



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Priestley Smith Specialist VI School

February 2026

Policy review date: February 2028

Policy status: Statutory

Responsible member of SLT: Joanna Garvey Headteacher

Contents

1 Introduction	2
2 Legal Framework	2
3 Aim	3
4 Our Ethos	3
5 Guiding Principles.....	3
6 Implementation	5
6.1 Admissions	5
6.2 School Curriculum	5
6.3 Valuing Diversity in Families	6
6.4 Food, Dietary and Medical Needs	6
6.5 Events	6
6.6 Employment.....	6
6.7 Staff Training	7
6.8 Examinations.....	7
7 Roles and Responsibilities	7
8 Breaches of the Policy.....	8
9 Monitoring and Evaluation.....	9
10 Publication and Dissemination	9

Priestley Smith School is committed to the rights of the child

Priestley Smith School is committed to the rights of the child as outlined in the UN Convention and is working towards Rights Respecting Schools Gold award. This belief influences everything the school does and impacts upon all our policies.

Article 2 The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 12 Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Article 13 Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

Article 14 Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 28 Every child has the right to an education.

Article 30 Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

Article 31 Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

1 Introduction

Priestley Smith Specialist School is committed to valuing diversity by providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families. We also value our staff and are committed to good employment practice. Priestley Smith school promotes positive attitudes towards equal opportunities and this is seen as an integral part of school life. We ensure that every member of the school community is valued, respected and entitled to fairness of treatment.

Priestley Smith Specialist School seeks to ensure that no member of the school community, or any person through their contact with the school, will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic. These include: race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, socio-economic background, living situation, or spent convictions.

In this we include all members of the extended school community – pupils, staff, Governors, Parents/Carers, volunteers and others from our local community. Partners, contractors and other visitors to the school are also expected to adhere to this policy.

2 Legal Framework

This policy describes the way in which Priestley Smith School will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This act replaced all previous policies and legislation relating to Race Equality, Gender Equality and Disability Equality. This policy will be applied to all students, staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to the school.

This policy has been devised to enable Priestley Smith School to meet its general duty in:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct
- Advancing equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not

We do this by:

- Providing a secure environment in which all of our children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued
- Including and valuing the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity
- Providing positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and people with disabilities

- Reviewing our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity
- Making inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of our school
- Taking appropriate action against any discriminatory behaviour by students, staff, Parents/Carers, governors or visitors

3 Aim

Equality and Diversity is about making a difference to the lives of the people we serve, treating all people with dignity and respect, and recognising the value of each individual. We are committed to ensuring that our services meet the varied and individual needs of children and young people in our school, that our employment practices are fair and promote equality and that we respect the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures, locally and nationally.

We aim to prepare children and young people for life within a diverse society with increasing global connections and controversial issues.

We work hard to build strong and trusting relationships with our pupils and their families in order to harness their engagement and enjoyment in all aspects of school life. We recognise that pupils and family members may experience a range of different needs during different times in their lives and we endeavour to meet these needs by working in close partnership with relevant agencies.

4 Our Ethos

Priestley Smith School is a welcoming and caring community of children, parents/carers, staff and governors. Together we continually strive to provide a happy and supportive environment in which the unique potential of every child is realised. Our vision is that within a comprehensive and bespoke curriculum we will enable each child to share the responsibility for becoming an independent and confident learner and achiever in a continually changing world.

We have a commitment to the rights of all and are currently working towards Rights Respecting Schools Gold accreditation which we aim to achieve by July 2022 . We successfully gained the Silver accreditation in December 2020. . This ethos is integral to all we do.

5 Guiding Principles

The following key principles guide all work and activities within school and are fully endorsed by students, staff, parents and governors.

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

All learners are of equal value and benefit equally from school policies, practices and programmes, whatever their ability, ethnicity or national identity, religious background, gender, sexual orientation or cultural identity.

Principle 2: Relevant differences are recognised

Treating people equally can mean treating them differently.

Policies, practices and programmes do not discriminate, but may be differentiated to take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- Disability – so that reasonable adjustments are made
- Ethnicity – so that different cultural backgrounds are celebrated and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- Gender – so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- Religion, belief, faith or non-faith background
- Sexual identity
- Age

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes, relationships and a shared sense of belonging

Our policies and programmes promote:

- Positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people. All our students have a visual impairment and many have additional special educational needs or disabilities. We teach students to challenge any barriers facing them and to realise that, while they might tackle a task in a different way to their sighted peers, most things are possible.
- Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other. This includes ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related language, bullying and incidents.

Mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment or abuse.

Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development

Steps are taken to positively promote equality and to ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in recruitment, professional development and promotion.

We aim to ensure that our recruitment and CPD policies support all staff and do not discriminate on the grounds of :

- Whether or not applicants are disabled/not disabled
- Age
- Ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- Gender and sexual identity. (We also fully respect legal rights relating to pregnancy, maternity and paternity)

When recruiting staff, age is not identified on application forms and health related questions will not be asked until after a job offer is made and then only if it is pertinent to the role.

Principle 5: Reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of policies and programmes, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by addressing, reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist between:

- Disabled and non-disabled people
- People of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Girls and boys, women and men

Principle 6: Policy development involves widespread consultation and involvement

People affected by a policy or programme are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. Such consultation is both direct and through representative organisations, and is based on principles of transparency and accountability. It involves those who in the past have been excluded or disadvantaged, and who continue to face barriers:

- Disabled people as well as non-disabled people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Both women and men, and girls and boys
- Those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender

Principle 7: Society as a whole benefits

Our policies and programmes benefit society as a whole, locally, nationally and internationally, by fostering greater cohesion and greater participation in public life for:

- Disabled people as well as non-disabled
- People of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Both women and men, girls and boys
- Those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and report quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- Disability
- Ethnicity, religion and culture
- Gender and sexual identity

Principle 9: Improvement Objectives

We will formulate and publish specific and measurable improvement objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published in relation to:

- Disability
- Ethnicity, religion and culture
- Gender and sexual identity

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference. We will regularly set and review our equality objectives and report annually to students, staff, governors and parents on progress towards achieving them.

6 Implementation

6.1 Admissions

- Pupils are admitted to the school through Birmingham LA Provision Panel. All students have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) identifying significant visual impairment or are in the process of being assessed for one. Occasionally, a pupil will be admitted prior to the completion of the EHCP process if it is clear the pupil is very likely to be placed at Priestley Smith and the parents have named Priestley Smith as their preferred school or an assessment is required.
- Many students have additional needs e.g. hearing impairment, moderate learning disability, physical disability, medical needs, communication difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Condition, social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The School's catchment area is a regional one covering all of Birmingham, plus local regional authorities e.g. Walsall, Sandwell, Dudley, Solihull, Wolverhampton, Warwickshire.
- Priestley Smith School welcomes students from the whole community. We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our school, on the basis of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, political activities, socio-economic background, living situation, being a member of a travelling community or an asylum seeker or having spent convictions.
- We ensure that our environment and published materials are fully accessible for children, staff, governors and parents/carers with disabilities so that they can participate successfully in all activities offered by our school. We try to provide information in clear, concise, jargon-free language, whether written or spoken.

6.2 School Curriculum

The curriculum offered at Priestley Smith School encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves.

Equality and diversity is embedded as far as possible in all areas of the curriculum and pupils are given opportunities to explore prejudice and discrimination, and to positively explore difference in relation to race/ethnicity, religion/belief, gender, age, disability and sexual identity. Equality, diversity and discrimination are also key aspects of the PSHE curriculum and the school's social, moral, spiritual and cultural work. We ensure that all our students have full access to an individualised learning programme, appropriately modified for learning level and medium of access e.g. large print, braille, Moon etc.

We do this by:

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves through the curriculum
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance
- Helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable
- Ensuring that children have full access to learning through a bespoke curriculum designed for students with visual impairment, highly differentiated, modified learning activities and specialist equipment to enable access e.g. Zoomtext, JAWS, Brailnotes etc.

- Recognising the different learning styles of children, making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities
- Regularly reviewing the teaching within each subject area as well as the resources that are available to support this so that the diversity of the school, local community and wider society as a whole are represented in this.
- Ensuring that the key Stage 5 curriculum focusses on a wide set of skills that provide our pupils for future employment e.g interview skills and work experience opportunities.
- Recognising the specific assessment needs of all pupils and ensuring appropriate provision for this is in place e.g. amanuensis, reader, scribe, practical assistant, additional time etc.
- Avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual materials and scrutinising materials for cultural bias
- Celebrating a wide range of festivals
- Ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning
- Collecting data with regard to the attainment and achievement of all pupils in order to inform the planning and provision of support to individuals and groups of pupils
- Reflecting the diversity of members of our society in all our publicity and promotional materials

6.3 Valuing Diversity in Families

- We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work in partnership with all families
- We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life in form times, circle times, lessons and assemblies
- We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of Priestley Smith School by attending Learn Together sessions, workshops at parents evenings e.g.e-safety We try to make these sessions as practical as possible where there are barriers eg language, physical and learning needs.
- We provide interpreter services for families who have little or no English in order for them to be fully involved in EHCP reviews, Parents' Evenings and other events.

6.4 Food, Dietary and Medical Needs

- We work in partnership with Parents/Carers and our meal providers to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met as far as is reasonably possible
- We help children to learn about a range of food, and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them
- We provide guided meal choices for students who have dietary needs as part of their medical condition
- Our pupils have access to mainstream canteens that offer a wide range of food choices.
- We provide medical support for all students who require this e.g. students with insulin-dependent diabetes, support for seizures, asthma support, support with eye creams/drops, pain relief etc. through Care Plans negotiated and agreed with parents and medical staff. Staff are trained to support a range of medical conditions and have their competencies to do this checked regularly by medical professionals.
- Every effort is made to ensure, with students and parents/carers, that medical needs are fully met and that we minimise the impact of medical need on attendance.

6.5 Events

- Events are arranged to ensure that all families may become involved in the life of the school if they wish
- Information about events and meetings is communicated in a variety of ways (e.g. electronically, brailled, written and verbal), to ensure that all Parents/Carers have information about, and access to, the meetings/events

6.6 Employment

- We avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Selections are made on the basis of aptitude, ability and merit.
- Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
- Applicants are welcome from all backgrounds and posts are open to all.

- The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service – this ensures a fair selection process.
- Safer recruitment policies and practices are followed robustly and all interview panels include interviewers who are safer recruitment trained.
- All job descriptions include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their specifications.
- We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible
- All employees, whether part-time, full-time, temporary or permanent are treated fairly and equally.

6.7 Staff Training

- All staff at Priestley Smith School will have their professional development needs met in relation to this agenda. This includes staff across all sectors (teaching, support, lunchtime staff, Habilitation staff, technicians, office staff, etc.). Support will be provided to meet training needs as outlined in our School Development Plan.
- New and temporary staff will be made aware of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and other practices in relation to this. (Check that this is on the induction list)
- We seek out training opportunities for staff, volunteers and governors to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish. We will utilise Flick learning for staff training
- We will review our practices annually with staff, students and governors to ensure that we are fully implementing our Equality, Diversity And Inclusion Policy

6.8 Examinations

As part of the school's commitment to ensuring complete access of the curriculum to all pupils, the acquisition of qualifications is an integral aspect of this. Here, the school ensures that appropriate and up to date access arrangements are applied for pupils when necessary. This will include, but is not limited to, extra time, access to a word processor, reader or amanuensis. In addition, pupils will have access to modified papers which have been specially adapted in their medium of study, be it large print or Braille.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

All who are associated with Priestley Smith School have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination. It is the responsibility of every individual (staff, learners, parents and visitors) to counter negative attitudes and any discriminatory practice.

School Governors:

- Provide leadership and drive for the development and regular review of the school's policies
- Provide leadership and ensure the accountability of the Headteacher and senior leadership 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 staff, pupils, parents/carers and all other stakeholders
- Congratulate examples of good practice from the school
- Ensure a consistent response to incidents e.g. bullying cases, homophobic, gender-based and racist incidents
- Ensure that the school carries out the letter and the spirit of its statutory duties
- Make sure the school complies with all current equality legislation
- Make sure this policy and its procedures are followed
- Make sure that the school has up-to-date Equality Policy and Improvement Objectives which are incorporated into the School Improvement Plan. The Governors' Teaching and Learning Committee will carry out a monitoring review annually and a full policy review and revision every three years.

Headteacher:

- 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 staff are trained as necessary to carry out the policies
- Oversee the effective implementation of the policies
- Hold subject leaders accountable for effective policy implementation
- Provide appropriate role models for all staff and pupils
- Provide opportunities and mechanisms for the sharing of good practice

- Take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination and ensure a consistent response to incidents e.g. bullying, homophobic, gender-based and racist incidents
- Ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties effectively

Staff:

- Proactively follow this policy and any associated guidelines
- Provide role models for pupils through their own actions
- Deal with racist, sexist, gender-based and homophobic incidents robustly, and recognise and tackle other forms of bias and stereotyping
- Promote equality and good community relations and avoid discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic circumstances
- Keep up to date with the law on discrimination and undertake training and learning opportunities offered to them

Pupils:

- Recognise their own rights and the rights of others. This is underpinned by our Rights Respecting Schools Award.
- Treat others kindly and fairly without prejudice, discrimination or harassment
- Attend and engage in their own learning as well as helping other pupils to learn
- Tell staff about any prejudiced related incidents that occur

Parents Carers:

- Support the school in its implementation of this policy
- Follow the school policy through their own behaviour
- Ensure their children attend and engage in learning
- Tell staff about any prejudice related incidents that occur

Visitors:

- Know and follow our policy. Visitors are informed of our expectations with regard to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through the School's Visitor Policy.

Overseeing the Policy

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school lies with the headteacher and the Chair of the Governors' Teaching and Learning Committee.

Responsibilities include:

- Co-ordinating and monitoring work on equality issues
- Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist, homophobic and gender-based incidents)
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups of pupils (e.g. Black and minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsies and Travellers, boys/girls etc.)
- Monitoring exclusion
(The decision to exclude a child for a fixed period or permanently is a **last resort**. Our exclusion criteria are defined within the School's Behaviour policy and are applied consistently to every young person, irrespective of any protected characteristic.)

8 Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head Teacher and Governing Body. Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be advised to follow the School Complaints Procedure, available on the school's website or on the Staff shared network.

All prejudice driven behaviour are recorded and reported to the governing body and Local Authority following established procedures and guidelines.

9 Monitoring and Evaluation

The leadership team and governors at Priestley Smith School regularly review the progress we are making to meet our equality objectives with regards to protected groups (race, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, religion and belief) under the Equality Act 2010.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation procedure, we will monitor:

- The attainment of pupils with protected characteristics and those from vulnerable groups and address any issues of differential progress and achievement
- Exclusion and other aspect of the Behaviour management Systems ensuring that policies are applied equally and fairly, across the board, and in relation to protected characteristics
- Teaching and learning to ensure all pupils' needs are met, irrespective of their background, and to ensure that challenging targets are set for all
- Curriculum and teaching resources to ensure that pupils' experiences are broadened and they are prepared for life in a diverse society
- The protected characteristics of the school's staff and Governors with the aim of ensuring that they reflect the diversity in wider society and the local community and that they are seen to be positive role models.
- Incidents of racist, gender-based and homophobic behaviour and the way the school handles and reports these
- The way in which the school is sensitive to, and meets the needs of all stakeholders, paying particular regard to cultural, religious historical, ethnic and/or linguistic heritages
- The way in which the school uses the diversity within its local and wider communities to enrich learning experiences for pupils

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years in the light of experiences and best practice. This mechanism recognises that changes to legislation might require a review of the policy before the three years stipulated.

In considering the effectiveness of this policy, consultation will be undertaken with staff, Governors, pupils and parents/carers to assist in this review process.

10 Publication and Dissemination

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by our school in line with legislation from the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, Disability Equality Duty 2005 and Equality Act 2010.

We are committed to meeting our public sector duties and welcome the following statutory duties to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- Promote positive attitudes of difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

We are committed to sharing information about our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy as widely as possible. To this end, we will publish an annual monitoring update consisting of impact outcomes, progress made, refinements, amendments and new actions. We will also publish the results of a full policy review every three years – in which we will make proposals for future action.