

This policy reflects the Equality Act 2010 and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and supersedes all previous school policies on Disability, Ethnicity (ie Race) and Gender.

“People are pretty much alike. It’s only that our differences are more susceptible to definition than our similarities.” (*Linda Ellerbee*)

Our community operates on a mutual trust and understanding. This is underpinned by the ethos reinforced by this policy.

It is a strength of Hele’s that we invest in the notion that “every person matters”, and aim to ensure a nurturing environment for people’s health and wellbeing.

1. Introduction

At Hele’s School, we are committed to ensuring and promoting equality of education and opportunity for students, staff and those receiving services from the school regardless of gender, disability, race, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, age and sexual orientation.

One of our core aims is to enable everyone to reach their full potential.

We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity. At Hele’s School, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

We will endeavour to ensure that members of the school community are not treated less favourably in any practices, procedures or aspects of service delivery.

Following consultation with students, staff, governors, parents and other stakeholders, this equality scheme was developed in 2012, and reviewed in 2015, to meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and aims:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimization and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
4. Promote fundamental British values; and
5. Have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

This scheme demonstrates our commitment to promote race, gender and disability equality and extends to legislation protecting against discrimination on the grounds of age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

The production of this equality scheme provides us with a framework for integrating equality into all aspects of school life and demonstrates how we are seeking to meet the specific duty.

The content of this scheme is in line with the Plymouth City Council Equality Schemes. Many of our policies and practices are based on guidance from the local authority.

Equality, Community Cohesion and promoting fundamental British values at Hele’s School

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When we talk about community we mean the following groups:

Our school community – the students, parents, carers and families, our staff, governors and community users of our facilities and services.

The community within which our school is located – our immediate neighbourhood but also our city and the distinctive features of Plymouth...the sea, the moors, the docks, the Armed Forces.

The UK community
The global community

Our focus on community cohesion work is about promoting cohesions across different groups within our community: socio-economic groups, religious or non-religious, different cultural and ethnic groups. We are responsible for helping to equip students to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds. Our main contributions to community cohesion can be classified in three areas:

1. Teaching, learning and the curriculum: using the curriculum to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values
2. Equality and excellence: ensuring high standards for all and tackling under performance by any particular group
3. Engagement and extended services: engaging with other schools, parents and the community, as well as local authorities and other partners in developing extended services

Teaching, learning and curriculum.

At Hele's School we have a sharp focus on maintaining high standards of learning and teaching which is embedded within a relevant and high quality curriculum. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity are evident across the curriculum. We will ensure that our students:

- Recognize diversity across the school and within the wider community and take opportunities to celebrate and value difference as appropriate.
- Understand the idea of shared values and what that means to us as individuals.
- Have an understanding of the need to defend the human rights of all individuals.
- Participate, through their own choices, in all that the school and wider community has to offer

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- Engage in lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help them to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Have a greater understanding of community and diversity through enrichment activities and visits.
- Have an effective voice and involvement in the governance and organization of our school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.

Equity and Excellence

As stated in our aims, we believe in full inclusion of all members of society in a fair and equal way in order to bring out the best in each and every child. We will ensure that students and staff:

- Are treated fairly and equally and given equal opportunities in all that the school has to offer.
- Work towards removing any barriers against access and participation in all that the school has to offer, both during curriculum time as well as during extended schools activities.
- Identify at the earliest possible opportunity any areas of concern which need to be dealt with as part of our community cohesion approach.
- Work together to eliminate any variations of expectation for any groups or individuals.

Engagement and Extended Services

Hele's School students take an active part within the community from local to global. We aim to progress this action further to the benefit of the students themselves as well as the wider community. We will therefore:

- Provide opportunities for our students and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds, enabling the building of positive relationships between all community members.
- Sustain our existing links with other schools and different communities both locally as well as nationally and internationally and seek opportunities for branching out further.
- Provide signposting to the wide variety of extended services on offer in the school and elsewhere.

Following consultation with a range of stakeholders, much good practice was identified. Students, staff and parents identified the following as positive aspects of our practice:

- Support and care for students
- A wide and balanced curriculum which suits the needs of learners
- High standards of education and behaviour
- An effective anti-bullying policy

Ongoing communication and consultation related to the action plan will take place through Governors, School Forum, Parental Communications Group, staff meetings and the school newsletter.

Impact Assessments

The Equality Strategy Group at Hele's School monitors policies and functions and recommends priorities, to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body, to ensure that all policies, strategies and services are impact assessed.

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The school's strategic CPD (Continuing Professional Development) plan has identified the need to train managers and staff to assist them in conducting impact assessments that look at a range of diverse needs, including race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, faith, age, social exclusion

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