

HONYWOOD SCHOOL

Equality Information and Objectives Policy

2026 / 2027

Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010

Approved by the Local Governing Body	September 2026
Equality information reviewed	Annually (next: September 2027)
Equality objectives reviewed	At least every four years (next: September 2030)
Operational lead	Headteacher (James Saunders)
Read in conjunction with	SAT Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy; Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy; Behaviour Policy; Accessibility Plan; SEND Policy; Admissions Policy

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1. Our commitment to equality

Honywood School, part of Saffron Academy Trust, is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, celebrating and valuing diversity, and creating an inclusive community in which everyone is treated with fairness, dignity and respect. Staff, workers, volunteers, learners, parents and carers, applicants and governors will receive equal treatment regardless of any protected characteristic.

We want every member of our community to feel safe, welcome and able to achieve their potential. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation, and we actively challenge prejudice, stereotyping and bias, including discriminatory language and behaviour, wherever they occur. This policy sets out how we meet our legal duties and how equality is embedded in the daily life of the school.

2. Aims: the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

As a public body, the school must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out in the Equality Act 2010. In carrying out its functions, the school has due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard to advancing equality of opportunity involves removing or minimising disadvantages connected to a protected characteristic, taking steps to meet particular needs, and encouraging participation where it is disproportionately low. This policy applies to all current and prospective members of the school community. It complements the Saffron Academy Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which sets out the Trust's employment-related commitments.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is written to comply with the following legislation and statutory duties, and has regard to the relevant guidance:

- **Equality Act 2010** creates the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- **Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011** requires the school to publish information demonstrating compliance with the PSED (updated at least annually) and to publish measurable equality objectives (at least every four years).
- **Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023** in force from 26 October 2024, this places a proactive duty on the school, as an employer, to take reasonable steps to prevent the sexual harassment of employees.
- **Education and Inspections Act 2006** the duty to promote community cohesion.
- **Human Rights Act 1998** the international standards in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Equality Act 2010, Schedule 10** the duty to have an accessibility plan for disabled pupils.

The policy also has regard to the following guidance:

- DfE departmental advice, 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools';
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) technical guidance for schools in England
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including its expectations on prejudice-based bullying and on supporting gender-questioning children;

- the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) guidance;
- 'Behaviour in schools' and the 'Suspension and permanent exclusion' statutory guidance;
- the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice.

Following the Supreme Court judgment in *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers* [2025] UKSC 16, which clarified that the terms 'sex', 'man' and 'woman' in the Equality Act 2010 refer to biological sex, the EHRC is revising its technical guidance for schools (under consultation during 2026). The school has regard to the judgment now and will adopt the updated EHRC guidance once it is finalised.

4. The protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of nine protected characteristics. The school ensures that no learner, member of staff, applicant or other member of the community is discriminated against, harassed or victimised because of:

Protected characteristic	Protected characteristic
Age	Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
Disability	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
Gender reassignment	Sex
Marriage and civil partnership	Sexual orientation
Pregnancy and maternity	

Protection also extends to discrimination by association (being treated less favourably because of someone else's protected characteristic) and discrimination by perception (being treated less favourably because others think a person has a protected characteristic). While 'age' and 'marriage and civil partnership' do not apply to the provision of education to pupils, they apply to the school as an employer. Beyond its legal duties, the school is committed to an inclusive culture that values every individual, and treats prejudice against any group, including on the basis of characteristics not listed in the Act, such as socio-economic background or caring responsibilities, as unacceptable.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body, on behalf of Saffron Academy Trust, has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with equality law. It ensures that equality information and objectives are published and communicated; that the equality information is updated at least annually and the objectives reviewed at least every four years; that an equality link governor is appointed; and that day-to-day responsibility is delegated to the Headteacher.

The equality link governor

- meets each year with the designated staff lead for equality (and other relevant staff) to discuss issues and how they are being addressed;
- is familiar with the relevant legislation and this policy, and attends appropriate equality and diversity training;
- reports back to the full Local Governing Body on any issues.

The Headteacher

- promotes knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and learners;
- appoints a designated member of staff for equality;
- monitors progress against the objectives and reports to governors; and holds overall responsibility for equality training.

The designated staff lead for equality

- supports the Headteacher in promoting understanding of the equality objectives;
- meets annually with the equality link governor to raise and discuss issues;
- helps identify staff training needs and supports the delivery of training.

All staff

All staff are expected to have regard to this policy, to work towards its objectives, to set an appropriate standard of behaviour and lead by example, and to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of induction, with refresher training thereafter, and challenge and report discrimination, harassment or victimisation, whether directed at a learner, a colleague or any other person. Individuals can be personally liable for acts of unlawful discrimination, and serious acts of harassment may be criminal offences. Any questions about this policy, or suggestions for improving it, can be raised with the Headteacher.

6. Eliminating discrimination

The following forms of conduct are prohibited under the Equality Act 2010 and under this policy:

- **Direct discrimination** - treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** - applying a provision, criterion or practice that puts people who share a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and which cannot be objectively justified.
- **Harassment** - unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic (including sexual harassment) that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation** - treating someone badly because they have made, or supported, a complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- **Disability discrimination** - including direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, and a failure to make reasonable adjustments to remove disadvantage caused by a disability.

Preventing sexual harassment — our proactive duty

Under the Worker Protection Act, the school takes reasonable steps to prevent the sexual harassment of its employees, including by third parties.

We assess risk, set clear expectations through the Staff Behaviour Policy, provide training, and ensure staff know how to report concerns and that reports are taken seriously.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence involving children are addressed through the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy.

Where relevant, the school's other policies reinforce the importance of avoiding discrimination and prohibited conduct. Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, and this is recorded in meeting minutes where discussed.

7. Advancing equality of opportunity

In line with DfE guidance, the school advances equality of opportunity by removing or minimising disadvantages connected to a protected characteristic (for example, supporting learners with disabilities, or

those experiencing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying); taking steps to meet particular needs (for example, enabling learners to observe religious obligations); and encouraging full participation in the life of the school. To do this, the school:

- records and analyses attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour and exclusion data by relevant characteristic each year to identify strengths and areas for action;
- implements and evaluates actions in response, and publishes appropriate information;
- monitors participation in enrichment, leadership and the wider curriculum to ensure it is open to all; and
- records and acts on any issues associated with particular protected characteristics that could affect learners.

8. Fostering good relations and community cohesion

The school fosters good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and promotes community cohesion, by:

- promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of cultures, faiths and lifestyles through the curriculum - including RE, PSHE and RSHE (through the LS5 programme), assemblies, and cross-curricular work such as literature from a range of cultures in English;
- holding assemblies on relevant issues, with learners encouraged to lead and external speakers invited to contribute;
- working with the local community, including local faith groups, and organising trips and activities that build understanding;
- promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
- marking national events and themed weeks that promote equality and diversity, for example Black History Month, anti-bullying week, and campaigns against racism and prejudice-based bullying; and
- acting early to address any tensions between groups of learners, and working with parents and carers to promote knowledge and understanding of difference.

9. Admissions

The school accepts applications from, and admits learners irrespective of, any protected characteristic, and does not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered. Every application is treated fairly and open-mindedly. The Admissions Policy reflects this approach and is consistent with this policy.

10. Learners: equal access to school life

The school promotes equal opportunity in the provision of education, benefits, facilities and services to all learners, irrespective of any protected characteristic. Learners are given fair access to all aspects of school life, including: how the curriculum is taught, and academic and vocational options; tests and examinations; school uniform; extra-curricular activities and clubs; school trips; facilities such as the library, IT and dining areas; work experience and placements; and careers education, information, advice and guidance.

11. Disability and accessibility

The school encourages anyone who is disabled, or becomes disabled, to tell us about their needs so that we can offer appropriate support, and we make reasonable adjustments to remove disadvantages for disabled learners, staff and visitors. We monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place

anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage and, where necessary and practical, take reasonable steps to improve access. Our Accessibility Plan sets out how we increase access to the curriculum, improve the physical environment, and improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs is set out in the SEND Policy and delivered in line with the SEND Code of Practice.

12. Sex, single-sex provision and gender-questioning children

The school treats every child and adult with dignity and respect, and does not tolerate bullying or harassment related to sex, gender reassignment or sexual orientation. We recognise this is an area of evolving law and guidance, and we act on current legal advice and statutory guidance, taking a measured, child-centred and safeguarding-led approach.

- **The meaning of 'sex'.** Following *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers* [2025] UKSC 16, the terms 'sex', 'man' and 'woman' in the Equality Act 2010 are understood to refer to biological sex. Where the school provides single-sex facilities or services (for example toilets, changing rooms, or certain activities), it does so in accordance with the law and updated guidance from the EHRC as it is finalised.
- **Supporting gender-questioning children.** Where a child is questioning their gender, the school responds sensitively and in the child's best interests, in line with the DfE's guidance on supporting gender-questioning children and the expectations in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*. As a general principle, parents and carers are involved and decisions are not taken without them unless doing so would place the child at risk of harm. Requests are considered individually and cautiously, having regard to safeguarding, the welfare of the child and of other children, and the school's legal duties. Any safeguarding concern is managed under the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
- **Curriculum and respect.** Our RSHE and wider curriculum teach respect for all, are age- and stage-appropriate, factual and balanced, and avoid presenting contested matters as settled fact.

13. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made, and considers the impact of decisions on people who share a protected characteristic. For example, when planning a school trip or activity, staff consider whether it conflicts with religious observances, is accessible to learners with disabilities, and provides equivalent and appropriate facilities. The school keeps a written record showing it has actively considered its equality duties for trips and activities; this is recorded alongside the risk assessment by the member of staff organising the activity.

14. Prejudice-related incidents and bullying

The school does not tolerate prejudice-related bullying, harassment or discriminatory language, including racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist, misogynistic, disablist or faith-based abuse. All such incidents are recorded, monitored and addressed under the Behaviour Policy, and, where they raise a safeguarding concern, under the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and (for sexual harassment and violence) the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy. We support both those who are harmed and those who display unacceptable attitudes, aiming to change behaviour, and we challenge all incidents of hatred or discrimination, working with the police and Prevent where appropriate. Learners who direct discrimination or harassment at staff are dealt with through the Behaviour Policy.

15. Suspensions and exclusions

The school does not discriminate against any learner in respect of a protected characteristic in any decision to suspend or permanently exclude. We monitor suspension and exclusion data by characteristic to identify and

address any disproportionality. The Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy reflects this approach, is applied in line with the DfE statutory guidance, and is consistent with this policy.

16. Breaches of this policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy. Any breach is recorded and reported to the Headteacher, who decides on an appropriate course of action. Breaches by learners are normally dealt with under the Behaviour Policy; it is always made clear that discriminatory behaviour is unacceptable. Breaches by staff are dealt with under the Trust's discipline and dismissal procedures and may, in serious cases, lead to dismissal.

17. Publishing, monitoring and review

To meet the specific duties under the Equality Act, the school publishes information to demonstrate how it complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and publishes specific and measurable equality objectives. Both are available on the school website. The school collects and analyses quantitative and qualitative data including attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour and exclusions, broken down by relevant characteristics (such as disability and SEND, ethnicity, sex, and religion or belief), and uses it to inform action. This policy is informed by the views of stakeholders, who are reminded of their right to suggest improvements. The equality information is reviewed at least annually, and the policy and objectives are reviewed and approved by the Local Governing Body at least every four years, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

18. Our equality objectives 2026–2030

Our equality objectives take into account all the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and other factors that could disadvantage individuals in our community. They are published in keeping with the specific duties and are specific and measurable.

Objective 1 — Remove barriers linked to protected characteristics.

We will identify and remove barriers faced by individuals as a result of their protected characteristics, working with stakeholders and external agencies to address individual needs.

Objective 2 — Reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities.

We will maintain a reasonable-adjustment agreement for every member of staff with a disability, so their needs are met and any disadvantage is addressed.

Objective 3 — A representative workforce and governing body.

Over the period to 2030, we will work to increase the diversity of teachers, support staff and governors so that learners are better able to see themselves represented, monitoring progress annually.

Objective 4 — High standards of respect; discrimination recorded and addressed.

We will maintain high standards of behaviour and respect, record and monitor all incidents of discrimination, eradicate discriminatory language, support both those harmed and those who display unacceptable attitudes, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions — working with the police and Prevent where appropriate.

Objective 5 — A curriculum that celebrates diversity and community.

We will ensure the curriculum makes explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity and a cohesive community, promotes diverse role models, gives learners and staff opportunities to engage with the wider community, and embeds the fundamental British values, supported by national events and themed weeks.

Objective 6 — Timely intervention to overcome barriers to learning.

We will ensure appropriate intervention is in place to overcome barriers to learning for all learners, with purposeful means of evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and support.

19. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and documents: the Saffron Academy Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; the Accessibility Plan; risk assessments and Equality Impact Assessments; the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; the Responding to Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy; the Behaviour Policy; the Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy; the SEND Policy; the Admissions Policy; the Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct); and the Sex and Relationship Education Policy (RSHE).