



## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The policy/statement reflects the duty of all educational organisations to have updated and published their Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, to adhere to the Equality Act 2010.

This policy describes the way in which the school will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This Act replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. The policy will be applied to all staff and learners, in addition to any placement students and any volunteers working in the school.

Employees, learners, placement students and volunteers are made aware of the existence of this policy and where it can be accessed. This policy is reviewed annually.

The school agrees to:

- adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by not discriminating against learners, staff, placement students, volunteers or anyone involved in external agencies the organisation may be working with on the grounds of:
- sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.
- In addition, there will be no discrimination against:
  - pregnant females or new mothers
  - staff, learners or volunteers undergoing gender re-assignment
  - learners due to the behaviour of their parents and/or siblings

### Introduction:

Equal opportunities applies to all the children and adults connected to and involved with every aspect of the school. Parents, governors and all visitors to the school should be aware of the policy and all should feel able to reinforce it and improve practice wherever possible. Equal opportunities means being pro-active and involved, constantly evaluating situations, resources and attitudes. It is important not to make assumptions, to seek out appropriate information and ask direct, honest questions where necessary. As a school we need to share the commitment and rigorously uphold the equal opportunities policy within the school environment and through all extra-curricular activities.

Equal opportunity means extending the same rights to all with good manners and consultation.

Reviewed Autumn 2016

Next Review Autumn 2017

Many jokes are based on humour that exploits an individual's impairments. These are thoroughly offensive and should be challenged in the same way all racist, sexist and heterosexist jokes should be challenged. Avoiding this implies tacit agreement.

### EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY REGARDLESS OF GENDER

Equality of Opportunity regardless of the gender needs to be addressed pro-actively. Some children and adults may need enhanced opportunity to experience activities and situations that will broaden their talents and horizons. Activities, groupings and materials that perpetuate gender stereotypes should be identified and challenged. Opportunities for staff to further their professional development should be addressed in a fair and open manner appropriate to individual and school needs.

Girls and boys need equality of opportunity in order to develop and maximise their intellectual and social potential and achieve self-fulfilment in ways which may be denied to them because of traditional expectations of the social group with which they identify, or are identified.

This may require scrutiny of materials, resources and attitudes. Situations should be structured to ensure that both boys and girls have access to technology, cooking, play situations and a variety of sporting and leisure activities that reduce stereotyping. Domination of certain materials and toys by gender groups should be actively counter balanced to provide time and access for all.

### EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY REGARDLESS OF RACE, CULTURE AND CREED

Equality of opportunity regardless of race, culture and creed should be addressed by raising awareness and respect across the nationalities, backgrounds and religious beliefs. All areas of the curriculum and social life of the school will reflect and celebrate differences and similarities in people and their heritage. This will be reflected in things such as classroom materials, food, music, costumes, shared resources, festivals, invited visitors and celebrations.

There should be full recognition of the gift that a variety of cultures can bring to the school through their languages, literature art, music, customs and religions

Priory Woods school is committed to providing resources, materials and experiences that will enhance the environment for all. Multi-cultural input can be enhanced via themed assemblies and special weeks, a wider variety of music resources reflecting cultures and interests, and greater opportunity for staff to gain knowledge and information that would give accurate insight into varying cultures and backgrounds. Contracts with agencies representing diverse cultures and religions should be made and parents and families should be actively involved, as they are often our most readily accessible support and resource.

School meals should always meet dietary requirements and staff should always ensure that a child is only given the permitted food and drink. Where particular dress codes, hairstyles, hygiene practices or privacy requirements are made, every effort should be made to ensure these instructions are followed appropriately to the needs of the children.

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## EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY REGARDLESS OF ABILITY

Equality of opportunity regardless of ability will respect whatever the individual brings to us. It will encourage appropriate use of adults and their talents and how we use and develop them effectively for the benefit of the school. The children should be valued and respected for the progress and achievements they make at school and for just being themselves. Adults will need to be the facilitators for equal opportunities on behalf of the children. Priory Woods School especially wants the children to be given time and opportunity for:

- Indication of preference/choice. This applies to all areas of their school life, but especially during eating and drinking. Children should have time to sample flavours and textures, they should be given time and opportunity to develop skills giving them control in their lives. The curriculum and timetables should look to address this.
- Reaction and response that is respected and acknowledged by adults. Children need to have the time and opportunity to give responses and reactions that indicate their preferences, moods, emotions or needs. Adults in school need to key into these responses and reactions and respond appropriately, they need to share the information with all those that are involved with the child.
- Respect and dignity in all areas of their daily routines. Schools should not allow a child's physical or sensory problems to become a barrier to the appropriate level of physical contact or access to learning environments.
- Children who need special resources, equipment, support or curriculum input to enable them to access learning situations and make progress should have their needs met.
- Rooms and sessions for children who may have physical, visual or hearing difficulties should be structured accordingly. Children with visual impairments should be advised when they are going to be moved or touched. Clear facial expressions and body language should be used to ensure a child is looking at you, especially if there is any hearing impairment. When talking to a person who is in a wheelchair, it is important to physically get down to their eye-level.
- Children need to be talked to and reassured during all personal hygiene situations. The appropriate level of help should be offered, giving time and opportunity for independence whenever possible. Age, ability and development appropriateness for individuals should always be encouraged.

In all our work, we will seek to maintain the conditions most likely to facilitate learning for all pupils through:

- Provisions of appropriate information technology hardware, software and peripherals
- Appropriate use of positioning and mobility aids
- A total communication environment featuring signs, symbols and tactile cues
- Observance of therapeutic regimes - whether based in speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, drama therapy, music therapy or medication
- Implementation of strategies to alleviate sensory impairments consistent and sensitive application of programmes designed to moderate challenging behaviours
- A commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration and partnership with parents, fellow professionals, pupils and the community of which we are part
- Access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum, including the National Curriculum
- Recognition of achievements, to whatever level is significant and appropriate to the children

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### Recognition of achievement

Equal opportunities is a rights issue. When a person's rights are denied, their equality of opportunity is also denied. In the case of children with severe learning difficulties, who may also experience additional physical and sensory impairments, the potential for children's rights to be denied is even higher. This may take many forms, including making decisions on their behalf without proper consultation, or assuming that because a child's ability to understand is impaired it is therefore acceptable to talk about them as if they were not there and to assume that it is impossible to involve a child with severe learning difficulties in discussions about their own achievements.

Incidents denying any pupil, member of staff or placement student will be reported to the Head Teacher and recorded on CPOMs if it concerns a pupil. The appropriate action, apposite to the ability of the accused person, will be taken as necessary.