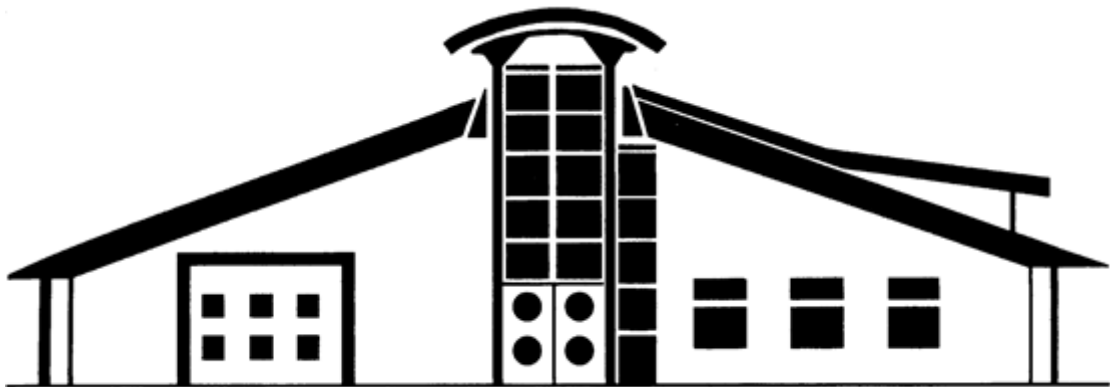




HOLMESDALE COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL



EQUALITY POLICY

Approved by Governors.....September 2024

Review DateSeptember 2025

Holmesdale Community Infant School

EQUALITY POLICY

(Race, Disability, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Age, Religion/Belief)

1. Introduction

At Holmesdale Community Infant School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. This policy sets out the school's approach to promoting equality, as defined in the Equality Act (2010).

This policy aims to promote community cohesion, avoid discrimination and promote equality for pupils, staff and others using our school's facilities. It incorporates within one over-arching policy document our previously distinct race, disability and gender policies and our equal opportunities policy which covered sexual orientation, age, religion and belief. Taking a single equality approach recognises that people often share more than one aspect of their identity in relation to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Holmesdale we believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

2. School Context

Holmesdale is situated in a suburban area and is a large infant school. At September 2024 there were 288 pupils and the majority of children live in the local area. The percentage of children known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is 2.7% which is below the national average. 22.2% of our pupils have English as an additional language and 29.2% of pupils are from ethnic minority groups. 0.35% of pupils are refugees. There are no pupils from Traveller or asylum seeker families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and of those with educational health care plans, is below average at 4.2%. Typically, children's attainment on entry is above that expected.

3. What do we mean by Equality and Diversity?

Equality refers to outcomes, making sure that all social groups benefit equally from our activities.

Diversity recognises that we can only achieve equality by taking into account the different needs of communities. Equality is impossible to achieve without recognising diversity.

4. Equality – Aims and Values

Holmesdale School aims to provide equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards. We strive to be an inclusive school, providing equal opportunities for all pupils and staff. We value the diverse backgrounds of our pupils, staff and community and encourage all pupils and staff to reach their potential. We aim to help our pupils in the early stages of learning to become responsible members of the community.

This policy is based on our core vision and values of inclusivity and equality of opportunity for all, within our community which includes everyone and celebrates their differences and achievements. As a Value based school we nurture a culture of respect for others, recognising and celebrating the differences between people within our diverse society. The school believes in the equal value of each of its pupils and employees and strives to ensure that all are treated with equal respect and opportunity in all levels of school activity and employment.

Mission Statement

Children are at the heart of all that we do; working together to be the best that we can be.

Aims

Children should be curious, enjoy learning with an appropriate level of academic achievement and in a changing world be provided with a foundation for lifelong learning.

To be an inclusive school where children are well rounded and have positive values.

Parents and carers to be actively involved in school life and their children's learning.

To build up positive relationships with the local and wider community.

5. The School's Approach to Promoting Equality

The overall objective of our Equality Policy is to provide a framework for Holmesdale School to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, promote equality of opportunity, and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

Through the Equality Policy, we seek to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents, guardians or carers or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief, gender and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, disability, age, responsibility for children or other dependents, trade union or political activities, social class, where the person lives or spent convictions.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community, pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

6. What is Discrimination?

Discrimination can be direct, indirect, intentional, unintentional or institutional. Discrimination is also unlawful. Individuals have a responsibility, in law, not to discriminate.

- **Direct discrimination** is where an individual or group receives less favourable treatment with some unjustifiable reason, because, for example, of sex, race religion sexual orientation or disability.
- **Indirect discrimination** is applying unjustifiable requirements and conditions that have a disproportionate impact on an individual or particular group.
- **Institutional discrimination** is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their background or experience. It can be seen in attitudes, behaviours and procedures that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage people.

7. A Cohesive Community

We have a responsibility to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across different cultures, ethnic, religious and non-religious and socioeconomic groups.

Our contribution to community cohesion includes:

- **Teaching, learning and curriculum** – to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- **Equity and excellence** – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to accessing school provision, participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.
- **Engagement and ethos** – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally (including communities of interest, i.e. environmental groups, faith groups, ethnic or language groups), across the country and internationally.

In order to achieve a cohesive community, Holmesdale School:

- promotes understanding and engagement between communities
- encourages all children and families to feel part of the wider community

- understands and responds to the needs and hopes of all our communities
- tackles discrimination
- increases life opportunities for all
- ensures teaching and the curriculum explores and addresses issues of diversity

8. Meeting our Duties

Under statutory duties all schools have responsibilities to promote race, disability and gender equality.

(i) Race Equality

Holmesdale School actively promotes good understanding of cultures and beliefs other than those the children experience in their own homes and will not tolerate any behaviour, speech, or curriculum content that is in any way racist or presents a racist attitude. The school understands racism as any kind of race hatred, rivalry or feeling that suggests an inherent superiority of one racial group over another; or any discriminatory treatment based on such a belief.

The general duty to promote race equality means that we must have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Scope of the Policy

Holmesdale School aims to promote race equality and good race relations across all areas of school activity.

- **Curriculum**

The curriculum will reflect the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom and include direct teaching of a wide range of cultural practices and beliefs.

- **Teaching and learning**

The cultural and language learning needs of all children will be addressed within the classroom so that every child has equal opportunity to access the National Curriculum and attain their full potential.

- **Progress, attainment and assessment**

All children will be assessed against National Curriculum standards and their attainment analysed to ensure no cultural bias is evident in outcomes. The Special Educational Needs Policy addresses the issue of pupils with English as an additional language, and makes clear the provision that is made at Holmesdale.

- **Admissions**

No child will be refused admission to Holmesdale on the grounds of race or culture.

- **Staff/ Governors**

No person will be refused interview, employment or position on the school committee on the grounds of race or culture. All members of staff will have equality of opportunity for professional development.

- **Partnerships with parents and communities**

The school actively encourages visits from different cultural groups to teach the pupils about, and encourage their respect for, cultures different to their own. Parents from various cultural and religious backgrounds are invited into school as speakers or to demonstrate and celebrate different cultural practices.

Responsibilities

- **The School Committee** will ensure that the school complies with race relations legislation and that its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- **The Head teacher** will implement the policy and its related procedures and strategies, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support, and he/she/they will take appropriate action in any case of racial discrimination.
- **All staff** will abide by the policy and deal with any racist incidents that occur. They will know how to identify and challenge any racial bias or stereotyping and will promote racial equality, good race relations and keep up to date with race equality legislation through training and development.

Dealing with racist incidents

Racist incidents are reported in accordance with the Surrey County Council guidelines. Staff will report the incident to the Head teacher and record the incident, action taken and final outcome on the school's incident log. Statistical information is reported as required to the School Committee and Surrey County Council.

(ii) Disability Equality

Our aim is to provide responsive and accessible services for all pupils, staff, parents or carers with disabilities, promoting equality and challenging discrimination. We promote disability equality in terms of recruitment, facilities, accessibility, attitudes, behaviours, access to learning and social life.

The general duty to promote disability equality is owed to all disabled people which mean that we must have due regard to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate disability related harassment
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to take account of disabled peoples' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

Scope of the Policy

We strive to champion equality for people with disabilities and aim to lead in the following ways:

- Providing responsive and accessible services for all employees and learners
- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Promoting inclusion for disabled people through all School policies
- Placing pupils with significant learning difficulties in small groups
- Providing pupils with significant learning difficulties with specialized staff and learning programmes where possible
- Providing pupils with significant learning difficulties with specialized resources where possible
- Adapting and improving the physical environment to facilitate access
- Taking account of people's disabilities, even where that involves treating some people more favourably than others
- Challenging and eliminating all forms of discrimination and disability related harassment
- Encouraging participation by people with disabilities in school life, events and trips
- Promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities

Responsibilities

- **The School Committee** will ensure that the school complies with disability equality legislation and that its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- **The Head teacher** will implement the policy and its related procedures and strategies, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support, and he/she/they will take appropriate action in any case of disability discrimination.
- **All staff** will be proactive in promoting equality regardless of ability or disability and will deal with any incidents that occur. They will keep up to date with equality legislation through training and development.

Accessibility

There is specific disability legislation in relation to disabled pupils and accessibility which means we must plan strategically over time to:

- Increase access to the curriculum
- Make improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access;
- Make written information accessible to pupils in a range of different ways.

The school will gather and report on a range of information relating to staff and learners with disabilities. The information will be evaluated by the School Governors. The report will include an analysis by specific disability, where necessary, to determine whether the needs of the learner have been met. The recommendations of the report will feed into the School Development Plan as appropriate.

We must ensure that disabled pupils do not receive less favourable treatment and to do this the school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

(iii) Gender Equality

At Holmesdale School we take positive steps to address gender inequality, however we understand that barriers exist that may prevent pupils and staff from achieving and making the most of the opportunities we make available. To promote gender equality, it is vital that the differences between boys' and girls', male and female experiences, attitudes and achievements in schools are understood so that our policies and practices can begin to break down these barriers.

The general duty to promote gender equality means that we must have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys

Scope of the Policy

Holmesdale aims to promote gender equality across all areas of school activity in the following ways:

- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women, boys and girls to achieve to the best of their ability
- Provide equal opportunity to participate in all curricular and extra-curricular activities, regardless of their gender
- Demonstrate how we value diversity through consistent avoidance of stereo-typing in all areas of school life.
- Provide equality of opportunity for training and development of staff, regardless of gender or identification
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Result in improved outcomes for pupils, staff and parents/carers in all aspects of school life, in the wider community and in employment.

The duty also includes the need to consider actions to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

Responsibilities

- **The School Committee** will ensure that the school complies with gender equality legislation and that its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- **The Head teacher** will implement the policy and its related procedures and strategies, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support, and he/she/they will take appropriate action in any case of gender discrimination.
- **All staff** will be proactive in promoting equality regardless of gender and will deal with any incidents that occur. They will keep up to date with equality legislation and through training and development.

Transgender

Transgendered people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty. The term transgendered refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender. The school will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within its school community.

(iv) Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief

We must ensure that we do not discriminate on these grounds. This policy includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

Scope of the Policy

Holmesdale is committed to equality of opportunity for all and across all aspects of school life, promoting equality in the following ways:

- Promoting an understanding and interest in different environments, faiths, societies, systems and cultures across the world
- Giving all pupils and staff the opportunity to fulfil their potential, whatever their colour, culture, origin, belief, culture, gender or sexual orientation
- Providing opportunities to explore and share the ideas, opinions and interests derived from their own particular cultural experience, for example, participation in religious festivals and celebrations
- Providing the opportunity to challenge discrimination and to discuss and consider behaviour and attitudes towards each other
- Recognising, respecting and acknowledging the languages and dialects of all members of the school community
- Recognising the importance of the religions, cultures and beliefs of all in our school community
- Maintaining high standards and expectations of behaviour regardless of sex or culture

Responsibilities

- **The Governing Body** will ensure that the school complies with all equality legislation and that its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- **The Head teacher** will implement the policy and its related procedures and strategies, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support, and he/ she/ they will take appropriate action in any case of gender discrimination.
- **All staff** will be proactive in promoting equality of opportunity and will deal with any incidents that occur. They will keep up to date with relevant legislation through training and development.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

All who work in the school have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination. The following states the specific responsibilities of the members of the school community.

School governors are responsible for:

- making sure the school complies with all current equality legislation
- making sure this policy and its procedures are followed

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- making sure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents/carers know about it
- making sure its procedures are followed
- producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary
- making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination

All school staff are responsible for:

- modelling good practice, dealing with racist incidents and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- promoting equality and good race relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, ethnic or national origins, language, culture, religion or belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or social class.
- keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking training and learning opportunities

Pupils are responsible for:

- developing rules which challenge discriminatory behaviour

- sharing their views (e.g. on bullying) through class discussions and the school council

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- raising equality and diversity issues with the Head teacher and school committee and PSA
- taking part in parent forums on these issues
- signing and supporting the home/school agreement
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Visitors and contractors are responsible for:

- Knowing and following our equality policy

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school lies with the Head teacher, the Chair of Governors and the School Committee . Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating and monitoring work on equality issues
- Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents)
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of potentially vulnerable groups of pupils (e.g. children and young people in care, children from minority ethnic/language or Traveller communities, disabled pupils etc.)
- Monitoring exclusions

10. Monitoring, Reviewing and Assessing impact

The policy will be reviewed regularly by staff and governors in line with the policy register. This is to ensure that it is effective in eliminating discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

The School Committee will review this policy annually. The Head teacher will report in the Head teacher's report to governors any significant issues regarding equality and diversity.

We recognise that all school policies and procedures need to be reviewed in light of the Equality Policy to ensure that they are designed with disabled people in mind. Any pattern of inequality found will be used to inform future planning and decision-making.

Any reported breach of this policy will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will be taken in cases of harassment or discrimination.