THE HOWARD PARTNERSHIP TRUST

THPT EQUALITY POLICY

Date of review: July 2025	Responsible body: The Howard Partnership Trust
Review period: Annually	Trust/Committee: Inclusion Committee
Next due for review: July 2026	Executive Lead: DCEO, Head of People
Status: Statutory	Publication: Website

Aims/Purpose:

The Howard Partnership Trust are fully committed to providing all pupils and employees with an equal opportunity to reach their full potential. As set out in the Equality Act (2010), this covers sex, race, disability, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation, pupils and employees who are pregnant and on maternity/paternity leave, or who are undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment, and age in relation to employees. Our aim of "Bringing Out the Best" applies equally to all our pupils and employees. We are proud of, and value, the diverse backgrounds of everyone in our communities.

We believe, as a Trust providing comprehensive education, every child has the right to a stimulating education that promotes academic and personal growth and celebrates unique strengths, that every staff member is entitled to rewarding and fulfilling work.

We also believe that the curriculum itself should reflect the cultural and cognitive diversity of our society as a whole, so that all pupils grow up with an awareness of the contribution made by other cultures and the value of diverse ways of thinking to that society, even if they do not directly encounter them at their schools. The concept of Equality of Opportunity is one of our core values as a Trust. As an employer, we similarly strive to ensure we do not discriminate against employees and potential employees in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, reward and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Legal Background

The legal and local framework for this policy is the Equality Act (2010). The Equality Act replaced nine major Acts of parliament and almost one hundred sets of regulations, which had been introduced over several decades. It provides a single, consolidated source of equality law, covering all types of discrimination, harassment and victimisation that are unlawful. It simplified the law by getting rid of anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time, and extended protection against discrimination in several areas.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006

- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

This policy has due regard to national guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and Trusts'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Other Employment Policies

The Equality Act 2010 provides a modern, single legal framework with three broad duties:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

For the purpose of this policy, the Equality Act 2010 will be referred to as 'The Act'. The Trust fully understands the principles of The Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities.

Aims and Values

The Howard Partnership Trust (THPT) is a welcoming organisation where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered.

We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils to maximise their potential regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, cognitive diversity, pregnancy, maternity, ability, marriage or civil partnership, age, gender identification and socio-economic circumstances. Although this list of the areas of potential discrimination is wide-ranging, it is not exhaustive and incidents of discrimination on any other grounds will be taken equally seriously. We create and promote positive relationships with pupils, parents, carers, employees, Governors, Trustees and members of the wider community.

At THPT we aim to promote equality and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of Trust/school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement for adults and pupils alike. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion and we actively work to celebrate diverse perspectives and strengths.

The Equality Policy provides a framework for THPT to pursue our equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination (both direct and indirect), harassment and victimisation (see Appendix 1), and promote equality of opportunity, good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds and those with protected characteristics in all our activities.

We will seek to ensure that no pupils, employees, parents, carers or any other person, through their contact with the individual schools or wider Trust, receives less favourable or discriminatory treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This includes the protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act (2010) – sex, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), age (in the case of adults), disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pupils or employees who are pregnant, on maternity/paternity leave, and pupils and employees that are undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment.

As a Trust, we aim to:

- Provide a secure environment in which everyone can flourish and achieve;
- Provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- Provide opportunity for recognition and celebration of individual strengths and diverse perspectives;
- Prepare pupils for life in a diverse society in which they are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
- Include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- Provide positive non-stereotyping information about different groups of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marriage or civil partnership, ability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity;
- Plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity;
- Actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage;
- Make inclusion a thread which runs through all our activities.

To achieve these aims we will:

- Involve stakeholders in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures;
- Publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community;
- Collect and analyse data to ensure all groups of pupils and staff are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage;
- Use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for all, respond to people's diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning or employment;
- Ensure that the wider school curriculum, CPD programmes and the Rewards & Benefits Framework make explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity;
- Have high expectations of behaviour, through the use of Behaviour for Learning, the Respectful Relationships and Behaviour Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct, which demonstrate respect to others.
- Use opportunities such as (REPORTS, Parent evenings etc) to celebrate individual strengths

THPT is committed to:

- Being proactive in promoting good relationships and equality of opportunity across all aspects of school life and the wider community;
- Encouraging, supporting and enabling all pupils and employees to reach their potential and make a positive contribution;
- Working in partnership with families, the local authority (LA) and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and tackle discrimination

ensuring that our schools implement their Single Equality Schemes.

Responsibilities

Trustees are responsible for:

- Making sure that the Trust and our schools comply with current equality legislation, in particular the Equality Act (2010);
- Making sure the Equality Policy and its procedures are followed.

The CEO, Executive Leaders, Principals and Service Leads are responsible for:

- Fostering an organisational culture that promotes equality and diversity;
- Making sure the policy is readily available and that the Trustees, Governors, employees, pupils and their parents/carers know about it;
- Making sure the procedures are followed;
- Creating diverse accessible opportunities for feedback through multiple channels; recognizing strength in continued improvement and learning opportunities;
- Producing regular information for Trustees, Governors and employees about the policy and how it is working and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary;
- Reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may exist;
- Making sure all employees know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out;
- Ensuring staff promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the Trust, challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, and showing appropriate support for pupils with additional needs, maintaining a good level of awareness of issues surrounding equality; understanding the contextual information (such as communication differences) that may impact on how an individual student communicates distress.
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination by following the procedures as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy.
- Keeping equality and diversity issues on the Trust's agenda and ensuring policies and procedures are developed with these issues in mind.
- Identifying continued opportunities for learning.

Responsibility for overseeing equality and diversity practices in the Trust and at each school lies jointly with THPT Standards & Performance Committee, Business & Finance Committee, People, Pay & Performance Committee, and named employees. These responsibilities include:

- Monitoring work on equality and diversity issues;
- Ensuring appropriate response to dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents);
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of potentially vulnerable groups of pupils;
- Monitoring and actively working to reduce exclusions;
- Monitoring the application of the Rewards & Benefits Framework and the Pay Policy.

Employees

All THPT employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Specifically:

- Modelling good practice;

- Recognising discriminatory incidents and how to appropriately respond;
- Being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- Promoting equality and avoiding discrimination;
- Undertaking all relevant EDI related training and learning opportunities, which will encompass relevant legal updates;
- Recognizing the relevant contextual information such as communication preferences or differences, trauma informed responses.

Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will be considered in line with relevant Trust policies, including Disciplinary and Capability, Grievance, Internal Complaints and Concerns, Online Safety, Responding to Concerns and Code of Conduct.

The THPT HR Team are responsible for:

- Developing and modelling good practice in HR activity;
- Supporting line management and leadership in responding to discriminatory incidents;
- Developing and delivering, as necessary, ongoing appropriate equality and diversity training for employees;
- Ensuring recruitment and selection processes minimise the opportunity for conscious and unconscious bias and support the recruitment of individuals who share the Trust values and behaviours;
- Collecting and analysing data with a view to evaluating HR practice across the Trust in relation to discrimination.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Not behaving in a manner that would suggest bias, prejudice, discrimination or any public phobic behaviour due to a person's diversity;
- Keeping equality and diversity issues on School Council agendas, through a shared input with employees on developing policies relating to this area. For example, the anti-bullying policy and specifically racist and homophobic bullying and developing school/class rules which challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- Creating a culture where everyone is respected and valued no matter the diversity of their identities.

Inclusion teams are responsible for:

- Identifying and supporting pupils with a disability and candidates with access arrangements during public exams (see Appendix 2).

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Keeping equality and diversity issues on the Parent Council agenda and a shared input with employees on developing policies relating to this area. For example, the anti-bullying policy and the Home-School Agreement.
- Communicating and raising concerns.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for:

- Familiarising and following our equality and diversity policy as the need arises;
- Behaving in accordance with the THPT Code of Conduct.

Monitoring, Reviewing and Assessing Impact

This Equality and Diversity Policy is supported by a Single Equality Scheme. The Scheme is linked to the THPT and schools' plans including accessibility. Such plans will include targets promoting equality. Each THPT school will have its own bespoke accessibility plan that will be overseen by the Executive Leadership Team. The Equality Policy will be reviewed yearly 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.

Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessment will be used to inform future planning and decision-making.

Breaches of the Policy

All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to the CEO and the Board of Trustees as required.

Appendix One

Types of Discrimination

1. **Direct Discrimination** - this occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat, or would treat, other people.

2. **Indirect Discrimination -** this occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.

3. **Harassment -** this is 'unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.' This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour.

4. **Associative discrimination** - this occurs where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for associating with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

5. **Perceptive discrimination –** This occurs where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she in fact does not have that protected characteristic.

6. **Victimisation -** this occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done in connection with the Equality Act ('a protected act'). A protected act includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Equality Act.

7. **A failure to make reasonable adjustments** may occur where a physical feature or a requirement, condition or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Appendix Two

The Equality Act 2010 and Conduct of Examinations

A	Training invigilators
1	The yearly training will make invigilators aware of the Equality Act 2010 and train them in disability issues.
2	Invigilators will be made aware of policies and procedures relating to emergency evacuation and medication, especially when they relate to a candidate with a disability
3	Invigilators will be made aware of alternative means of communication, where appropriate, especially in the exam room when conveying information to disabled candidates
B	Information for candidates
	Information supplied to candidates with a disability, such as the JCQ Information for Candidates, are suitably sized and adapted.
C	Seating arrangements
1	There will be chairs available outside the examination rooms, or a separate place to wait, to enable those with a disability or those candidates who experience extreme stress or anxiety, to sit and rest before they enter the examination.
2	Where required, there will be sufficient space between desks and chairs to enable a candidate or invigilator to enter and leave the room without difficulty.
3	If the school is aware that a candidate may become unwell during the examination due to the nature of their disability, they will be seated close to the exits to make them feel more comfortable and to limit any disruption to others within the examination room.
4	Seating will be appropriate and comfortable for those who may have a disability which affects sitting and posture.
D	Candidates requiring access arrangements
1	Where a candidate has been granted the use of a Language Modifier, a reader or scribe, the individuals who will be acting in this capacity will be introduced to the candidate before the examination takes place. This is particularly the case for those candidates with autism who will find it difficult to relate to someone who is a stranger. For identified pupils, this person will be someone known to them from the regular staff body.
2	Where a candidate has been granted supervised rest breaks, the rest areas will be suitably comfortable as well as maintaining the security of the examination. Supervised rest breaks will apply to those candidates who suffer from conditions such as fatigue, hyperactivity, obsessive compulsive disorders or long-term health conditions.
3	Where a candidate has been granted the use of a prompter, it is important that the person appointed to act as a prompter is aware of disability etiquette, particularly when touching the candidate's desk as a means of a prompt, or tapping the candidate's arm or shoulder. This will apply to those candidates with autism who may have difficulty with time.
4	For on-screen tests, hardware and software will be adapted for those candidates with a sensory or multi-sensory impairment.
E	Emergency evacuation procedures
1	Invigilators and all other centre staff involved in conducting examinations will be aware of the emergency evacuation procedures in place for those candidates with a disability who may need assistance in leaving the building.
2	When evacuation and emergency procedures are being explained to candidates, attention should be given to those candidates with a disability, for whom these procedures may be different.

Source: Instructions for Conducting Examinations, JCQ, 2022

Appendix Three

Equality Objectives

Our equality objectives are based on our analysis of data and other information. They focus on those areas where we have agreed to take action to improve equality and opportunity. The Howard Partnership Trust has set out the following equality objectives. All of these objectives and actions to achieve them are detailed in academy and trust improvement plans.

In relation to Achievement:

- We are committed to improving the attainment of vulnerable groups of students, includingstudents with Special Educational Needs, students with disabilities and those entitled to Free School Meals so that the gap between their attainment and that of other students is narrowed.
- We will aim to raise aspirations among children and young people, their parents and communities and raise awareness of career and higher education opportunities, to challenge stereotypes.

In relation to Teaching and Learning:

- We will ensure that our curriculum (including our programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities) actively is broad and balanced and provides opportunities for all students and promotes understanding between different groups of people, cultures and societies.
- Our curriculum will include an element of PHSE education that tackles stereotypes and challenges student's perceptions.
- In relation to Behaviour and Safety: We will maintain a rigorous anti-bullying stance so that all students and staff, including those with protected characteristics, are protected from harassment and discrimination of all kinds.
- Our behaviour for learning policies will outline how we will deal with students who use discriminatory homophobic or otherwise offensive language. We will ensure the promotion of British values through our curriculum. This will support and develop our students into responsible citizens of the future.
- Continually review the curriculum to ensure parity of access regardless of difference.

In relation to Leadership and Management:

- We will demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity through consistent application of our policies and procedures.
- We will ensure that our systems for recruiting, retaining and managing staff (and potential applicants) support all those in groups protected by the Equalities Act.
- We will undertake equality assessments of all new and existing policies and procedures.
- Actively hire for and recognise divergent strengths and celebrate the value of cognitive diversity for high performing teams.

How we will consult and engage our stakeholders with regard to our PSED:

We engage and consult with our stakeholders (including parents, students, local governors, staff and local communities) so we can develop our awareness and review the impact of our policies and equality objectives.

Examples of our engagement and consultation include:

- Student surveys, 'Student Voice' forums and school council structures
- Student school leader programmes
- Staff surveys
- Parents forum
- Open events/Parents Evenings
- School website and other communication channels

How we will demonstrate we meet our PSED:

The following information demonstrates how we comply and achieve our PSED objectives:

- Reviewing pupil progress and attainment data, particularly from identified sub-groups. This data will be used to plan intervention.
- Mentoring and enrichment programmes.
- PSHE programmes, including tutor sessions, assemblies and celebrations involving students.
- Data and information published on our websites, including; Pupil Premium and SEN reports.
- School Improvement Plans, Trust reports and minutes.
- Taking advice from relevant parties e.g., disability experts, HR professionals etc.
- Information on SEN or specific support programmes.
- Work profile data and recruitment monitoring information.
- Equality Impact Assessments.
- Policies that are in place across the trust.