



Priory School

Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Signed: _____

Date:

Caroline Masih - Chair of Governors

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Statement of intent

Priory School is committed to promoting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals feel safe, valued and respected, and where everyone is able to contribute fully and be their authentic selves at work, feel psychologically safe, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. We recognise that working in a highly inclusive school brings emotional and relational demands, and we are committed to supporting staff wellbeing through compassionate leadership and trauma-informed practice. Trauma-informed practice for staff means recognising the emotional demands of school work and ensuring that leadership responses, supervision, workload decisions and wellbeing support are relational, respectful and avoid re-traumatisation.

Our approach is rooted in Priory's core values of **Hope, Trust, Curiosity and Opportunity**, and our core behaviours of **Kindness, Determination and Courage**. These values guide how we work together as colleagues and how we model inclusive behaviour for pupils and families. We expect all staff to treat one another with dignity and respect in all professional interactions.

We recognise that equity is not the same as equality. At Priory, we are committed to identifying and removing barriers to participation, progression and wellbeing by making reasonable adjustments, adapting processes and providing additional support where needed. This is particularly important in the context of our highly inclusive school community and the complex demands of SEND provision.

We value and seek to strengthen the diversity within our workforce. We are committed to anti-racism and to challenging discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping in all forms. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Anti-Racism Action Plan underpins this work and is reviewed regularly.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, Priory School has a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different groups

This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels within the school, including teachers, support staff, leaders, volunteers, trainees and agency workers.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023
- ACAS guidance on discrimination and harassment
- DfE guidance on equality in schools

This policy operates in conjunction with:

- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Teacher Appraisal Policy
- Support Staff Performance Management Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

2. Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Priory School has due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The school publishes equality information annually and equality objectives at least every four years.

3. Protected Characteristics

Priory School will not discriminate against staff or job applicants on the basis of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also recognise discrimination by association and perception.

4. Forms of discrimination

Unlawful discrimination may take the following forms:

- **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination:** applying a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages a group and cannot be objectively justified.
- **Harassment:** unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- **Victimisation:** treating someone unfavourably because they have made or supported a complaint under this policy.

5. Preventing Harassment and Sexual Harassment (Proactive Duty)

Priory School is committed to taking **reasonable steps to prevent harassment and sexual harassment** in the course of employment, including in work-related environments and events, and where relevant, by third parties. The school will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour from parents, pupils, visitors or external partners. Appropriate action will be taken in line with behaviour, safeguarding or access policies where necessary.

This includes:

- Promoting a culture of respect and professional conduct
- Clear reporting routes for concerns
- Timely investigation and action
- Training and awareness for staff and leaders
- Risk assessment of working environments and practices

Harassment or sexual harassment may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct and will be addressed in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

6. Recruitment, Selection and Progression

We will:

- Recruit on merit against fair and objective criteria
- Avoid stereotyping in job adverts and selection processes
- Ensure shortlisting and appointment decisions are fair and consistent
- Make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes
- Monitor workforce diversity and progression
- Use positive action where lawful and appropriate

7. Reasonable Adjustments, Disability and Wellbeing

Priory School recognises flexible working as an important inclusion tool, supporting carers, parents, faith observance and staff wellbeing, subject to operational requirements through:

- Making reasonable adjustments
- Considering flexible working arrangements
- Supporting access to occupational health where appropriate
- Creating an inclusive working environment
- Taking a compassionate, trauma-informed approach to staff wellbeing

8. Training, Development and Progression

We will ensure:

- Access to training and development is equitable
- Opportunities for progression are fair and transparent
- We will review progression and leadership representation data to identify and address potential barriers.
- Leaders are trained in inclusive leadership
- EDI awareness is part of professional development
- Leaders will be supported to apply compassionate and inclusive approaches within appraisal, performance management and capability processes.

9. Bullying, Harassment and Complaints

Staff who experience or witness discrimination, bullying or harassment are encouraged to raise concerns through:

- Informal routes
- Line managers or SLT
- Formal grievance procedures
- Whistleblowing routes (where appropriate)

Concerns will be treated seriously, sensitively and without victimisation. Where possible, concerns will be handled confidentially. Retaliation against any individual who raises or supports a concern under this policy will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

10. Breaches of this policy

Breaches of this policy will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal in cases of gross misconduct.

11. Monitoring and review

The Governing Board and SLT will monitor:

- Recruitment and shortlisting diversity data
- Promotion and leadership representation
- Retention and turnover trends

- Absence patterns
- Staff wellbeing survey findings
- Themes arising from grievances or complaints

Workforce data will be reviewed at least annually, with key themes reported to Governors. Where patterns of disproportionality are identified, appropriate action will be agreed.

Appendix A: Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

The definitions used in this appendix are based on the Equality Act 2010, the full text of which is available [here](#).

Age: The Act protects people of all ages; however, differential treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

Disability: The Act protects people who are disabled; the Act defines this as someone who has 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.

Gender reassignment: The Act protects transgender people. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected, so a person who does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered by these protections.

Marriage and civil partnership: The Act protects people who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.

Pregnancy and maternity: The Act protects people against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which they are entitled.

Race: The Act protects people of all races; the Act's definition of race includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief: The Act protects people of any religion, including specific denominations or sects, as well as a lack of religion, i.e. employees or jobseekers who do not follow a certain religion or do not follow any religion are protected. The Act protects people of any belief; this is defined as any religious or philosophical belief, or a lack of such belief, that is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

Sex: The Act protects men and women.

Sexual orientation: The Act protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual staff.