The Henslow and Evolution School
Equality Policy

Our school's ethos relating to equality

We are committed to equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff and those receiving additional services from the school. We strive to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel safe to disclose any disability or difference which they feel could affect their ability to take part fully in school life. We will make reasonable adjustments so that the school environment is as accessible as possible. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn in, teach at or visit The Henslow School and Evolution School.

This policy applies to both schools. It links to our Accessibility Plan, Admissions Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, SEND Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 replaced earlier equality laws, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

Age and marriage or civil partnership are also protected characteristics, but they do not apply to pupils. They do apply to staff.

The Act sets out four types of unlawful behaviour:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation

While the Act is very clear that schools should not treat people differently because of the factors listed above there is one clear exception; in the case of disability the Act is clear that a disabled person must often be treated more favourably so that they can benefit from what the school has to offer.

The definition of a disability in the Act is:
'Physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'

Reasonable adjustment

The Act requires a school to make reasonable adjustments where something in the school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage, including providing an auxiliary aid or service if this would remove the disadvantage.

Accessibility

Each school has an Accessibility Plan, as the Equality Act requires. The plan sets out how, over time, we will increase disabled pupils' access to the curriculum, improve the physical environment and improve the way we give information to disabled pupils. It also holds the access audit for each school site. The plan is available from the school office on request.

We will provide newsletters and other information for parents and carers in an accessible format on request, for example for a parent who is visually impaired. Parents and carers should tell us if they have any difficulty accessing information. Events for parents and carers, such as open evenings and meetings with teachers, will be held in accessible parts of the building.

How we promote equality

As independent schools, we are not covered by the public sector equality duty. We choose to work to its aims: removing discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

Each school is designed to meet individual needs. We work with each student, and the adults who support them, from the point of referral so that their needs are met. EHC plans are central to identifying and meeting each student's needs.

The schools are too small for statistical analysis of the performance of different groups of students, but we still monitor achievement trends to see whether any group is underperforming. Through the whole curriculum, and PSHE, English Literature and RE in particular, we build understanding of difference and good relations. We use the curriculum and displays to challenge stereotypes, including gender stereotypes, and we cover equality in staff training. Students can raise equality concerns through student council meetings, and staff through staff meetings.

Gender questioning students

Requests for support with social transition are handled under the New Reflexions Children Questioning their Gender Policy, which is held centrally, and our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. We follow Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, paragraphs 260 to 279. In summary: staff do not start any action on social transition themselves; parents and carers are involved as a priority, unless that would put the child at greater risk, in which case the DSL decides what is needed first; decisions are based on the best interests of the child and of other children, with particular caution for primary-aged children; decisions are recorded; and no student uses toilets or changing rooms designated for the opposite sex.

Any bullying of a gender questioning student is dealt with under our Anti-bullying Policy.

Equality for staff

The Act says that a school must not discriminate against an employee or a potential employee. Schools must make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees as they do for students. Reasonable adjustments for disabled staff may include:

- Altering working hours
- Changing the location of the person's main area of work
- Allowing absences during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment
- Examining the duties allocated to a disabled member of staff to see where additional support may be required
- Supplying additional training
- Acquiring or making changes to equipment
- Altering premises
- Transferring the person to fill an existing vacancy, for example: if a teacher becomes disabled and there is no reasonable adjustment that can enable them to continue in their current post, they might be considered for another suitable post

Equality in the classroom

We make reasonable adjustments for disabled students by:

- Differentiating the curriculum to suit each individual student.
- Developing a vision and values based on an inclusive ethos.
- Encouraging a positive attitude from all staff to overcome barriers for disabled students.
- Liaising effectively with parents, carers and specialists who can offer advice and support about what is effective.
- Allowing students to have a meaningful voice and to be consulted effectively.
- Having a positive approach to managing behaviour.
- Ensuring effective staff training and development.
- Building disability into day to day resourcing arrangements.
- Adopting a sensitive approach to meeting the specific needs of students.
- Making available role models and positive images of disability.
- Using access arrangements appropriately in supporting students to take examinations.

We strive to create a happy, safe and inclusive environment which promotes independent, healthy and confident learners. We encourage all our learners, including those with a disability, to aim for high standards, become economically aware, and make a positive contribution to the wider community.

We challenge inequality by:

- Promoting equal opportunities for all, regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation, and making reasonable adjustments to the curriculum where needed to meet the needs of all students.
- Setting high standards and targets for all students.
- Providing a safe and secure learning environment for all students.
- Developing student collaboration and independent learning opportunities.
- Making sure that all students have opportunities to develop positive self-esteem.
- Encouraging all students to become literate and numerate, so that they can communicate effectively.
- Assessing students for access arrangements as appropriate
- Promoting positive attitudes in students, to help them to develop socially, morally and spiritually, so that they can make positive and safe choices.
- Encouraging awareness and acceptance of disability, both in and out of the classroom.
- Making sure that each student is treated as an individual and specific needs are met.

Equality objectives

Equality objectives are not a legal requirement for independent schools, but we set them each year as good practice and review them at the end of the summer term. Records of how individual students are supported are kept in their own files, not in this policy.

Our objectives for 2026-27 are:

- Check that curriculum resources and displays in both schools show a range of people, including disabled people, and challenge stereotypes.
- Review school leaflets and both websites for accessibility, and offer key documents in other formats on request.
- Use behaviour and bullying records on CPOMS each term to check whether any group of students is affected more than others, including by prejudice-based bullying.

Status	November 2026
Next review due	August 2028
Reviewed by	Jacqui Brooks