



400 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Equality Policy

Policy approval date	March 2026
Policy review date	March 2027
Policy Lead	Ian Hawkins (Headteacher)
Governor or SLT approval	Governor
Governor committee responsible for policy	Pastoral

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision was the introduction of a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and academies. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011 and extends to all *protected characteristics* (see Legal Background below). It replaces the three separate previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender.

Vision and Values

At Richard Hale School we have high expectations of all our students irrespective of ability, age, background, belief or religion, disability, gender, race or sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn or teach in or visit the school. Learning is the entitlement of every member of the school community, so every student has the right to equal access to a curriculum that meets their needs. All students and staff should feel safe to work and play at Richard Hale free from any form of discriminatory or disrespectful behaviour, in word or deed. It is fundamental to our values that all members of the school community should behave with respect for each other, for each other's property, and for the School's good reputation in the wider community.

Equally important in enabling students to make a success of their time at Richard Hale is the provision of opportunities for all students to learn responsibility, to develop self-esteem and tolerance of others, and to make a full contribution to the life of the School. So it is our policy to provide equal access to all extra-curricular activities wherever possible. Our aim is that all students realize their full potential and complete their education with us successfully. We are therefore committed to promoting equality of the person and equality of provision at every level of the school from the outset through strategic planning, policy creation, day-to-day management and classroom practice.

School Aims

The school motto is "Learning with Virtue". Our aim is for every student to:

- **Respect Others** - so students show respect to the whole community and become young people of character who want to and will contribute to society
- **Aim High** – so all students achieve their potential
- **Show Commitment** - by engaging in the opportunities available to not only develop their own interests and skills, but also to enrich the life of the school

School Context

Richard Hale School is an 11-18 all-ability school for boys, which admits girls into a co-educational sixth form. The intake is largely from the towns of Hertford, Ware and surrounding villages. The published admission number is 180 but the school is consistently over-subscribed. The school roll is currently over 1200, with a sixth form of over 300. Year 7 students are drawn from approximately 50 primary schools, and the sixth form now attracts boys and girls from further afield than the immediate locality. The school adopted Foundation status in September 2008 and became an Academy in 2013. The school currently uses the County Council's admission rules for single sex schools. Richard Hale has an extensive sixth form curriculum.

The school is located in the Hertford Castle ward; the socio-economic information is derived from this ward and the nine others that supply the majority of students. When data is averaged against the national picture the school population has a higher percentage of adults per household who have attended Higher Education, a low ethnic minority intake, and only a small number of children from overcrowded households. The percentage of students with special educational needs is below the national average. We place a high value on extra-curricular participation, and regularly achieve success at district, regional and even national level in a range of activities, including sports, drama, art, public speaking, young enterprise, mathematics and engineering. Extra-curricular participation and senior student leadership are fostered by a strong, competitive house system. Each year a significant number of students complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme at bronze, alongside provision for silver and gold levels.

The 2024 Ofsted inspection report on the school contained the following statements:

- Pupils live out the school's vision of 'Learning with Virtue.'
- They {Pupils} have thoughtful opportunities to develop their character.
- The school's aim for pupils to respect others is realised.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. This happens because they build positive relationships with staff.
- The school is a happy place to learn and work in.
- Pupil's experiences extend beyond the academic.
- Sixth-form students, including those new to the school, receive high-quality care and education.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported.
- There is a strong emphasis on building positive, respectful relationships.
- Pupils appreciate how staff recognise their successes and efforts to do well.
- The school's personal development curriculum celebrates diversity. Pupils learn about different cultures.

THE LEGAL BACKGROUND

Richard Hale School is committed to meeting its public sector statutory duties as detailed below. We understand that the duties apply to service delivery and employment and staff management as well as policy development and implementation.

General Duty under the Equality Act 2010:

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- **advance equality of opportunity** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- **foster good relations** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Specific Duties of the Equality Act 2012:

These duties enable schools to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The specific duties require schools to:

- Publish quantitative and qualitative information annually, showing compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- To set at least every four years one or more specific measurable equality objectives that further the aims of the equality duty through the Accessibility Plan.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects students from discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics. The protected characteristics for school provisions are:

disability; ethnicity and race; gender (sex); gender identity and reassignment; pregnancy, maternity and breast feeding; religion and belief; sexual orientation; age (staff only); marriage and civil partnership (staff only)

Disability

The disability provisions in this act are different from those for other protected characteristics in that schools may, and often must, treat disabled students more favourably than non-disabled students by making reasonable adjustments to ensure that a disabled student can benefit from what they offer to the same extent that a student without a disability can.

At Richard Hale we implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

Provision for disabled students is closely linked with the existing provisions for students with special educational needs. These are the same duties as previously existed under the DDA and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010.

Community Cohesion

The UK is a diverse and multicultural community. Richard Hale School embraces this diversity which enhances our lives and the education process. However, we recognise that our local and school environment is not significantly culturally diverse, and are therefore conscious of the need to provide opportunities and experiences for the students to learn about and where possible to encounter people from other cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.

Equality of Opportunity

Richard Hale School operates equality of opportunity in its day-to-day practice. We comply fully with legislation which protects all staff from discrimination on the grounds of any of the *protected characteristics*. This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices and disciplinary procedures. We are mindful of the safety and well-being of our staff and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination, recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementation

The Governing Body, supported by the Headteacher and staff, is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this scheme. The Headteacher retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the Action Plan is delivered effectively and will report regularly on the matter to governors. All staff are responsible for delivering the scheme both as employees and as it relates to their area of work.

Responsibility for	Key person
Single equality scheme	I Hawkins / Headteacher
Disability equality (including bullying incidents)	M Greenwood / Deputy Headteacher
SEN	S Morris / SENCO
Accessibility	M Botheras / Business Manager
Gender equality (including bullying incidents)	M Greenwood / Deputy Headteacher
Race equality (including racist incidents)	M Greenwood / Deputy Headteacher
Equality and diversity in curriculum content and student achievement	D Sykes / Assistant Headteacher
Equality and diversity – behaviour and exclusions	M Greenwood / Deputy Headteacher
Stakeholder consultation	I Hawkins / Headteacher
Policy review	SLT and Governors
Communication and publishing	M Greenwood / Deputy Headteacher

Review and Publication

In writing and reviewing all school policies, the equality impact will be assessed with regard to all forms of unlawful discrimination to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our students and staff, and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

The RHS Equality Scheme will be aligned with the School Development Plan. Its implementation will be monitored within the school's self-evaluation and other review processes and updated annually. It will then be published on our website.

Consultation

Richard Hale School is committed to encouraging everyone to contribute to the development and review of all policies and practices affecting the life of the school and its impact within the wider community, e.g. through staff responses (individually or by department or year team consultation), governors, student voice, and parent and year group questionnaires. We will continue to consult various stakeholders on this scheme and on all of our policies. This Scheme will be reviewed annually by the Governors' Curriculum and Pastoral Committee which makes recommendations to the full Governing Body.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION

Governors will:

- Ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties
- Ensure the accountability of the Headteacher and senior staff for the communication and implementation of school policies
- Review the school's equality and other policies according to the policy review calendar

The Headteacher and Senior Staff will:

- Initiate and oversee the development and regular review of policies and procedures
- Ensure the effective communication of the policies to all students, staff and stakeholders
- Ensure that managers and staff are trained as necessary to carry out the policies
- Oversee the effective implementation of the policies
- Hold line managers accountable for effective policy implementation
- Provide appropriate role models for all managers, staff and students
- Highlight good practice from departments, individual managers, staff and students, and provide mechanisms for the sharing of good practice
- Ensure a consistent response to incidents, e.g., bullying cases and racist incidents
- Ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties effectively
- Create opportunities for students and staff to state their views

All other staff (teaching and non-teaching) will:

- Contribute to consultations and reviews
- Raise issues with line managers which could contribute to policy review and development
- Maintain awareness of the school's current equality policy and procedures
- Implement the policy as it applies to staff and students
- Behave with respect and fairness to all colleagues and students
- Provide a consistent response to incidents, e.g., bullying cases and racist incidents
- Contribute to the implementation of the school's equality scheme

Evidence demonstrating the school's compliance with the Equality Policy

The Specific Duties of the Equality Act 2012 enable schools to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The specific duties require schools to:

1. Publish quantitative and qualitative information annually, showing compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This information is available on the school website and via the DFE performance table link on the website.
2. To set, at least, every four years, one or more specific measurable equality objectives that further the aims of the equality duty. Please see the School Development and School Strategic Plan.