

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY POLICY (STUDENTS)

Policy Owner PPS DSLs	Applies to Prior Park Schools (Trust wide)	Superseded documents Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy v3
Associated documents Safeguarding Policy Behaviour Policy SEND Policy EAL Policy PSHCE Handbook Policy/ Personal Development Policy RSE Policy Curriculum Policy Exclusions Policy Accessibility Policy and Access Plan Anti-Bullying Policy Admissions Policy Gender Identity Policy	Review frequency Every three years (unless the legislation/regulations update before this time) Implementation date 3 February 2025	Legal Framework Equality Act 2010 (Schedule 10) Working Together with Safeguarding Children (July 2018) Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022) Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 Children and Families Act 2014 Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 SEND Code of Practice 2015 DfE Guidance Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

This policy is reviewed triennially, or more regularly as required, prior to approval by Trustees, where applicable.

Last reviewed by:	PPS DSLs (Mrs S James, Mrs I Burton and Miss M Porro) and Head of Compliance (Miss E Wickham) and the PPC Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
Date last reviewed:	November 2024
Approved by Trustees:	NA Approved by PEB
Date last approved:	3 February 2025
Date for next approval:	February 2028

1. Introduction

Prior Park Schools (PPS) is a family of Christian schools based in Bath and Gibraltar. Prior Park College (PPC) and The Paragon School (TP) are incorporated in England as Prior Park Educational Trust Ltd. Prior Park School Gibraltar (PPSG), is incorporated in Gibraltar as Prior Park School Ltd. Both are companies limited by guarantee and registered charities.

The Prior Park Schools mission, underpinned by shared values, is to steward a thriving family of communities with love for the young people they serve at their heart. These vibrant communities cultivate creativity, foster integrity, and transform lives.

Prior Park Schools Values:

Curiosity - Generosity - Courage

2. Scope

PPS is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all members of its community and values the rich diversity and creative potential that students with different backgrounds, skills and abilities bring to the Trust.

PPS is opposed to any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying on the grounds of any protected characteristic and aims to create an environment where all current and prospective students are treated with dignity and respect and fairly with regard to their 'protected characteristics'.

This Equal Opportunities (Student) Policy sets out how PPS intends to meet these aims and comply with its equality duties, and is written under the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) ('the Act'), and draws upon the DfE guidance The Equality Act 2010 and schools (2014).

All members of the schools' communities are expected to comply with this policy. PPS seeks to encourage greater awareness of its aims, policies and procedures in relation to equal opportunities and will provide information and training as required.

Unlawful discrimination The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour (direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation) as defined below:

Direct discrimination This occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat - or would treat - other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination (e.g. if the school were to refuse to let a student become a prefect because he is gay).

Indirect discrimination This occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting students with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to students without that characteristic (e.g. if the school were to hold a parents’ meeting on a Friday evening, which would make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend).

Harassment This is defined in the Act as “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, but potentially extends to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic. Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable.

Victimisation This occurs when a student is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. If a student has done a protected act themselves (e.g. making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher) then the student’s own good faith will be relevant (e.g. if the parent’s complaint is based on information from their child and the child was deliberately lying, it is not victimisation for the school to punish the student in the same way as it might do any other dishonest student). A student must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or a sibling in relation to the Act.

3. Policy Aims

The aims of this policy and the Trust’s ethos as a whole are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics (the protected characteristics are;
 - Sex
 - Disability
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender reassignment
 - Religion or belief*
 - Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Age*
 - Marriage and civil partnership*

** “religion” as being any religion (e.g. all the major faith groups) and “belief” as any religious or philosophical belief (e.g. non-religious worldviews such as humanism); a lack of religion or a lack of belief are also protected characteristics. The last two of these protected characteristics (“Age” and “Marriage and civil partnership”) do not apply to students within schools.*

PPS has 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity (between those who share a certain protected characteristic and those who don't)
- Foster good relations (between those who share a certain protected characteristic and those who don't)

Everyone has at least some characteristics included in this list. PPS aims to foster a sense of community in which all

- students are valued and can thrive regardless of any of these characteristics,
- will seek to ensure that the school and its work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the PPS community.
- Comply with the equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.

For issues related to gender reassignment, please see the Gender Identity Policy.

In teaching about sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership, teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education. For further information, please see each schools RSE/Personal Development RSE Policy.

4. Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

It is the Board of Trustees responsibility to:

- Ensure that they and all staff act as role models of inclusive behaviour and practice
- Ensure that the Trust complies with its equality obligations
- Ensure that the School's policies and procedures are monitored in light of this policy and the School's wider equality obligations
- Be involved, together with the Head, when applicable, in dealing with serious breaches of this policy.

The Head and Senior Leadership Team

It is the Head and SLT's responsibility to:

- Ensure effective implementation of this policy and its and procedures
- Ensure that all staff are sufficiently aware and trained within equality, diversity and inclusivity Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice within the school, be it by staff, students, parents or visitors
- Have procedures in place to deal effectively with any reported incidents of discrimination, victimization or harassment
- Ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, this policy.

All Staff (including volunteers and contractors)

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Positively role model inclusive behaviour
- Actively challenge and report any forms of discrimination, victimization, harassment or bullying
- Promote an inclusive curriculum, identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the School's culture (d) Commit to broadening their knowledge, confidence and inclusive behaviour by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

All Students

It is the responsibility of all students to:

- Positively role model inclusive behaviour
- Actively challenge and report any forms of discrimination, victimization, harassment or bullying

5. Policy

Admissions

Each school welcomes applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. Students are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential to take advantage of the particular educational provision of each school.

The School will not discriminate in relation to the protected characteristics listed above in its admissions processes.

There will be no discrimination against students with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND), in so far as they have the academic ability to attend the School.

All students will have equity to opportunity to access the curriculum. However, the schools are not a specialist provider for SEND.

Disability

Definition of 'disability': The Act defines a 'disability' as when a person has '*a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities*'. This has some overlap with the definition of 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) in the Children and Families Act (2014), but not all students are disabled by their SEN and vice versa.

'Disabled students', for the purpose of this policy, refers not only to those students with physical disabilities but could include, for example, those with health issues, including mental health, or learning disabilities if they meet the legal definition of 'disability'.

- Direct discrimination: PPS will not treat a disabled student less favourably simply because that student is disabled.
- Indirect discrimination: PPS will not do something which applies to all students, but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled students only unless the School can show that it is done for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- Discrimination arising from disability: PPS will not discriminate against a disabled student because of something that is a consequence of their disability (e.g. by not allowing a disabled student on crutches outside at break because it would take them too long to get out and back).
- Harassment: PPS will not harass a student because of their disability (e.g. a teacher shouting at the student because their disability means that they are constantly struggling with classwork or unable to concentrate).

Reasonable adjustments

Each school will take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other students (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty).

Where the school is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the school is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The school will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a student's disability and the resources available to the school.

Reasonable adjustments and students' behaviour

Independent schools must comply with the Act in relation to student exclusions. The Act does not prohibit schools from excluding students with a protected characteristic but does prohibit schools from excluding students because of their protected characteristic or from discriminating unlawfully during the exclusion process. Schools also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the exclusions process for disabled students.

For further information, please see each school's SEND Policy.

Each school's Accessibility Policy sets out the school's arrangements for:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school's curriculum.
- improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of the education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school.
- improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is readily accessible to students who are not disabled.

Parents must inform the school when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the school.

The school will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the school cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs.

Bursaries are means tested awards offered to those who meet the admission criteria but may otherwise be unable to attend due to financial hardship. (Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website or obtained from the Finance office).

Curriculum and Teaching

The Act explicitly states that the content of each school's curriculum is excluded from discrimination law.

However, the delivery of the curriculum is explicitly included. As such, each school will ensure that the way in which its teaching covers issues, thoughts and ideas of all kinds does not subject individual students to discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics listed above. Staff are expected to be sensitive about equal opportunities in their teaching and guard against the transmission, through the content and delivery of the curriculum, of attitudes which stereotype people or label individual students as inferior or limited. This includes through the planning of lessons, teaching methods, classroom resources, behaviour management, etc., and through the 'hidden lessons' implicit in other activities about their value as a person, their human rights, the options available to them and their expectations for adult life. Teachers will create a safe space in which age appropriate, healthy discussion and education related to protected characteristics can occur. Students are provided with the opportunity to learn and understand more about the protected characteristics e.g. discussions about the gender pay gap/ challenges for trans pupils in school etc.

For further information about the content and delivery of the curriculum, please see each school's Curriculum Policy, PSHE/Personal Development Policy and Teaching and Learning Policy.

PPS affords all students access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). PPS will not discriminate against a student on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

PPS will:

- Treat all members of the community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics
- Ensure that students with English as an Additional Language and students with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support
- Monitor the admission and progress of students from different backgrounds
- Challenge and sanction inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by students and staff
- Offer all students access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination across the school's
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices

PPS recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all their forms are unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust and each school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

Religious belief

Each school within PPS is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or with no religion or faith) subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of the school community.

The Board of Trustees, through the Senior Leadership Team(s), actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

School Uniform

All students are required to wear the approved school uniform until Year 12, and a strict "business dress" code operates for Years 12 and 13. The uniform is as such that it accommodates for variations depending on personal choice. For further guidance please read each school's Uniform Policy.

The Halo Code

PPS have committed to The Halo Code. The Halo Code states the importance of embracing afro-hairstyles and the importance of acknowledging that these specific hairstyles are required for health and maintenance. Students will not be discriminated against for the style in which they choose to wear their hair. Any discrimination in relation to hairstyle is not acceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust and each schools' Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

6. Raising awareness

All school staff are expected to implement this policy on equal opportunities. Use is made of assemblies, PSHCE, the curriculum and the co-curricular programme to:

- Help students to develop self-esteem and recognise that they are valued as individuals
- Promote respect for each other within the school community
- Promote positive images and role models to challenge prejudice and raise awareness of related issues
- Foster an open-minded approach and encourage students to recognise the contributions made by different cultures, and so enable students to contribute actively to the process of education by bringing to it their cultural experiences, values and perspectives
- Understand why and how we deal with offensive language and behaviour
- Understand why we will deal with any incidents in a sensitive manner and as promptly as possible
- Reflect the School's position as one which is explicitly anti-discriminatory. Specifically, the School holds positions that are anti-racist, anti-sexist - including misogyny - and, explicitly, anti-HBT (anti-homophobic, biphobic and transphobic).
- Help students to understand the connection between our school values and the issues raised above.

7. Breach of this policy

PPS will do its utmost to protect students from discriminatory behaviour by any individual or groups within the school. Allegations of discriminatory behaviour on the part of students or staff will be handled under the relevant policy: the students' Behaviour Policy or the Staff Grievance / Disciplinary Policies.

8. Raising a Complaint

Current students and parents can raise a complaint through the Complaints Procedure as set out in our Complaints Policy.