

# Heathlands

## C of E Primary School

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*Helping everyone shine their light*

|                   |                                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Policy            | EQUALITY POLICY                     |
| Author            | Mel Cork – Deputy Headteacher/SENCO |
| Adopted by        | Governing Board – Dec 2025          |
| To be reviewed by | Dec 2026                            |

At Heathlands Primary School, we are committed to providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment where every child feels valued and secure.

## **School Values**

At Heathlands, we believe in the importance of relationships, ensuring children feel valued, safe and secure, providing a sense of connection with a member of staff and a belonging to the whole school community through our school core Christian Values of Trust, Respect, Enjoyment, Courage and Kindness.

Our school reflects the values of the Essex Approach to understanding behaviour and supporting emotional wellbeing known as Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP)

- Compassion and Kindness
- Hope
- Connection and Belonging

These, alongside our Core Christian Values, are interweaved in all that we do.

## **School Ethos**

It is a core aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We are an inclusive and caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all.

Our Equality policy is therefore designed to support the way in which all members of the school can live and work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment where everyone feels happy, safe and secure and able to learn.

We value each individual child and work with families, the community and beyond to offer diverse experiences and support for pupils and families in a caring and safe environment. We develop children to be confident, life-long learners and compassionate, respectful members of their local and global community and the world.

We always prioritise the safety of our children and staff. Everything we do in school is underpinned by our safeguarding procedures.

## **Aims and Principles**

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic \* and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic\* and people who do not share it
- We pride ourselves on being a fully inclusive school, able to meet the needs of staff and children through a range of integrated community services
- We believe that everyone is of equal value; everyone is unique
- We recognise and respect diversity. Treating people equally does not necessarily mean treating them the same. Policies, procedure and practices do not discriminate, they differentiate to meet individual needs.

## **Legislation and guidance**

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

## **Strategies and Equality statements**

### **Ethos and Environment**

Staff work together to create an environment that feels safe, welcoming and accessible to all staff, pupils, families, governors and visitors, based on a culture of mutual respect and celebration of diversity.

We operate an 'open door' policy, whereby families are encouraged to discuss any issues with school staff and staff make regular contact with families. Classroom/school layout, equipment and adaptations reflect the needs of children and adults, to enable them to participate in all aspects of school life.

Resources and displays in our school reflect the experiences, backgrounds and abilities of pupils, promote diversity and challenge stereotypes. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school.

Discrimination is challenged and investigated.

### **Admissions, Attendance and Exclusions**

Our Admission Policy is fair and transparent and does not discriminate against any protected groups. Additional support is offered to parents to access information, as appropriate. The school expects excellent attendance from all pupils, due to the positive impact that this has on attainment and progress.

Attendance is monitored on an individual, group, class, year group and school basis. Absences are authorised for exceptional circumstances.

### **Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum:**

All staff ensure that the school environment and all learning experiences are inclusive, in which all children are able to participate and where they feel that their contributions are valued.

Positive steps are taken to include all pupils: Individual needs are discussed and recorded on entry to our school. Transition meetings occur between all year groups. All staff work hard to ensure that specific needs are met.

Appropriate differentiation and support are provided from within school and/or with input from other specialist agencies. Pupil groupings are varied, during the week, to reflect the individual needs of children, including academic and personal/social developments and needs. Differentiation ensures everyone is included in the main class lesson. Teaching styles reflect different learning styles and children's individual needs are met within and across lessons. Collaborative working is planned and encouraged, across all groups of pupils and all years.

Pupils' personal qualities are developed in all lessons, as we strive to develop character. Pupils are taught to become increasingly sensitive towards and tolerant of others. Independence is encouraged and supported, enabling them to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.

Staff use teaching materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community, and avoid reinforcement of bias or stereotyping. The curriculum is planned and developed to ensure that it is appropriate, interesting, stimulating and challenging to all pupils. The curriculum is planned to promote positive attitudes to diversity and to directly teach attitudes and values that challenge discriminatory behaviour or prejudice. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture, to celebrate what it is to be British (the rule of law, democracy and individual liberty) and celebrate the diversity of other cultures. Opportunities are identified to enrich curricular experiences by learning about cultures, languages, religions, beliefs and experiences of pupils and pupil groups within the school. This includes visits out of school and inviting visitors into school.

Staff work in partnership with families to involve them in supporting their child's education. School council provides a forum for all children to express their views and discuss issues important to themselves.

The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- boys and girls
- pupils learning English as an additional language
- pupils from minority ethnic groups, including Gypsies and Travellers
- pupils who are gifted and talented
- pupils with special educational needs
- pupils with a disability
- pupils receiving free school meals
- pupils who are in public care
- pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion
- lesbian, gay or questioning young people

### **Attainment and Progress**

The school has high expectations of all pupils and strives to attain the highest possible standards. Pupil attainment and progress data is monitored in detail on an individual and school level, as well as by identified pupil groups. Intervention strategies are implemented as necessary. Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupil progress and these are reviewed to ensure that they are accessible to all pupils. Attainment and progress data are used to set future priorities for learning for individuals, groups, classes, year groups and the school. These objectives are then formalised in the School Improvement Plan.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

A range of extra-curricular clubs and activities are available and are an important part of children's development, providing opportunities to try new activities and develop skills in particular areas of interest. Clubs/activities are available to all pupils from Year R onwards, with additional support being provided as necessary to meet individual needs.

### **Staff Recruitment and Training**

The school adheres to recruitment and employment procedures which are fair, equitable and in line with statutory duties and Essex County Council guidelines. We recruit, train and promote staff on the basis of their ability and potential.

Recruitment processes and staffing structure decisions are monitored to ensure decisions are free from discrimination. All staff, volunteers, parents, governors and visitors are informed of the contents of this policy. Everyone associated with the school is expected to support the ethos of the school, promoting equality and challenging bias and stereotyping wherever they observe it.

Annual staff training occurs to highlight equality issues and to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping. Equality is incorporated in the induction programme for new staff. We encourage staff to explore their own views and attitudes to difference and to monitor their practice in relation to this policy.

Adults in school take care to lead through example, demonstrating high expectations of all pupils. The skills of all staff, including non-teaching and part-time staff are recognised and valued.

All staff are offered Performance Management Reviews.

Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and the school strives to reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The governing board will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives to the headteacher

Governors as a whole are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with the relevant equality legislation
- Monitoring the implementation and impact of the Equality Scheme
- Monitoring progress towards the equality objectives and reporting on these annually

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this Equality Scheme
- Implementing action to address the schools' equality objectives and reporting on the progress of these to Governors
- Training staff to ensure that they know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- Providing information for visitors about this Equality Scheme.
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including prejudice-related incidents
- Enabling reasonable adjustments to be made, particularly in relation to disability, in regard to students, staff, parents, governors and visitors to the school, to ensure individual needs can be met

All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and community cohesion in their work
  - Avoiding unlawful discrimination against anyone
  - Fostering good relations between groups
  - Dealing with prejudice-related incidents
  - Being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
  - Taking up training and learning opportunities
- Visitors and contractors are responsible for following this school policy.

### **Eliminating discrimination**

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with nondiscrimination provisions. Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct. Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings.

### **Advancing equality of opportunity**

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)

- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities(e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics \*, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils

### **Fostering good relations**

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic \* and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, Citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies, and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community

- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach

### **Equality considerations in decision-making**

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

### **How we have due regard to equality**

We are committed to working for the equality of all our pupils. To meet our duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct towards pupils with protected characteristics prohibited by the Act:

- Related policies in place are anti-bullying, e-safety, behaviour, safeguarding and SEND;
- Accessibility plan for the disabled;
- Admission arrangements – new arrivals have an induction;

- Exclusions are monitored and reported;
- Incidents of harassment are recorded;
- Staff and governors have regular safeguarding and SEND;
- Authority complaints procedures are followed;
- Non-discriminatory employment practice is adhered to;
- There are staff codes of conduct;
- Teaching targets needs and there is training on differentiation and challenge;
- EAL strategies are employed and resources targeted.

## Equality objectives

| Objective   | Actions   | Progress (Review Dec 25)   |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Improve attendance for pupils who are PPG in all year groups.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to monitor attendance termly for all children</li> <li>Engage families with attendance meetings</li> </ul>  | <p><i>In this academic year, pupil attendance has increased to 97 – previous 96.4. PPG attendance continues to be outside of the previous 5% of this – around 93.4%, although this is an increase from 90%.</i></p> <p><i>Families identified with absence below expected have engaged well in attendance meetings and support. Our key focus is to reduce the small number of persistent absentees (link PPG) by focused and consistent support.</i></p> <p><i>A developed Heathlands attendance strategy, inline with DFE guidelines and alongside the Heathlands Wellbeing strategy, focusses on support and a consistent approach to support good attendance for all pupils. Regular attendance letters, calls and meetings are supported with a pastoral approach and defined approach to SEND support.</i></p> |
| <p>Improve knowledge to enable all to appreciate and value difference and diversity.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to attend Multi schools council meetings</li> <li>Review curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities to ensure all groups are represented and celebrated.</li> </ul>  | <p><i>All staff have completed the TPP training, with a further 4 staff completing the TPP for families module. Staff have completed training on Diversity with a focus on developing the curriculum this academic year</i></p> <p><i>A broad range of pupils have attended Multi school council meetings, and we have been accredited with the Silver level award.</i></p> <p><i>Extra curricula events are reviewed to ensure all groups are represented. Our PE Lead ensures opportunities are provided which meet the needs of all pupils and are celebrated. This includes attending events including All In. The SENCO and PE lead work together to ensure a range of pupils attend events across the school year.</i></p>   |
| <p>To continue to improve the overall balance of the staff/membership of the Governing Board, not only by taking account of</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To actively promote, among parents, prospective parents and other stakeholders a greater awareness of the Governing Board and its role, whilst emphasizing our aim to</li> </ul> | <p><i>The Governors have worked to try to recruit representatives comparative with our pupil population.</i></p>   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>individuals' skills and experience, but also seeking to identify candidates from groups which are under-represented compared with the make-up of our pupil population.</p> | <p>ensure that its members are more representative of the background and particular needs of the pupils entrusted to our care.</p>  |   |
| <p>To continue develop access to school site for all.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within termly site walks identify areas which may need develop to ensure they can be accessed by all.</li> <li>• To actively develop knowledge of staff to ensure that all are aware of how to ensure site and events are accessible for all.</li> </ul> | <p><i>We have continued with termly walks completed by the Site team and Head teacher to identify areas to develop.</i></p> <p><i>Events are discussed during the planning stage to ensure that they are inclusive, appropriately supported and risk assessed before they take place.</i></p> <p><i>PDNet physical disability training has been completed by 10 members of staff to support and inform practice. Close working through the PINS project has meant that a number of audits have taken place across the school to review sensory and physical needs.</i></p> <p><i>2 further staff members have completed their NASENCO training, and one has completed the NPQLBC.</i></p> |
| <p>To further develop equality and diversity throughout curriculum themes and texts within the classroom</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete audit of curriculum</li> <li>• Complete audit of texts used throughout the school (within assemblies etc.)</li> <li>• Develop choice of texts through the school</li> </ul>   | <p><i>The Literacy team have begun to recommend and include texts that celebrate equality and diversity.</i></p> <p><i>Further work is to be completed on this this academic year.</i></p>  |

Information about the pupil population

Number of pupils on roll at the school: **409**

### Information on pupils by protected characteristics

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of ‘protected characteristics’. Every person has several of the protected characteristics, so the Act protects everyone against unfair treatment.

### Disability

The Equality Act defines disability as when a person has a ‘physical or mental impairment’ which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities’.

There are pupils at our school with different types of disabilities and these include:

- ASD;
- Speech Language and Communication Needs;
- Hearing Impairment;
- Physical Needs
- Severe Allergies
- ADHD

### Ethnicity

| Ethnicity | Percentage |
|-----------|------------|
|-----------|------------|

|                                  |      |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Other ethnic group               | 0.2  |
| ABRI                             | 0.5  |
| White and black caribbean        | 0.2  |
| White Eastern European           | 1.0  |
| Afghan                           | 0.7  |
| White and Black African          | 1.2  |
| Any other Black background       | 0.5  |
| Afghan                           | 0.7  |
| Other Black African              | 0.5  |
| NOBT                             | 0.2  |
| White and Asian                  | 1.5  |
| White and any other ethnic group | 1.2  |
| White other                      | 1.2  |
| White British                    | 89.7 |
| Flippino                         | 0.2  |
| Other mixed background           | 0.2  |
| Traveller of Irish Heritage      | 0.2  |

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| Vietnamese  | 0.2 |
| White Irish | 0.2 |

### Information on Other Groups of Pupils

We aim for all our pupils to make progress, including those whose needs, dispositions, aptitudes or circumstances require additional support.

In addition to pupils with protected characteristics, we wish to provide further information on the following groups of pupils:

### Pupils from lower income households

|   | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Number of pupils currently eligible for free school meals | 8.1%       |

### Pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)

| These figures include EYFS | Number of pupils | Percentage (%) of the school population |
|----------------------------|------------------|---|
| SEND Support               | 56               | 13.8                                    |

|      |                 |     |
|------|-----------------|-----|
| EHCP | 14<br>(+5 IPRA) | 3.4 |
|------|-----------------|-----|

### Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

1% of pupils at Heathlands have English as an additional language.

### Young Carers

We are aware that some children may be young carers and are alert as to the signs that this may be the case. We currently have 0.8% (4 children) children identified as Young Carers.

Other vulnerable groups:

- There are a number of children who are on our Disadvantaged children register;
- We hold a Wellbeing register which is reviewed half termly
- We provide therapy and counselling for children with emotional difficulties;
- We also provide support for families in a variety of ways

### Monitoring arrangements

The Full Governing Body will update the equality information every two years.

## Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Risk assessment
- Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy
- SEND

### \* Protected Characteristics – definition

The Equality Act covers the same groups that were protected by existing equality legislation – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. These are now called ‘protected characteristics’.

The Act extends some protections to characteristics that were not previously covered, and also strengthens particular aspects of equality law.

### Age (no change)

- The Act protects people of all ages. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if you can justify it (for example if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim). Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination. Disability (new definition and changes)
- The Act has made it easier for a person to show that they are disabled and protected from disability discrimination. Under the Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal

day-to-day activities, which would include things like using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport. As before, the Act puts a duty on the employer to make reasonable adjustments for staff to help them overcome disadvantage resulting from an impairment (for example, by providing assistive technologies to help visually impaired staff use computers effectively).

- The Act includes a new protection from discrimination arising from disability. This states that it is discrimination to treat a disabled person UNFAVOURABLY because of something connected with their disability (for example, a tendency to make spelling mistakes arising from dyslexia). This type of discrimination is unlawful where the employer or other person acting for the employer knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person has a disability. This type of discrimination is only justifiable if an employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Additionally, indirect discrimination now covers disabled people. This means that a job applicant or employee could claim that a particular rule or requirement you have in place disadvantages people with the same disability. Unless you could justify this, it would be unlawful.

The Act also includes a new provision which makes it unlawful, except in certain circumstances, for employers to ask about a candidate's health before offering them work.

#### Gender reassignment (new definition)

- The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected – so a woman who decides to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered.
- It is discrimination to treat transsexual people less favourably for being absent from work because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured. This is being taken into account as part of the review of Sickness Absence, and will be integrated within the updated policy.

#### Marriage and civil partnership (no change)

- The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.

#### Pregnancy and maternity (no change)

- A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. During this period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination cannot be treated as sex discrimination. You must not take into account an employee's period of absence due to pregnancy-related illness when making a decision about her employment.
- Breastfeeding is now explicitly protected and needs to be brought to the attention of the providers of e.g. our catering services, or any on-campus retail outlets. Race (no change)
- For the purposes of the Act 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Religion or belief (no change)
- In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes no religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or no belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief.

Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief. This characteristic includes having a religion or belief and not having one. It does not include political beliefs, scientific beliefs, or supporting football teams. However, there has been a tribunal case where a belief in man-made climate change met the threshold of the belief being 'cogent, serious and worthy of respect in a democratic society.'

We have to be mindful of this threshold when determining if a person's belief falls under the protection of the Equality Act. It is important to note that minority religions are treated with the same consideration and respect as more prominent religions.

Sex (no change)

- Both men and women are protected under the Act. Sexual orientation (no change)
- The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people