

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES and DIVERSITY POLICY including EYFS

1. Introduction

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Holy Cross Prep School.

Holy Cross Prep School is committed to equal treatment for all pupils. Its teachings will not undermine fundamental British values or discriminate against pupils contrary to the Equality Act 2010, that is, on the basis of the protected characteristics of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion (including lack of religion) or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Equal opportunity in a school situation means ensuring that every individual has equal access to an education. Equality means having the same rights and status as everybody else.

We believe that the educational experience can only be enriched if children are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are developing.

We also welcome applications from pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and refer parents to our [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Policy](#).

The Equality Act 2010 gives us guidance and provides positive duties for schools to promote equality with particular regard to the protected characteristics. This policy outlines how Holy Cross Prep ensures that equality is being promoted, outlines what provision is available and what action is to be taken.

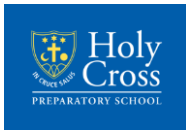
It is the responsibility of the whole school community to abide by our policy.

2. The Aims of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

The aims of this policy and the school's ethos as a whole is to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics;
- promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community;
- comply with the school's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.

At Holy Cross Prep School, we believe that every member of our school community has the right to receive the best possible education in an environment which is free from prejudice. We are committed to providing all our pupils with an equal opportunity to thrive in a setting free from discrimination in all its forms. Our policy should ensure that every member of our community respects others and is respected, achieves their full potential and is welcomed and valued.



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To make this commitment real, we aim to develop policies and practices based on the particular needs of our school and its community. We aim to:

- ensure that pupils have the opportunity to reach their potential in all areas of school life;
- ensure that parents and pupils can make choices free from prejudice and stereotyping;
- oppose any form of discrimination;
- value every pupil's language and cultural background;
- promote respect between cultures.

3. Admissions Policy

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, all prospective pupils irrespective of their protected characteristics.

Parents must inform the school when submitting the school registration form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the school. The school will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the school cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs.

4. Ethos and Atmosphere

The school ethos positively values all staff and pupils and welcomes diversity. We seek to promote the achievement of all pupils. Teaching staff make time to praise children for their behaviour, contributions and their work. Each week we hold an assembly during which children are publicly awarded for achievement in all areas of school life. All pupils have examples of their work displayed in classrooms and corridors.

Children and staff are called by their preferred names and we ensure that names are spelt and pronounced correctly.

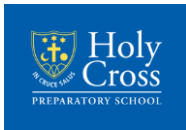
Our multi-faith assemblies and religious education promote justice, fairness and equality as well as informing pupils of many different religious stories, traditions and beliefs.

We have a children's School Council which meets regularly to discuss concerns and suggestions raised by other pupils. The council initiates many discussions and makes contributions to the decision-making process of issues concerning children in the school.

Circle time sessions are held on a regular basis in each class. This is part of our personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE Education). Issues discussed include equal opportunities.

Children and class teachers write their class rules and expectations at the beginning of each school year and address equal opportunity and how they are going to ensure equality in the classroom.

Playground behaviour is monitored and unacceptable behaviour challenged to ensure that pupils are safe and free from harassment.



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Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with immediately. We have developed systems to deal with playground incidents and with discrimination and these are followed up by all staff. Offensive remarks or behaviour based upon prejudice or misinformation are always challenged (refer to [Behaviour and Exclusions Policy](#)).

5. Educational Services

The school affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). 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.

The school will:

- Treat all members of the school community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination.
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics.
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support.
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds.
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff.
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities.
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in school.
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices.
- Use assemblies and PSHE to:
 - Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
 - Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.

The school recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's [Behaviour and Exclusions Policy](#) and [Anti-Bullying Policy](#).

6. Inclusive Curriculum

Holy Cross Prep School pupils have the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills, concepts and experiences through their participation in a broad and balanced curriculum. We have high expectations of all our pupils and do not make assumptions about ability or areas of interest.

The school aims to deliver an inclusive curriculum. The National Curriculum statement requires teachers to have due regard to three key principles:

1. setting suitable learning challenges;
2. responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
3. overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The focus is far wider than disability and special educational needs. It includes pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, pupils of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

This policy includes how provision will promote and value diversity and differences and includes ensuring that an awareness of multi-cultural issues informs all our planning. Through geography and history topics, pupils learn about different societies, environments and cultures. Religion is taught within certain topics as well as in assemblies and as a subject in its own right. Religions, cultures and traditions and societies are presented by the teacher and will encourage children to have equal respect and value for others. When discussing these issues, teachers focus upon similarities as well as on differences and inappropriate attitudes to these will be challenged by the teacher and the teaching assistant.

Teachers aim to take into account individual pupils' experiences and endeavour to make lessons and activities interesting and accessible to all.

7. Early Years Foundation Stage

The curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage makes the same commitment to meet the diverse needs of children through:

- careful planning;
- appropriate teaching strategies and support;
- providing a safe environment where stereotypes are challenged.

This commitment is to all children, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs that will be valued and supported and given the individual support that they require. They may involve:

- working very closely with parents and other agencies;
- liaising with our special educational needs coordinator.

Inclusivity practices will be reviewed, monitored and evaluated each term by the Head of Pre-Prep who will report to the Senior Leadership Team.

8. English as an Additional Language

Children who speak English as an additional language and those who have been identified as having educational or physical needs are considered in all aspects of planning, teaching and assessment.

Observing inclusive teaching strategies is a key element of the Senior Leadership Team's (SLT) programme of monitoring. Refer to [EAL-ML Policy](#).

9. Classroom Management and Organisation

Class teachers develop strategies to ensure appropriate access to classroom equipment and resources which include computer timetables, rotating activities and providing independent choice time.

In the classroom, teachers regularly mix groups working together to enable pupils to work with a variety of class members.

As some styles of teaching can advantage particular pupils, we use a variety of strategies which include whole class teaching, group discussions, paired and individual activities. In the EYFS, we also include child-initiated and adult-led opportunities.

10. Pupil Welfare and Guidance

Pupils are offered sympathetic support by their class teacher and other members of the school community.

We have a carefully planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE Education).

There are planned opportunities, often arising from literacy and humanity topics, to discuss equality issues, to challenge stereotyping, discrimination and harassment. This ensures that these issues are dealt with pro-actively, not just after an incident.

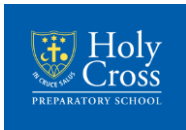
Refer to our [Behaviour and Exclusions Policy](#) and [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) which include positive strategies and monitoring procedures.

The phone numbers for children's support agency networks are included in the [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).

11. Safeguarding / Child Protection

Our utmost priority is the safety and wellbeing of the children in our care. The school-based Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Headteacher (the Deputy DSL), and the EYFS Designated Safeguarding Lead are always made aware of any concerns staff may have and appropriate steps are taken for the child's protection.

Teaching staff receive training and support on how to act when suspicions of child abuse are raised and how to proceed with sensitivity if a child discloses information. The DSL works closely with other agencies to promote the safety and well-being of the children.



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12. Resources

We intend for pictures and posters on display around the school to present positive images of people from all sections of our society. When ordering new resources, time is spent choosing material which challenges stereotypes and promotes our diverse community.

Junior children are encouraged to challenge stereotyping, prejudice and omissions in existing resource material.

We aim to meet specific resource needs for pupils of different abilities. Please see the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy](#) (SEND) for further information.

13. Staff

The school is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing.

A commitment to equal opportunities is included in the selection criteria for all posts.

Teaching and support staff are encouraged to further their professional careers by attending courses suited to their posts.

14. Parents and the Community

We acknowledge and support the family circumstances in which our pupils live and we try to ensure that all parents are welcomed at our school. A weekly newsletter is emailed to parents every Friday detailing current events and other information about school life. This is our key form of communication. In addition, specific letters are sent home each term to inform parents of work being undertaken by their children. A successful Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy requires strong and positive support from parent and guardians and full acceptance of the school's ethos of tolerance and respect.

15. Learning Ability

Much time and care is put into the identification of children with educational needs and the planning, implementing and assessing of individual educational programmes (IEP). Children with an IEP or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are treated with equal respect and value. All staff have high expectations of all pupils. There is a wide range of resources available to cater for pupils of all abilities and work is often differentiated so that pupils can achieve personal goals.

16. Physical Ability

The school welcomes staff and pupils with differing physical abilities within the limitations of the school building and the practicalities of the work.

We try to use resources which challenge stereotypical views of those with different physical abilities.

The terminology used to describe forms of physical ability should not be offensive.

Staff are made aware of pupils' individual needs and how to cope with them (e.g. asthma attacks) in a safe, sensitive and practical way.

17. Reasonable Adjustments for Pupils with Disability

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 with other pupils.

Where the school is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the school is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The school will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the school. Further information on the School's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the school's [Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy](#) and the [Health and Safety Policy](#).

The school has an [Accessibility Plan](#) in place. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

18. Race

The school welcomes a racially diverse population and recognises that it enriches the school in a positive way. All staff and pupils are encouraged to adopt a respectful awareness of other cultures and languages, to be thoughtful, tactful and to examine and be critical of their own racial prejudices. It is important to remember that racism can take place on a conscious and unconscious level. Resources should give a positive view of our multi-racial society and encourage respect for people as individuals. Resources should present a global view of the world.

19. Religion

We are a Catholic school that welcomes families of all faiths. Lessons and assemblies regarding religion give pupils opportunities to learn about the variety of world religions. Pupils are encouraged to accept and respect a variety of religious and cultural views within the religions studied. Pupils are encouraged to challenge stereotypes and discuss diversity. The expectation is that all pupils attend the services, Masses and assemblies. Displays and resources should reflect the diversity of religions.

20. Other

The school welcomes parents, and staff, whatever their sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment or whether in a same sex marriage or civil partnership or pregnant or on maternity/paternity leave.

21. Mental Health and Drug/Alcohol Abuse

The school is sympathetic to the needs of families with mental health issues or drug or alcohol abuse. Information given to teachers is treated with sensitivity and only passed on to other members of staff who have contact with the child and may need to be aware of a particular home situation.

When teaching children about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, teachers are sensitive to the experiences of children in their class. We aim to give factual information in a balanced non-judgmental way. We encourage children to discuss issues and develop their own opinions. Offensive language is challenged and staff explain why certain language is considered offensive to groups of people.



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22. Dealing with Harassment

Harassment on account of ability, gender, race, religion, sexuality or social background is unjust and totally unacceptable. Harassment can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti. We aim to take all incidents of harassment seriously and the school has a statutory responsibility to deal with racial and sexual harassment. We have developed a clear procedure for dealing with complaints and grievances, including those regarding harassment. For more information, please see the Complaints Policy.

23. Monitoring and Evaluation

We monitor our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy regularly and the Headteacher reports to the Advisory Body in order to ensure its effectiveness and any issues arising.

24. Complaints

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about the operation of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy; please speak to the Headteacher if you have any concerns. Copies of the school's Complaints Policy can be found on the school website or requested from the school office.