



# Equal Opportunities Policy

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**Date Agreed:**

**Written By:** Ricky Emms

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**Signed Head teacher:**

**Signed Chair of Governors:**

**The Priors prides itself in providing equal opportunities for all of its employees, children and parents regardless of disability, religion, sexual orientation, culture, gender, ethnic origin, colour, class or age.**

This policy aims to:

- Offer equal opportunities regardless of race, culture, gender, academic ability, physical ability or class.
- Provide an environment free from social, sexual or cultural prejudice for all members of our school community.
- Achieve an environment in which members of the school community can be respected as individuals and in which the varied experiences of the community can enrich the life of the school.

**Principles:** The Priors School is committed to Equal Opportunities and Inclusion. We aim to engender a sense of community and belonging, and to offer new opportunities to learners who may have experienced previous difficulties. We model Equal Opportunities and Inclusion in our staffing policies, relationships with parents/carers and the community in order to meet legislative requirements as laid down in the Equality Act 2010.

Equal Opportunities is the responsibility of the whole school community and must be reflected throughout the organisation of the school and be addressed in the taught and hidden curriculum. The school ensures that staff expectations of different race/religious belief groups are no different.

All staff, governors, parents/guardians and pupils regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, gender and socio-economic background, are welcome and will be encouraged to participate in the life of the school.

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act to eliminate discrimination and to promote good race relations.

**Actions:**

- Statements of equality dimensions and opportunity will be printed in all relevant school documentation e.g. school prospectus, vision statement, policies and in the staff handbook.
- Governors, staff and pupils will receive training in relevant aspects of equal opportunities to ensure their ability to actively support this policy.
- Parents and pupils will receive information detailing the school's rules identifying expectations of behaviour.
- The school will make all reasonable effort to ensure that meetings are accessible and convenient for all and take into account particular needs and requirements, e.g. physical access, child care and interpreter support.
- The school will include in its annual report information concerning the arrangements made for the admission of disabled pupils; the steps taken to prevent disabled pupils from being treated less favourably than other pupils; the facilities provided to assist access to the school by disabled pupils. The school buildings have been inspected for access and the plans have

been accepted by the governing body. Progress in this area is documented in the School's S.E.N.D. action plan.

What follows are the different areas in which the school will pay particular attention to ensuring that there is Equal Opportunity for all.

### **Equal Opportunities - Multi-Cultural:**

It is our school policy:

- To incorporate a balanced view of the world through a multi-cultural approach.
- To recognise that our pupils are world citizens who will meet a wide variety of cultures throughout their lives.

Children need to develop a respect, knowledge and understanding for other cultures, religions and ways of life if they are to play a positive and effective role in our increasingly global society. A knowledge and respect for others goes part way to challenging inequality.

Strategies to ensure that an inter-cultural out-look permeates the life of the school

- Celebrate the diversity of language, culture and religious belief in our school and the wider society
- Celebrate world festivals and note the achievements of people from all cultures around the world
- Purchase of resources will reflect the diverse range of cultures and religions in our society
- Display around the school will celebrate the diversity of cultures around the school
- Recognise the valuable resources our children, parents, staff and community visitors can bring to our inter-cultural education

### **Equal Opportunities - Gender**

It is our school policy:

To ensure no discrimination takes place at The Priors School on the grounds of gender, transgender or sexual orientation.

To create a school community in which men and women, boys and girls from all faiths and cultures are valued equally, while their different backgrounds, experiences and needs are respected.

To establish an ethos of equality, and adopt strategies to achieve equality of opportunity for both sexes.

In our society a large number of differences which have been conventionally associated with sex are actually socially constructed and are maintained through social pressure. Sexism is the term used to describe discrimination on the basis of gender; where the operation of forces in society, (beliefs, attitudes, behaviours) can allot benefits and privileges, as well as curb and limit preferences and opportunities, on the basis of a person's gender rather than on the basis of inclination or ability. Sexism and gender stereotyping can be offensive and is equally damaging to boys and

girls. Conforming to gender roles can inhibit the abilities, performance and aspirations of both boys and girls by restricting their choices.

Our school is committed to sexual equality and seeks to counter sexism and gender/ transgender or sexuality stereotyping in order to extend the choices and horizons of all staff and children so that they can discover who they are, what they like doing and achieve their full potential at whatever they attempt.

**In order to achieve this we will employ the following strategies:**

Boys and girls will have access to the full range of educational activities and equal entitlement to all resources.

Raise awareness amongst the staff of the dangers of gender role stereotyping and of procedures and principles to counter it.

Encourage all children to extend their horizons and make children aware of all the opportunities available to them.

Recognise that access itself will not lead to equality: we may need to intervene strongly. For example some girls given the opportunity to build with construction kits may not succeed with them to their full potential unless they are actively taught how to use them – a procedure with which many boys may already be very familiar.

- Monitor the use of school equipment in terms of access, time available and teaching (Research shows that boys demand and receive more of a teacher's time than girls).
- Use positive role models and ensure the achievements and contributions of both men and women throughout history, art, literature and science are incorporated appropriately into the curriculum. It needs to be presented as a natural part of the curriculum and not an appendage.
- Teachers have equally high expectations of both boys and girls.
- Be aware of word use, the power of language and its implications; for example 'policeman' or 'good girl'.
- Use, where appropriate, discussion, drama, role play to explore different roles: empathy and understanding of others.
- Build in activities to the curriculum which challenge limiting assumptions, extend horizons and explore new avenues of thought. For example, write a fairy story with characters who have stepped outside of their stereotyped role; active, strong clever princesses.
- Make equal demands on both sexes, for example during discussion and class questioning.
- Challenge inappropriate stereotypes, sexist comment and inappropriate statements about sex roles: for example "boys are better at..."
- Ensure school texts and resources do not promote sex stereotyping. We recognise the more than occasional limitations of commercial material and budget limitations but will actively endeavour to purchase material which promotes positive role models for both sexes.
- If stereotyped images or comments do occur in curriculum materials, e.g. fiction books they should be discussed with the children.
- Ensure staff are seen as positive role models.
- Ensure we employ the very best available staff for all roles in school regardless of their gender (or transgender) and / or sexuality.
- Monitor our own practice, beliefs and expectations through self-evaluation. Do we expect girls to be more.....?

- Consider carefully, and act on, equality issues in the organisation and management of learning. We recognise that the achievement of equality will be complex and subtle.

### **Equal Opportunities - Race:**

It is our school policy to:

- Provide a curriculum which emphasises respect and understanding of all cultures and religions.
- Provide a curriculum which enables children to develop skills to recognise and challenge inequality.
- Ensure a consistent approach to tackle racism in all its forms and manage racist incidents.

Racism refers to the consequence of placing social significance in concepts of race which have as their outcome the disadvantage of individuals and groups. Racism may be exhibited in many forms including physical assault, derogatory name calling, verbal abuse, insults, jokes, graffiti, provocative behaviour, (including wearing badges or bringing literature to school,) ridicule of an individual for cultural or religious difference and refusal to co-operate with others because of their ethnic origins. Racism includes all practices and procedures that discriminate against others because of their race colour, culture, nationality and national or ethnic origins (including religion and language) whether on an individual, institutional or cultural level. Discrimination is defined as action or behaviour which disadvantages a group of people.

Racism can take many forms from direct harassment (e.g. racist name calling physical bullying) to indirect and institutional racism (e.g. discriminatory admissions criteria and allocation to teaching groups). Racism can occur between any ethnic group.

In order to fulfil the above, the following types of behaviour will not be tolerated:

- 1) Provocative behaviour, i.e. wearing of any racist badges or insignia.
- 2) The use of verbal abuse or name calling of a racist nature.
- 3) The encouragement of others to behave in a racist manner.
- 4) The ridiculing of an individual for cultural differences.
- 5) The telling of racist jokes or stories.
- 6) The exclusion of others because of their culture, ethnicity or race.

### **Equal Opportunities - Ability:**

It is our school policy:

- To recognise good effort and attitudes regardless of academic achievement.
- To allow all children access to equipment, resources and teacher time regardless of their academic achievements.
- To value all efforts and achievements of children in all areas of the curriculum.

We believe that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background, including those identified as having special educational needs. All children have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and to be fully included in all aspects of

school life. The Priors sees the inclusion of children identified as having special educational needs as an equal opportunities issue.

This does not mean that we will treat all learners in the same way, but that we will respond to learners in ways which take account of their varied life experiences and needs.

We recognise that pupils learn at different rates and that there are many factors affecting achievement, including ability, emotional state, age and maturity. We believe that many pupils, at some time in their school career, may experience difficulties which affect their learning, and we recognise that these may be long or short term.

At The Priors we aim to identify these needs as they arise and provide teaching and learning contexts which enable every child to achieve to his or her full potential.

We pay particular attention to the provision for and the achievement of different groups of learners. Every child has an entitlement to a positive, helpful learning environment, with carefully planned work which matches individual needs, in order that they may reach their potential. This will be through differentiated planning by class teachers and support staff as appropriate.

Within each class, teaching and learning styles and organisation will be flexible to ensure effective learning. Grouping to support children identified with additional needs will be part of this process.

Those pupils recorded as having a special educational need will have a specific Individual Education Plan drawn up. This document forms an individual record for the child and contains information about school based observation and assessment, a summary of the child's additional needs and action taken to meet them, including any advice sought from outside agencies.

Pupil who are withdrawn for individual or small group lessons do not lose access to the curriculum. These lessons are organized on a rotational basis to ensure this.

#### **Equal Opportunities - Class:**

It is our school policy:

- That children should not be treated in any way differently because of an assumed social class.
- That assumptions will not be made as regards class difference.

#### **Equal Opportunities - Physical Disability:**

It is our school policy that:

- Children should not be treated in any way differently to others due to their individual physical disabilities and needs.
- A provision should be made for the individual special needs of any disabled children within our school community.
- A physically disabled child has a right to take part in all activities within the school environment in so far as their individual disability allows them to do so.

### **5. Managing Equality in Practice**

1. **Admission** - The school follows the Governing Body Admission Policies that do not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as criteria for admission.
2. **Registration** - Pupils' names will be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Pupils will be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.
3. **Discrimination** -All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable. Racist symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden in school. Staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes. In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria. Parents should be aware of the school's commitment to equal opportunities. Incidents will be recorded.
4. **Language** - The school views linguistic diversity positively. Pupils and staff must feel that their natural language is valued.
5. **Resources** will be provided for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of sex, ability or ethnic origin. Current resources and new acquisitions will be monitored by Heads of Departments to ensure the promotion of a positive image regarding race, gender and special need. The library resources are regularly reviewed to ensure they include books that reflect the range of special educational needs issues and come from a disability equality perspective.
6. **The P.S.H.E.C** curriculum will help to promote a positive image of all members of society, with particular reference to race/religious belief, gender, physical ability and special need.
7. **Displays** reflect a positive image of race/religious belief, gender, physical ability and special need. All children are given the opportunity to contribute to display throughout the school and their contributions are valued.
8. **The Schools Monitoring and Evaluating System** for regularly observing, assessing and recording the progress of children is used to identify children who are not progressing satisfactorily and who may have additional needs. Whole school monitoring and evaluation procedures will include sampling of work and observations. Target setting for all pupils takes place daily, half-termly and within each Key Stage.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES SPECIFIC TO STAFF**

The Priors School is an equal opportunities employer. The School prides itself in providing equal opportunities for all of its employees and children regardless of disability, religion, sexual orientation, culture, gender, ethnic origin, colour, class or age.

### **6. Protected Characteristics**

No employee or prospective employee will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic, because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic or because they are associated with someone who has a Protected Characteristic, in particular but not only, in relation to:

- Recruitment and selection
- Promotion, transfer and training opportunities
- Benefits, terms and conditions of employment
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures

- Termination of employment including redundancies
- Conduct at work
- Procedures ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to admission and assessment of students.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff must treat visitors, pupils, parents, suppliers and former members of staff.

## **Implementation**

The School with the assistance of the staff will:

- Break down any barriers to equality of opportunity which may prevent staff members realising their full potential or accessing benefit
- Advertise vacancies and ensure job selection criteria are appropriate for the job.
- Promptly and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment, taking appropriate action where necessary.
- Ensure that all members of staff are fully informed and trained on this Policy.
- Monitor the composition of the School and the effects of its recruitment practices.
- Existing procedures are reviewed and examined to ensure they are not discriminatory in their operation.
- Language used in official communication reflects the letter and spirit of the policy

## **Recruitment and Selection**

The Priors School is committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which represents the population within our recruitment areas in terms of race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, age and disability (together known as “Protected Characteristics”).

Please refer to the School’s **Recruitment and Selection Policy** for further details.

## **Disability**

If you are disabled or become disabled, the School encourages you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a position at the School. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as are required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability. For example, where written tests are used, alternative arrangements will be made for visually impaired applicants.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact the head teacher to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The head teacher may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments and you may be required to give your consent to a report being produced about your state of health and ability to perform your duties. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will



explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible. Once an adjustment has been made its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.

The School will make such adjustments to work arrangements or School premises as are reasonable to enable a disabled staff member to carry out his or her duties. This will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign and flexible hours. Where during the course of their employment a disabled member of staff recognises their need for a reasonable adjustment to be made to work arrangements or School premises, he or she should discuss this requirement with the head teacher.

### **Harassment & Bullying Policy**

Harassment of any kind is not accepted within the School as detailed in the staff code of conduct.

### **Monitoring of the policy**

Equality of opportunity permeates the whole School and will be reviewed regularly. We recognise it is all too easy for the structure of institutions to result in 'inequality by default'. We therefore commit ourselves to take positive steps to examine our policies and practice and to change them where necessary.

The effectiveness of the above policy and our practice will therefore be evaluated every two years. This will be done every two years by the Governors in consultation with the whole school community.