HOLYWELL CHURCH OF ENGLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Equality Policy for Holywell School (inc. Equality Objectives)

Author	SENDCo
Responsibility	All staff and the governing body
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Background
As a Church of England School, our Equality Policy at Holywell School is rooted in our distinctively Christian character and our core beliefs which are Gospel inspired and which support the school's Vision:

At Holywell, our vision is that everyone in our community chooses to "Live Life in all its Fullness" (John 10:10).
Inspired by the teaching of Jesus, the Good Shepherd,
we choose to live our values,
being the best we can be
in community."

Holywell School is a caring, distinctively Christian, community-focussed Church of England School. We aim to continue the historic tradition of Church of England Schools by providing a Christian Values-inspired education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. As a school, we are a loving, supportive community with high aspirations for all. We promote inclusion, we are proud to belong and we value each individual. We look after each other, believe in second chances and aim to be the best we can be so we can serve and support the common good.

This Equality Policy has been written in the spirit of the Church of England's Vision for Education. "The outworking of this vision is grounded in the desire to shape education for 'life in all its fullness' (John 10.10). One of its four central pillars is Educating for Dignity and Respect." In rearticulating the vision for education, the Church of England published: "Our Hope for a Flourishing Schools System" in which it was set out what dignity and respect entails: "All children deserve to love their childhood, finding space for play, exploration, imagination and creativity. They should be surrounded by loving relationships, structures and systems which release and enable life in all its fullness." The hope and prayer is that this ethos will enable students to flourish and ensure that each and every child, knowing they are unique and made in the image of God, will find in our schools a safe environment where discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. They should all know themselves to be loved,

supported and championed, irrespective of physical appearance, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, academic ability, disability, age or sexual orientation. which has a key strand. As a Church of England school, we offer a community where everyone is a person known and loved by God, supported to know their intrinsic value.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

This policy also has due regard for non-statutory guidance, including the following:

- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools'
- National Society for Education / Church of England (2024): Flourishing for All: Anti-bullying Guidance for Church of England School

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Equality Information and Objectives Statement
- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Admissions Policy
- RE Policy
- PSHE Policy

The Equality Act 2010 provides a modern, single legal framework with three broad duties:

- Eliminate discrimination harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

For the purpose of this policy, the Equality Act 2010 will be referred to as 'the Act'. The school fully understands the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities. Protected characteristics, under the Act, are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality or ethnicity
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student

- In relation to admissions.
- In the way it provides education for students.
- In the way it provides students access to any benefit, facility or service.
- By excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The Act also makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise an adult – including parents, carers, staff, members of the local community, applicants to the school.

The responsible body for the school is the governing board.

The school's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a student has left the school, but will apply to subsequent actions connected to the previous relationship between school and student, such as the provision of references on former students or access to former students' communications and activities.

The school will promote equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants and will work in line with the Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will:

- Ensure that the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to:
    - Publish equality objectives at least every four years commencing on the date of the last publication.
    - Update and publish information every year to demonstrate school compliance with the PSED.
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans.
- Ensure that the school's Admissions Policy does not discriminate in any way.
- Ensure equal opportunities in its staff recruitment and promotion practices, professional development programmes and in membership of the governing board.
- Proactively recruit high-quality applicants from under-represented groups.
- Provide information in appropriate and accessible formats.
- Ensure that the necessary disciplinary measures are in place to enforce this policy.

The headteacher will:

- Implement and champion this policy and its procedures.
- Ensure that all staff members receive the appropriate equality and diversity training as part of their induction and CPD.
- Ensure that all parents, visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the provisions of this policy.
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any case of discriminatory practice.
- Address any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with DfE guidance.
- Produce an annual report on the progress of implementing the provisions of this policy and report it to the governing board.

Employees will:

- Be mindful of any incidents of harassment or bullying in the school.
- Track and monitor any instances of discrimination and deal with these in a consistent manner, making a report to the headteacher as necessary and following up with students as required.

- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and the school's culture.
- Promote equality and good relations, and not harass or discriminate in any way.
- Monitor students' progress and needs to ensure the appropriate support is in place.
- Keep up-to-date with equality legislation and its application by attending the appropriate training.
- Champion diversity and inclusion.

Students will:

- Not discriminate or harass any other student or staff member.
- Actively encourage equality and diversity in the school by contributing their cultural experiences and values.
- Report any incidences of bullying or harassment, whether to themselves or to others, to the head of year or to another member of staff.
- Abide by all the school's equality and diversity policies, procedures and codes.

The school will have an equality page on its website, in order to demonstrate how it is complying with the PSED in the Equality Act 2010, and advancing equality of opportunity.

Guiding principles

In line with The Equality Act of 2010, everyone in Britain is protected. This is because the Equality Act protects people against discrimination because of the protected characteristics that we all have. Under the Equality Act, there are nine protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

- Principle 1: All learners are of equal value. We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value.
- Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference. Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities do not discriminate but do, nevertheless, take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background. They also consider the differences, barriers and disadvantages which people may face.
- Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:
    - positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people.
    - positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents.
    - mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual, transphobic and homophobic harassment.
- Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development. We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees

and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development
- Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist. In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist
- Principle 6: We consult and involve widely. We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit. We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life.
- Principle 8: We base our policies and practices on sound evidence. We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information which shows our compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and on the basis of which we decide on specific and measurable objectives. Evidence relating to equalities is integrated into our self-evaluation documentation.
- Principle 9: Measurable objectives. We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the consultations we have conducted (principle 6) and the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8). The objectives which we identify consider national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate. Our equality objectives are integrated into the school improvement plan. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

Due regard
As a school and a public authority, we, in the exercise of our functions, have due regard to the need to
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Public Sector Equality Duty in the 2010 Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—
- tackle prejudice, and
- promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

The relevant protected characteristics listed again are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation

The curriculum
We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the 9 guiding principles on pages 2-3.

Ethos and organisation
We ensure the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- students' progress, attainment and achievement
- students' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying
Holywell School is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in the above paragraphs, namely:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism, homophobia or transphobia.

There is guidance in the Anti-bullying Policy on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents and, if requested, provide a report to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

Roles and responsibilities
The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.
A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Senior Leadership Team and the SENDCo have day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles above
- support students in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all students and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Community Cohesion

We define 'community cohesion' as working towards a society in which:

- There is a sense of belonging by all communities.
- The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and valued.
- Similar life opportunities are available to all.
- Strong and positive relationships exist, and continue to be developed in the workplace, school and wider community.
- Social mobility is encouraged and facilitated.

At Holywell we define 'community' in a number of ways:

- School community – the students we serve, their families, and our staff members.
- Our local community – our geographical community, and the people who live and/or work in our area.
- Our spiritual community – both the local Diocese of St Albans, and also the Church of England community.
- The community of Britain – with all of its ethnically rich and culturally diverse beliefs, populations and practices.
- The global community – formed by international links.

Our contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under several headings, including the following:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum
- Equality and excellence
- Engagement and ethos

Teaching, Learning and curriculum:

Our teaching and the curriculum provision supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values, and helps students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them.

Lessons taught across our curriculum provide various opportunities for students to develop their understanding and empathy, promote awareness of the rights of individuals, and to develop the teamwork, skills of participation and responsible action.

Equality and Excellence:
At Holywell there is a focus on securing high standards of attainment for all students and removing barriers to learning both in the classroom and in the wider world.
Effective procedures exist within our school to tackle prejudice, bullying and harassment.

Our **admission process** promotes community cohesion and social equality.

Engagement and ethos:
Holywell prides itself in providing opportunities for young people and their families to interact and build positive relationships with people from different backgrounds, including links with different schools and communities locally, nationally, internationally and on a wider basis where possible. Our school works in partnership with many external organisations to support our students' education.

We engage with parents through an open-door ethos, parents' evenings, festivals and other celebrations.

It is important to involve children in decision-making and the organisation of the school, teaching students the importance of participation and making a difference to the school, local community and beyond.

Equality Objectives
We are committed to promoting the welfare and equality of all our staff, pupils and other members of the school community. We see all members of the school community as of equal value, regardless of any protected characteristic. The school's policies, procedures and activities will not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences in life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to any protected characteristic.

The school's Equality Information and Objectives Statement sets out how the school is meeting the PSED and outlines how equality of opportunity is ensured for all members of the school community. The Equality Information and Objectives Statement is reviewed at least every four years and is published on the school website annually.

The school will consult with stakeholders to establish equality objectives and draw up a plan based on information collected on protected groups and accessibility planning. Objectives are in a separate section at the end of this document.

We will regularly review the steps being taken and the progress made towards the achievement of these objectives and, in line with the specific duties of the PSED.

Breaches of the policy
Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the headteacher and governing body.

Monitoring and Review

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and adjust as appropriate. In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; disadvantage; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

The Ethos Committee of the Board of Governors will monitor and review the implementation of this policy. The Ethos Committee will review this policy and make recommendations to the full Board regarding further amendments.

This Policy was based on guidance from INSTED Consultancy

Appendix 1: Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Discrimination on the grounds of any of the 9 protected characteristics is illegal and will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with the policy will be fully and promptly investigated using the appropriate procedures. The 9 protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

There are four ways in which discrimination may occur:

1. Direct discrimination: This means treating someone less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex etc.
2. Indirect discrimination: This means applying a requirement or condition which cannot be justified to all groups but which has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group because the proportion of that group which can comply is smaller than the proportion of the group(s) which can comply with it.
3. Victimisation: This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other persons would be treated because that person has done a 'protected act' under the Equal Pay Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act or Employment Equality Regulations, for example, by bringing forward proceedings or giving evidence or information.
4. Harassment: Harassment can take many forms, from the most obvious abusive remarks to extremely subtle use of power. As with unfair or unlawful discrimination, harassment can be intentional or unintentional. However, the key issue is not simply the intention of the offender but the impact of the behaviour on the person receiving it. Harassment may involve any of the following:
    a. physical contact or violence;
    b. offensive humiliating and intimidating remarks or actions;
    c. exclusion from participation in job-related or classroom-related discussions, training or social or other events;
    d. unfair work allocation;
    e. unjust or excessive or humiliating criticism of performance;
    f. offensive signs or notices;
    g. graffiti;
    h. repeated demands or requests for sexual favours.

These are merely examples and not an exhaustive list. Whatever the form, the school will provide support for any member of the school community, student or staff member who feels threatened or isolated because of such actions.

Equality Objectives for Holywell School

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Responsibility	All staff and the governing body
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Introduction
The Equality Act 2010 sets out that all public bodies will publish equalities objectives every four years. This document identifies the equalities objectives that we have chosen to focus on over the next four years, from 2023 to 2027, to improve equality, diversity and inclusion at Holywell School.

We recognise and take very seriously our broad responsibilities as both an employer and as a provider of a service to members of the public.

Holywell School is a caring, distinctively Christian, community-focussed Church of England School. We aim to continue the historic tradition of Church of England Schools by providing a Christian Values-inspired education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. As a school, we are a loving, supportive community with high aspirations for all. We promote inclusion, we are proud to belong and we value each individual. We look after each other, believe in second chances and aim to be the best we can be so we can serve and support the common good.

Our vision is to be an outstanding Christian learning community where everyone is valued as a unique individual and where everyone feels safe. We will aim to be the best we can possibly be, to treat others as we wish to be treated and to make a positive difference to our community and beyond. We strive to be peaceful problem-solvers with open minds and hearts, living God's love and being kind.

As a result, promoting equality is at the heart of all we do. Our equality objectives cover how we consider equality when we teach and support learning, and how we will ensure that students and staff have equality of opportunity.

Our objectives have been developed in consultation with staff and students and we will report annually on our progress. We will review our objectives and targets to ensure that they continue to be appropriately challenging.

Objective 1
To actively close gaps in attainment and achievement between all students and groups of students; especially students with special educational needs, disadvantaged students and pupil premium students

Review 2026
Maths
Although disappointingly below the national average, Maths results for both EXS and GDS are in line with student performance at KS1 and in line with GL baseline assessments.

Maths	EXS - GDS		GDS		EXS		NA/ Below/ Absent		Total
All students	66%	116	21%	38	44%	78	34%	61	177
SEND	33%	15	9%	4	24%	11	67%	31	46
Pupil Premium	32%	12	8%	3	24%	9	68%	25	37
Males	67%	60	26%	23	41%	37	33%	30	90
Females	64%	56	17%	15	47%	41	36%	31	87
EAL	71%	15	29%	6	43%	9	29%	6	21

GL results for this year group demonstrate below national average attainment, but nevertheless, progress from their starting points:

	Very Low (4)	Below Average (19)	Average (54)	Above Average (19)	Very High (4)	Average and above (77)	Mean 100 = National Average
Entry Y5 Sept 24	16	25	45	14	0	59	92.8
EOY5 June 2025	7	24	48	19	2	69	98.4
EOY6 June 2026	10	22	53	10	5	68	96.3

Reading
Although disappointingly below the national average and below student performance at KS1, results are in line with GL assessments with some students performing at the national standard in SATS even though their end-of-Year 5 and end-of-Year-6 GL scores are below average. 39 students performed significantly better in the final SATs test in comparison to their practice SATs papers (with many moving to EXS from WTS). 21 students performed below their previous test levels.

Reading	EXS - GDS	GDS	EXS	NA/ Below/ Absent	Total

All students	56%	99	18%	32	38%	67	44%	78	177
SEND	35%	16	4%	2	30%	14	65%	30	46
Pupil Premium	38%	14	3%	1	35%	13	62%	23	37
Males	42%	38	14%	13	28%	25	58%	52	90
Females	70%	61	22%	19	48%	42	30%	26	87
EAL	43%	9	14%	3	29%	6	57%	12	21

GL results for this year group demonstrate below national average attainment. Overall, they made no progress from their starting points:

	Very Low (4)	Below Average (19)	Average (54)	Above Average (19)	Very High (4)	Average and above (77)	Mean 100 = National Average
Entry Y5 Sept 24	4	25	54	15	2	71	97.7
EOY5 June 2025	2	17	65	12	4	81	99.3
EOY6 June 2026	2	27	51	18	1	70	97.7

GPAS

Although disappointingly below the national average and below student performance at KS1, results are in line with GL assessments with some students performing at the national standard in SATS even though their end-of-Year 5 and end-of-Year-6 GL scores are below average. 28 students performed significantly better in the final SATs test in comparison to their practice SATs papers (with many moving to EXS from WTS). 3 students performed below their previous test levels.

SPAG	**EXS – GDS**		**GDS**		**EXS**		**NA/ Below/ Absent**		**Total**
All students	53%	93	12%	21	41%	72	47%	84	177
SEND	30%	14	0%	0	30%	14	70%	32	46
Pupil Premium	24%	9	3%	1	22%	8	76%	28	37
Males	46%	41	9%	8	37%	33	54%	49	90
Females	60%	52	15%	13	45%	39	40%	35	87
EAL	57%	12	14%	3	43%	9	43%	9	21

Gender: Slight difference in boy/girls split in terms of numbers (51% boys; 49% girls) – however, girls attainment is significantly higher than boys in Reading (70% in comparison with 42%). The gap in GPAS is smaller but still significant (60% girls to 46% boys). In Maths

the boys performed slightly higher than more than the girls (67% compared to 64%). In GDS the gaps are similar but less pronounced.

SEND: The gap between SEND students and the whole cohort is significant 21% in Reading and 23% in GPAS. The gap is even more pronounced in Maths (33% gap). Some SEND students performed well and demonstrated good progress. 1 EBSNA student (EC) who had not previously done tests, completed both externally marked tests. 5 SEND students achieved the expected standard across all English standards (KF, JH, CR, KW, EW)

PP: 12 out of the 38 PP students are also on the SEND register and all have significant learning needs. The biggest gap is in GPAS.

EAL: The 21 EAL students have a varied profile with some being fluent English speakers and others with low levels of literacy and language. Overall, they are a strong cohort and they performed particularly well in Maths. Reading has the largest gap, however, as they progress in their fluency and as they build their vocabulary, the gap reduces.

Objective 2
Further develop the tracking of students and sub-groups to inform intervention programmes and ensure no child is left behind.

Review 2026
A tracking sheet has been created to log all interventions and opportunities accessed by each student. Analysis of this has shown a wide range of opportunities available for students without prejudice. Interventions have been evaluated and a more data-driven approach has been implemented for 2026-2027.

Objective 3
To raise awareness of the diversity of our community at all levels (school community, local community, world community).

Review 2026
A pilot programme explicitly exploring protected characteristics has now been systemised and scheduled for the academic year.
A link with the Msijute Primary School in Mtwara in Tanzania, Africa has raised awareness of the world community.