



Independent School for Girls Aged 2 to 18
and Boys Aged 2 to 11

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Harrogate Ladies' College family of Schools:

Highfield Pre School, Highfield and College

SLT Responsibility: Joanna Fox

Governor Committee Review: Pupil Welfare

Review Cycle: Biennial

PRINCIPAL: Joanna Fox, BA (OU), PGCE (Anglia Ruskin).
Clarence Drive • Harrogate • North Yorkshire • HG1 2QG **T:** +44 (0)1423 504543 **E:** enquire@hlc.org.uk **www.hlc.org.uk**

REGISTERED OFFICE: Harrogate Ladies' College, Clarence Drive, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 2QG.
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Since 1893

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy applies to the Harrogate Ladies' College Family of Schools – Highfield Pre-School, Highfield and College - hereafter referred to as "the School".
- 1.2 **The School:** HLC (**School**) is an independent mainstream boarding and day school for girls and boys aged from 2 to 18 years. The School is a registered charity with a Christian foundation. The school is linked to the Martyrs' Memorial Trust, an evangelical organisation which works to retain and develop the distinctively Christian character of this and other schools. This foundation affects our ethos in many ways, and underpins our values as a community which welcomes staff, workers, volunteers, pupils, parents, applicants and governors from all different ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. The term **School Community** includes staff, governors, pupils, parents, visitors and volunteers.
- 1.3 Harrogate Ladies' College is committed to being inclusive as we see our diverse population of both pupils and staff as one of the School's greatest strengths. In order to ensure everyone can thrive, feel of equal worth and meet their full potential, it is essential that inclusion and equality of opportunity be at the core of all the School's activities. This policy applies equally to staff, pupils, parents and visitors to the School.
- 1.4 The School is committed to a zero tolerance policy in relation to discrimination on the basis of any protected characteristic (race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, marital status, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, pregnancy, maternity) or any other relevant factor. We believe the *Equality Act 2010* provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships, examples of which are demonstrated on a day-to-day basis throughout the School.
- 1.5 Our approach to equality is based on the following key principles:
 1. All learners are of equal value: whether or not they are disabled; whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status; whatever their gender and gender identity; whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background; and whatever their sexual orientation.
 2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith, sexual orientation and any other relevant factor. We believe diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all who learn, teach, work and visit our School.

3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We aim for all members of our School to feel a sense of belonging within the community and to feel they are respected and able to participate fully in School life.
5. We observe good equalities practice for staff. We ensure policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.
6. We have the highest expectations for all our pupils. We expect all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.

1.6 The School is committed to promoting and developing inclusion and equality of opportunity in all its functions and will seek to do this by:

- communicating its commitment to equality and diversity to all members of its community;
- ensuring all staff and pupils are aware of the aims of this policy and of their responsibilities towards supporting an equal and diverse community;
- providing training for decision-makers, and briefings for staff and pupils;
- developing monitoring, evaluation and review mechanisms, cross-checking for any patterns or trends in behaviour;
- taking action to redress where there is identified underrepresentation in the workforce;
- demonstrating our zero tolerance attitude towards discrimination by taking all allegations seriously; and
- consulting with trades unions, interested groups and individuals, internal and external to ensure we are learning from best practice

2 Responsibility

2.1 The Governors and Senior Leadership Team have responsibility for ensuring the School complies with legislation and for implementing this policy and related procedures and plans throughout the School. However, each member of the School community is

responsible for preventing discrimination, embracing diversity and upholding equality of opportunity.

3 The Legal Framework

3.1 Discrimination can take the following forms:

- Direct Discrimination - This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than others because of their (or a family members) actual or perceived protected characteristic.
- Indirect Discrimination - This occurs by applying a provision, criterion or practice, which disadvantages people on the grounds of a protected characteristic and which cannot be justified as a proportionate or unpreventable way of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Victimisation - This occurs where an individual has exercised their rights under equality legislation (or has indicated that they intend to do so) and is treated less favourably as a direct result. It applies equally to a person who is supporting (or indicates that they intend to support) another person who is exercising their rights under the legislation.
- Harassment – This is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose OR effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating a hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- Disability Discrimination – This includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

3.2 The legal and local framework for this policy is:

- Equality Act 2010
- DfE Guidance on Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Duty to Promote Community Cohesion, Education and Inspections Act 2006

4 Aims and Values

- 4.1 Our school ethos states that: HLC is a welcoming school where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of difference, to maximise their potential and thrive.
- 4.2 At HLC we aim to promote inclusion and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of school life and with our key partners such as parents and other schools. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.
- 4.3 The School is resolutely committed to the promotion of equality and the creation of learning communities free from intolerance, discrimination and unconscious bias. We are clear that ethnicity is a protected characteristic and we support the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community in the struggle against racism and in tackling matters of inequality.
- 4.4 We aim to:
- provide a secure environment in which all our children can thrive and achieve all of the outcomes of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025*.
 - provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
 - prepare pupils for life in a diverse and inclusive society in which everyone can take their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
 - include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
 - provide and promote positive non-stereotyping information about the diversity of our society;
 - actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage and ensure we learn from these experiences;
 - embed inclusion through all our activities.

- 4.5 To achieve these aims we will:



- involve all members of the HLC community in the development, review, evaluation and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures;
- publish and share our policies and progress with the whole community;
- collect and analyse data to monitor potential disadvantage;
- help to overcome any potential barriers to learning by providing for pupils' diverse needs and learning styles, including and learning support needs and/or disabilities a pupil may have;
- Make explicit and implicit provision in the wider school curriculum to promote and celebrate equality and diversity;
- operate a clear zero tolerance policy towards abusive or discriminatory behaviour; and
- work in partnership with families and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and tackle discrimination.

5 Admissions

5.1 The School treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way, in accordance with this policy and the School's *Admissions Policy*. The School accepts applications from, and admits, pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic.

6 Education Provision

6.1 The curriculum offered at HLC encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different to themselves.

6.2 The School affords all pupils access to educational provision including all services and facilities irrespective of any protected characteristic, subject to the School's obligations under the *Equality Act 2010* and considerations of safety and welfare.

6.3 The School will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

6.4 Equality and diversity is embedded as far as possible in all areas of the curriculum and pupils are given opportunities to explore prejudice and discrimination, and to positively explore differences in relation to race/ethnicity, religion/belief, gender and disability. The School will seek to educate pupils in a multicultural, anti-racist environment using the curriculum, assemblies, PSHE programme (Flourish) and external speakers to promote understanding and appreciation of other faiths, races and cultures.

6.5 The School recognises that discrimination may be, for example, direct, indirect or arising from disability, whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and will be addressed in accordance with the School's *Anti-Bullying Policy* and the *Behaviour Policy*.

6.6 The School will:

- Ensure all children feel valued and good about themselves through the curriculum;
- Treat all members of the community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination;
- Ensure children have equal access to learning and recognise the individual learning needs of children, making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities;
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed above;
- Ensure those pupils with special educational needs (including an Education, Health and Care Plan) and/or disabilities receive necessary educational and welfare support;

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.

- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language receive additional support, such as extra English tuition, where required;
- Review the teaching and resources within each subject area regularly, to ensure the diversity of the School and wider society as a whole are represented;
- Help children understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable and challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils, staff and parents;
- Foster a culture which promotes openness and encourages pupils to come forward if they have experienced, or witnessed, discrimination;
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum, including being able to participate in a full range of extra-curricular activities;
- Create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance and ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity and are given appropriate training and/or support;
- Ensure data collection reviews the attainment and achievement of all pupils in order to inform the planning and provision of support to all individuals;
- Work with parents and external agencies, where appropriate, to combat and prevent discrimination in School; and
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

7 Religious Belief

7.1 Although the School's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, the School is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or no religion or faith).

8 Reasonable Adjustments

8.1 The School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled pupils. The School will inform and consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make for their disabled child. The School will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services, in light of a pupil's disability and, for example, the resources available to the School. The School has a duty to make reasonable adjustments (with case by case considerations) for staff or pupils who request to be known as gender neutral, gender fluid, are undergoing gender reassignment or are transgender.

8.2 The School is not legally required to make alterations to the School's physical environment as part of the reasonable adjustment duty. However, the School monitors and review the physical environment to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps can be taken to alleviate any substantial disadvantage caused to disabled pupils. The School has an Accessibility Plan in place, a copy of which can be made available upon request.

9 Responsibilities

The School Governors (delegated to the Pupil Welfare Committee)

9.1 It is the School Governors' responsibility to:

- role model inclusive behaviour and practice
- ensure that staff act as role models of inclusive behaviour and practice
- ensure that the school complies with equality legislation in all of its key policies
- ensure that the school's policy and procedures are monitored for effectiveness
- be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy.

The Principal

9.2 It is the Principal's responsibility to:

- ensure implementation of this policy and its and procedures
- ensure that all staff are sufficiently aware and trained within equality and diversity
- actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice, be it by staff, pupils, parents or visitors
- have procedures in place to deal effectively with any reported incidents of discrimination, victimization or harassment
- ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, this policy

All Staff

9.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- positively role-model inclusive behaviour
- actively challenge any forms of discrimination, victimization, harassment or bullying
- promote an inclusive curriculum, identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture
- plan and deliver lessons that reflect the School's principles; for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability

- commit to broadening their knowledge, confidence and inclusive behaviour relevant to their work by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

10 Concerns and Complaints

- 10.1** The School will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination and/or harassment. Any pupil who believes they have been discriminated against, or have been subject to discriminatory conduct should speak to the Senior Deputy.
- 10.2** Any pupil who harasses another pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic will be subject to the School's disciplinary measure in accordance with the School's *Behaviour Policy*.
- 10.3** If parents feel this policy has been breached, they should raise their concern or complaint through the School's *Complaints Policy*, which is available on the School's website or can be made available upon request.

11 Monitoring and Review

- 11.1** This policy is monitored on a regular basis to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure appropriate steps can be taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- 11.2** This policy is reviewed and updated at least biennially to ensure the aims of the policy are carried out in accordance with the School's equality obligations. The governors will also undertake regular review of this policy (Pupil Welfare Committee).

12 Breaches of the Policy

- 12.1** All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to the School Governors.

13 Version control

Date of last review of this policy	September 2025
Date for next review of this policy	September 2027
Policy owner (SLT)	Joanna Fox
Policy owner (Proprietor)	Dame Francine Holroyd

