



HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

# **SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY AND SCHEME**

February 2022

This is a Statutory Policy required by all Academies under the  
Equality Act 2010

Agreed by Trustees : 1 March 2022

## Introduction

This policy represents the response of the Governing Body and the school to meeting the Equality Act 2010. The policy sets out our practice and will have due regard for the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity for students, staff and others using the school facilities.
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Our Single Equality Policy follows Hertfordshire County Council guidance on the actions that schools need to take to comply with equality and diversity legislation, and our definitions align with their guidance. It will be updated and reviewed annually. Equality objectives will be reviewed and published every four years.

## Vision and Values

Hitchin Girls' School is committed to giving every student a broad education and helping to develop their individual talents to the full. We seek to maintain traditional values in work and behaviour and our aim is to provide a stimulating, problem solving and technologically-rich approach to learning. This will encourage and support students and members of the wider community in the full development of their intellectual, practical and interpersonal skills and develop those qualities of character to enable them to contribute effectively to modern society. We believe that this can best be achieved within a firm yet flexible, caring environment with frequent contact and close co-operation between parents and the school.

The core values that underpin our work are:

1. We respect our students as individuals who have the right to enjoy equal access to a rich, relevant curriculum, high quality learning experiences and enrichment activities.
2. All our students, parents and carers are respected as individuals of equal value whatever their age, race, religion, disability, sex or gender, background, sexual orientation, age and ability.
3. The school strives to give support to individuals and groups of students who require something extra to meet their needs.
4. We regard parents as an integral part of our community and involve them as much as possible in the joint enterprise of making learning exciting and positive for all.
5. Our school policies, procedures and activities recognise, respect and value differences of life experience, outlook and background. We will manage these in ways to seek to maintain every individual's dignity and rights regardless of their background. We will promote positive attitudes to all members of our wider community, fostering mutual respect and good relations between us all.
6. Hitchin Girls' School is an outward-looking community which seeks opportunities to involve the local, national and global community as much as possible.
7. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development and ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.

## School Context

### The characteristics of our school

Hitchin Girls' School is an 11-18 community school for girls. The school is about average in size and includes approximately 310 students in the Sixth Form. In addition, both male and female students from our Consortium partners receive part of their education here. The great majority of students are white, enriched by a significant minority (25.4%) of other ethnic backgrounds. Most come from the Indian sub-continent (10.7%) and of these about 5.9% are Indian and the rest Bangladeshi or Pakistani. Most of the other ethnic minority students are mixed white and Asian (2.2%), white-black Caribbean (3.3%), black or black British (2.9%) and dual heritage (4.7%) from a variety of backgrounds, including Asian and European. The proportion of ethnic minority students reflects the local community and is above average for a shire county.

The school serves a market town and outlying villages. One ward within the school's catchment area is identified as being in the bottom 25% of the social deprivation index - Oughton Ward. A small number of students also travel across the border from Luton, Bedfordshire and a few from neighbouring towns, mainly Letchworth. Whilst Hitchin is a relatively prosperous town there are a number of areas where families are significantly less prosperous from which we welcome a number of students.

9.2% of students are recorded as SEND monitoring (K) and there are 8 students with an Education, Health and Care Plan. The school draws from around 34 feeder primary schools.

Characteristic	Total	Breakdown (number and %)
Number of pupils	1322	Single Sex – Female
Number of teaching staff	85	73% Female 27% Male
Number of Trustees	19	43% Female 57% Male
Religious character		None
Attainment on entry		Above average although students are admitted across the full ability range.
Mobility of school population		Low
Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium	10.7%	
Disabled staff	None	
Disabled pupils (SEN/LDD)		Shown with EHCP/School Action/School Action Plus
Disabled pupils (no SEN)	0.8%	
BME pupils	26.%	
BME staff	14,5%	
Characteristic	Total	Breakdown (number and %)
Pupils who speak English as an additional language	15.3%	
Average attendance rate	94.5%	
Significant partnerships, extended provision, etc.		Hitchin Post 16 Consortium and Lead School for North Herts Teaching Alliance (NHTA)

Characteristic	Total	Breakdown (number and %)
Awards, accreditations, specialist status		Specialist Status – Science Arts Award Geography Mark Music Mark International School Award Careers Education and Guidance Award World Class Quality Schools Mark

The school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice. Our Charter of Respect reflects our commitment to challenging and eliminating discrimination regarding disability.

Within this single sex school we work to promote gender equality and are committed to providing opportunities for our students to succeed in all areas of the curriculum. Our Charter of Respect already reflects our commitment to challenging and eliminating stereotypical views.

Our Charter of Respect also reflects our commitment to challenging and eliminating discrimination regarding race.

This scheme should be read in conjunction with the School Accessibility Plan, the Anti-Bullying Policy and the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

## Legal Background

Our school is committed to meeting its public sector statutory duties as detailed below. We understand that the duties apply to service delivery and employment and staff management as well as policy development and implementation.

General Duty under the Equality Act 2010:

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard for the need to:

- **eliminate discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this 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.

The Specific Duties of the Act enable schools to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The specific duties require schools to:

- Publish annually information quantitative and qualitative, showing compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- To set every four years one or more specific measurable equality objectives that further the aims of the equality duty.

## Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects pupils from discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics. The protected characteristics for school provisions are:

- age
- disability

- race
- sex
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy, maternity
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation

### **Disability**

At Hitchin Girls' School we implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees , supported by the Headteacher and staff, is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this scheme.

### **Commitment to implementation**

The Trust Board are responsible for:

- ensuring the Single Equality Policy is followed and the Action Plan is monitored annually.
- striving to ensure that the membership of the Trust Board reflects the diversity of the communities served by the School.
- ensuring that they receive and respond to regular monitoring information on staff via the Personnel Committee.
- ensure that they receive and respond to reports on recruitment, retention, achievement and success rates for students from different backgrounds via the Admissions and Curriculum and Performance committees.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- taking the lead on equality issues across the school.
- ensuring that the Action Plan is delivered effectively.
- ensuring that procedures for the recruitment and promotion of staff reflect best practice in equality of opportunity.

The Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that:

- school policies are assessed for their impact in relation to equality.
- monitoring information is collected and analysed.
- targets are set for the achievement of students.
- support is available for students where needed, based on the analysis of data.
- curriculum planning, teaching and learning methods, classroom organisation, assessment procedures and educational visits take account of the need to promote equality.
- relevant procedures are in place to deal with incidences where the policy is breached by either students or staff.
- procedures for the recording of behaviour incidents capture those which are deemed to be in breach of the equality scheme.
- publicity materials reflect our policy and promote appropriate and positive messages about diversity.

All staff are responsible for delivering the scheme both as employees and as it relates to their area of work.

### **Commitment to review**

The school equality scheme will be aligned with the School Improvement Plan. Its implementation will be monitored within the school's self-evaluation and other review processes.

### **Commitment to publish**

We are committed to sharing information about our equality scheme as broadly as appropriate.

The school equality objectives will be aligned with the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and thus shared with all staff and trustees . We will also add the objectives to the Appendix of this policy and this will be published annually to parents via the school website. Its implementation will be monitored within the school's own self-evaluation review process.

Through publishing this information, we will ensure that trustees , staff, students and parents are aware of the value that we place upon equality and diversity and our commitments under this policy. In addition to this, the school has in place the following documents providing further evidence of our compliance to Equality Duty:

- SEND policy
- Relationships, Sex and Education policy
- Regular data checks by the Leadership Group
- Prospectus
- School Accessibility Plan
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy.

### **Commitment to action**

#### **Our Trustees will:**

- Provide leadership and drive for the development and regular review of the school's equality and other policies.
- Provide leadership and ensure the accountability of the Headteacher and senior staff for the communication and implementation of school policies.
- Highlight good practice and promote it throughout the school and wider community.
- Provide appropriate role models for all managers, staff and pupils.
- Congratulate examples of good practice from the school and among individual managers, staff and pupils.
- Ensure a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents.
- Ensure that the school carries out the letter and the spirit of the statutory duties.

#### **The Headteacher and senior staff will:**

- Initiate and oversee the development and regular review of equality policies and procedures.
- Consult pupils, staff and stakeholders in the development and review of the policies.
- Ensure the effective communication of the policies to all pupils, staff and stakeholders.
- Ensure that managers and staff are trained as necessary to carry out the policies.
- Oversee the effective implementation of the policies.
- Hold line managers accountable for effective policy implementation.
- Provide appropriate role models for all managers, staff and pupils.
- Highlight good practice from departments, individual managers, staff and pupils.
- Provide mechanisms for the sharing of good practice.
- Ensure a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents.
- Ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties effectively.

#### **Line Managers will:**

- Respond to consultation requests by creating opportunities for pupils and staff to share their comments, suggestions and feedback, ensuring that all voices are heard.
- Implement the school's equality scheme, holding staff accountable for their behaviour and providing support and guidance as necessary.
- Be accountable for the behaviour of the staff team, individual members of staff and pupils.
- Use informal and formal procedures as necessary to deal with 'difficult' situations.
- Behave in accordance with the school's policies, leading by example.
- Respond appropriately to the behaviour of pupils and staff, as a whole, and individuals (praising/challenging as necessary).
- Contribute to managing the implementation of the school's equality scheme.

**All staff: teaching and non-teaching will:**

- Contribute to consultations and reviews.
- Raise issues with line managers which could contribute to policy review and development.
- Maintain awareness of the school's current equality policy and procedures.
- Implement the policy as it applies to staff and pupils.
- Behave with respect and fairness to all colleagues and pupils, carrying out the letter and spirit of the school's equality scheme.
- Provide a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents.
- Contribute to the implementation of the school's equality scheme.

Reports which review equality will be made to Trustees' Committees throughout the year e.g. examination results analysis at The Curriculum and Performance Committee, to include breakdown by ethnicity, EAL, disadvantage and SEND.

**Using information**

Our Equality Impact Assessment Process (EQIA's) help us to analyse whether what we are planning potentially has a differential impact on one or more particular group (either positively or negatively). EQIA's help us to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that positive duties are promoted.

Accordingly we will collect the following information:

- Information relating to incidents of bullying and harassment including those relating to racism, homophobia and disability.
- Data on the employment of all staff.
- Qualitative information from all employees via staff questionnaire.
- Behaviour4Learning data for all students.
- Information regarding interventions for all disabled students.
- Progression routes for all students.
- Parent, staff and student opinions via questionnaires.

## Appendix A

## Our School's Equality Priorities

## Key priorities for action

## Action Plan

Action	Start Date	Review Date	Led by	Progress
Review attendance data to identify if any prevalent groups are at greater risk of persistent absence. If significant groups exist then identify other measures that can be taken to improve attendance for that group	Spring Term 2022	July 2022, December 2022, Easter 2023	LCO	
Heads of Department to review continuously practice of staff and schemes of learning in order to ensure they promote equality by encouraging and supporting students to challenge prejudice, stereotyping and intolerance on the grounds of disability, gender, race age, religion or belief or sexual orientation or other form of diversity.	Summer Term 2022	Dec.2022	DHT, Line mgrs	
Continue to use the pupil premium funding to support target group of students with access to additional educational resources e.g. Electronic Tablets, 1-2-1 tutoring, peer mentoring and access to extra-curricular opportunities.	Jan 2022	June 2022, Sept 2022	SMI to April 2022; LCO from Easter 2022	
Work with other girls' schools locally to review practice around equality, LGBTQ and transgender issues and to re-establish the HGS Equality student group to provide support and information across the school community	Jan 2022	Easter 2022	HT, LCO	
For the Trust Board to seek to appoint Trustees from more diverse backgrounds, in line with the local community and the school population.	Sept 2021	At Trust board meetings (3x / year)	Chair of Trustees, Clerk	