



# High March

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR PUPILS AND PARENTS

Person responsible for latest revision:	Mrs B M Avery
Page number of any significant changes in latest revision:	
Date of next review:	January 2024
ISI Reference	17 a

This policy applies to the Early Year Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

### Useful Websites


## **HIGH MARCH**

### **Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils and Parents**

**The purpose of this Policy is to promote equal opportunities for pupils and parents within the context of the School's ethos of understanding and respect, recognising the benefits of a diverse school community.**

#### **Regulatory Guidance**

**In drafting this Policy the School has drawn on guidance from DfE, Equality and Human Rights Commission (Technical Guidance for Schools 2014), Independent Schools' Standards Regulations, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022, The Equality Act 2010 ("The Act")**

#### **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The Act defines disability as 'A physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'.

The Act replaces the three previous equality duties for race, disability and gender, and the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. It also covers failure to make reasonable adjustments. In accordance with the Act the School will have regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity and inclusion 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.
- promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The application of the Act can be seen in all aspects of School life, including but not limited to in our Accessibility Plan, Admissions Policy, Behaviour and Pastoral Care Policy, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy Disability and Special Educational Needs (SEND) Policy, Inclusion Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy. SMSC Policy.

A duty to offer, enable and promote equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion is the responsibility of the whole School community. It is reflected throughout the organisation of the School, embodied in the curriculum, in School policies and in cross-curricular and extra-

curricular activities and visits. The School seeks to ensure that staff and pupil expectations of different race/religious belief groups foster mutual understanding and positive attitudes

Schools have a duty under paragraph 3 of the ISSR, relating to quality of education provided, to ensure that the teaching at the School does not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Act. In addition, paragraph 5 of the ISSR, relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, requires schools to ensure principles are actively promoted which encourage respect for others paying particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Act.

High March as an Equal Opportunities Employer. High March is an Equal Opportunities Employer and School. The High March Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff can be found on the School network and is referred to in the Staff Handbook. This Policy is concerned with managing diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities for pupils and parents. At High March we value diversity and treat everyone associated with the School without prejudice. We value applications from pupils with a diverse range of backgrounds. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. We concentrate on educating the individual, in order to promote a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued, a sense of belonging and can flourish. We treat everyone with equal concern for all regardless of their protected characteristics.

All staff, governors, parents/guardians and visitors regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic background, are welcome and will be encouraged to participate in the life of the School.

The School will not discriminate (whether directly or indirectly) against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the education provided, by excluding a pupil or by subjecting them to any other disadvantage including any failure to make reasonable adjustments. The School does not treat disabled pupils less favourably.

The School believes:

- everybody is of equal value whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background, and whatever their age and sexual orientation.
- in addition, all adults are of equal value whatever their marital or civil partnership status, maternity or pregnancy status.
- diversity is a strength. Therefore, the School, respects, values and welcomes difference.
- it is important to acknowledge and celebrate differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation.
- it is important to create an environment where pupils and parents feel able to be their authentic self.

- positive attitudes and relationships must be fostered and mutual respect shown between groups and communities different from each other.
- a shared sense of cohesion and belonging within the School and wider community is fostered, ensuring no pupil or parents feel like 'outsiders'.
- throughout the School standards and support for all adults and pupils are paramount, especially those requiring additional assistance.
- it accounts for equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the provision of education and access for all pupils to facilities and services.
- it is aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils, designed to enhance access to and participation by disabled pupils, preventing them from being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
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- it actively promotes equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all and recognises and acknowledges the lived experiences of pupils and parents.
- admissions arrangements are non-discriminatory
- it does not discriminate against pupils, parents or staff by treating them less favourably on the grounds of any protected characteristic, namely age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

#### The School:

- prepares pupils for life in a diverse society and ensures that activities across the curriculum promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- actively supports difference and diversity and raises pupils' awareness of the negative impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE and relationships education and citizenship and across the curriculum.
- ensures resources reflect the diversity of the school population and local community and provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- takes great care to present diversity in the curriculum. The use of correct terminology, positive images, maps and literature which avoid stereotyping and hidden racism are employed. This is combined with sensitive but balanced accounts of Britain's historical geo-political influence and impact in parts of the world.
- promotes a whole School ethos and values that challenge prejudice of all types.
- provides opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.
- promotes positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole School events.
- ensures statements of equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion are included in all relevant and appropriate school documentation.
- aims to enable governors, staff and pupils to receive training in relevant aspects of equal opportunities to ensure their ability to support this policy actively.

- provides parents and pupils with information detailing the School's rules, identifying expectations of behaviour.
- ensures that, irrespective of age, disability, gender, cultural or linguistic background, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, special educational need or specific ability pupils are cared for sensitively and in accordance with their individual needs
- ensures staff incorporate a balanced view of the world in their teaching through a multi-cultural approach.
- ensures staff recognise and understand that pupils are world citizens who will meet a wide variety of cultures throughout their lives.

With specific regard to Gender, the School:

- promotes non-sexist attitudes in pupils.
- ensures pupils have equal access to opportunities which will equip them for adult life.
- provides opportunities for collaboration with other school on co-educational projects and events.
- ensures all pupils, irrespective of gender, meet challenging expectations.
- works towards the eradication of sexual stereotyping.
- enables all pupils to try out new roles in play and learning activities, equipment and resources.
- reviews resources and displays to ensure they present a non-sexist attitude.
- reviews responses to behaviour problems to ensure equal approaches to both genders whilst respecting differences.

With specific regard to Race, the School:

- challenges racism in the context of a caring school community.
- ensures no pupil is treated in any way differently, or in a derogatory manner, because of their race.
- does not tolerate provocative behaviour, i.e. wearing of any racist badges or insignia.
- does not accept verbal abuse or name calling of a racist nature.
- will not allow pupils to be ridiculed due to racial differences.
- will not allow racist jokes or stories.

With specific regard to Ability the School:

- believes every pupil is entitled to a positive, helpful learning environment, with work that matches individual needs. This will be through differentiated planning and additional support from various support staff. (See the SEND and Learning Support policies)
- allows all pupils access to equipment, resources and support.
- values all pupils' efforts and achievements across the curriculum.
- believes all pupils have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum.
- responds to pupils' learning needs individually.
- understands pupils learn at different rates and factors affecting achievement include ability, emotional state, age and maturity.

- provides teaching and learning contexts which enable each pupil to achieve to his or her full potential.

With specific regard to Physical Disability, the School:

- does not treat pupils differently to others due to their individual physical disabilities and needs.
- makes provision for the individual special needs of any disabled pupils and adults within the School community.
- believes a physically disabled pupil has a right to participate in all activities in so far as their individual disability allows them to do so.

characteristics.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the School complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member is allocated responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this policy. The Governing Body monitors the School's overall effectiveness in maintaining their commitment to implement their duties under the Act, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the School environment.

The Headmistress and Senior Leadership Team review the School's rigorous policies and procedures regularly. As required, the School makes reasonable adjustments for any disabled pupils or parents with special educational needs requiring auxiliary aids. The need for reasonable adjustments and provision of auxiliary aids is considered regularly by our Head of Learning Support, Learning Support teaching staff and Senior Management Team at their regular meetings. The Headmistress and Senior Management Team aim to devote considerable time and effort towards ensuring that staff and pupils are actively engaged in implementing the policy.

Teaching and Support Staff:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom.
- Challenge bias, prejudice and discrimination and deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur.
- Plan and deliver lessons that reflect the School's ethos.
- Provide materials that give positive images in terms of age, race, gender and disability.
- Expect the highest standards from all pupils.
- Support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who have difficulties with learning.
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

## Admissions

We offer a non-selective intake (See our Admissions Policy).

We do not discriminate on admission on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

## Code of Conduct and Ethos

The Headmistress, Senior Leadership and Management Teams, pastoral staff and Directors play an active role in reviewing and monitoring the implementation of High March's policy and practice in equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion. Use is made of Assemblies, PSHE, Drama, Music, English and other lessons, School visits and cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities to:

- promote tolerance and understanding of each other and respect for each other's position within the community.
- promote positive attitudes, images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness
- communicate our Equal Opportunities ethos and remove or overcome any barriers to this
- foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures. Bias should be recognised and addressed.
- understand why and how we deal with offensive language and behaviour
- understand why we deal with any incidents causing concern under this statement promptly and in a sensitive manner
- recognise that harassment in all its forms is unacceptable. Our Behaviour and Pastoral Care and Anti-Bullying Policies contain clear procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, which could also constitute unlawful discrimination
- seek to eliminate discrimination on grounds of any protected characteristic
- communicate and recognise that a successful Equal Opportunities ethos requires strong and positive support from parents and guardians and full acceptance of the School's ethos of understanding and respect

## Complaints

- (Please also see Parental Complaints Procedure)
- The School hopes that parents and pupils do not have any complaints about the operation of the School's Equal Opportunities Policy. Any complaints of discrimination should be addressed in the first instance to the Headmistress. A right of appeal exists to the Chairman of the Board of Governors. Parents are referred to the Parental Complaints Procedure, available from the School Office or on the School's website. In the Early Years Foundation Stage if a complaint cannot be resolved within the School, parents can seek support from the Parent Partnership (01296 383754).

## Dealing with Inappropriate Behaviour

- (Please also see our Behaviour and Pastoral Care Policy)
- Behaviour which discriminates against a pupil on grounds of adoption, age, culture, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, will not be tolerated. Incidents should be dealt with openly, firmly and clearly by the member of staff concerned. Any incidents of this nature should be discussed with parents and reported to the Headmistress.

## Educational Visits

- Our Educational Visits Days are planned to maximise opportunities for diversity and cultural enrichment.

## English as an Additional Language

- In order to cope with the high academic and social demands of High March, pupils should be fluent English speakers or prepared to invest time at their parents' expense in becoming so such that they will benefit from the education at High March. Support is provided by the learning support department to aid the transition of children with EAL to High March. A register of EAL children is maintained and staff are given training to support children with EAL children

## The Learning Environment

We aim to provide an 'Enabling Environment' accessible to all. We do this by:

- seeking to identify and remove barriers to Inclusion.
- making reasonable adjustments to the environment and to our resources (both indoors and out) to accommodate a wide range of learning abilities and styles (eg. providing different sized tables and chairs, visual labels for resources). (See also our Learning Support, Inclusion and SEND Policies)
- differentiating our provision so that we are able to meet the needs of all our children.
- aiming to make the provision in our School reflect both the diversity present in our community, and in the wider community.
- aiming to avoid stereotypes in practice and resources (e.g. male nurse, female fire-fighters).
- learning about a range of religious festivals (e.g. Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year) and others depending on the faiths represented in the School and those that reflect the wider community.
- valuing each child's home language (e.g. learning to greet one another in languages represented in the class).
- seeking the views of children and their families to inform practice. Examples of this include parental questionnaires, the Entry Profile, an Open Door Policy, the Home/School Diary and the work of the Parent Representative on the Governing Board.

## Monitoring

The School monitors practice by asking:

- do our lessons:
  - a) take account of the diverse experiences of our pupils?
  - b) take account of the individual nature of our pupils?
  - c) acknowledge the contribution made by minority groups to our society
  - d) offer resources to challenge stereotypical and cultural bias?
  - e) deliver fair and objective accounts of Britain's historical geo-political influence and impact in parts of the world.
  - f) use correct terminology, use positive images, maps and literature which avoid stereotyping and indirect discrimination

- how are the pupils grouped in class?
- how successful are we at engaging all pupils in the lesson regardless of race, religion or belief, disability or culture?
- do our displays take account of pupils' diverse experience and different backgrounds?
- does the curriculum provide the opportunity to recognise and challenge discrimination?

### **Request for variation in School Uniform**

Although High March has Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religion or belief, and we welcome pupils of all faiths to practise their own faiths. However, parents should be aware that all pupils at High March are required to wear a uniform. The Headmistress will consider written requests from parents for variations in the uniform on religious, SEN or medical grounds that are consistent with the School's ethos and its policy on Health and Safety. The Headmistress may take expert advice and will normally agree to meet with the parents to discuss the implications of such a request.

### **SEND Accessibility Plan**

The School has a three year plan in place, in accordance with the Act, in order to ensure, where possible, 'reasonable adjustment' for current and prospective disabled pupils. The School currently has no pupils with physical disabilities which cause them challenges moving around the School but monitors this carefully on admission in consultation with parents.

This plan reflects the School's ethos of inclusion and the desire to be prepared to admit pupils who may have disabilities. The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with other plans and policies, especially the SEND Policy. Staff at the School will work closely with colleagues from other agencies in order to identify and provide the best support possible.

The SEND Accessibility Plan deals with;

- the extent to which disabled pupils (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the School's curriculum.
- how the School ensures school information is in a format that is easily understood by pupils with disabilities.
- how the School improves the physical environment in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of the education and associated services offered by the School.

The Directors on advice from the Head of Learning Support and Headmistress, identify the resources required to implement the Plan. Implementation of the Plan is overseen by the Headmistress. The plan is reviewed annually by the Headmistress, Senior Leadership Team and Directors.

## Training

We regularly seek opportunities to enable all staff to participate in further training - including developing anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices. These training opportunities are designed to promote pupils' and parents' positive experience of equal opportunities.

We ensure that staff are confident and fully trained in the administration of medicines where this is necessary (See First Aid and Medicines Policy and the staff training log).

All staff are made aware of training opportunities and given an equal chance to attend.

## Valuing Diversity

- We welcome all families and encourage children to contribute stories about their experiences and their lives.
- We encourage parents and carers to take part in the life of the School (e.g. to speak about a religious festival celebrated by the family, to speak about a parent's occupation).
- Through our displays, projects, "Show and Tell", PSHE and cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities, we seek to promote diversity and inclusion.

## Working with Other Agencies

Relevant members of staff attend EYFS Network meetings and disseminate to and share information and advice with all staff. Staff also liaise with Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Educational Psychologists as required to promote good practice and offer reasonable adjustments to pupils.

## Working with Parents

- We work in partnership with parents to ensure that medical, cultural dietary, holistic and special needs are met. (Please see the Entry Profile and Admissions Form)
- We arrange meetings at different times of the day and week so that all parents can be accommodated.
- We communicate information about meetings in a variety of ways to enable access.

## Review, monitoring and evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains effective and to ensure that our strategies meet the overall aims of our Equal Opportunities Policy. It will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, with reference to the staff.
- Parents are encouraged to support the Policy.

**Related Policies**

Admissions Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Behaviour and Pastoral Care Policy

Code of Conduct for Staff

Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff

Inclusion Policy

Learning Support Policy

Pupil Sanctions Record

SEND Accessibility Plan

SEND Policy