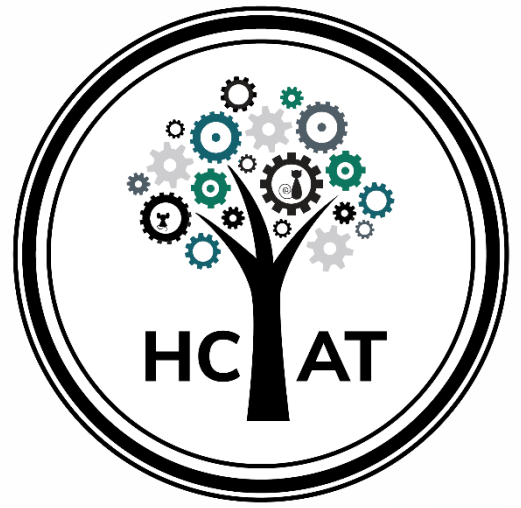




HCAT

Equality Policy and Objectives

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Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
1	Original	Feb 2023
2	Rebranded	June 2024
3	Update with most recent legislation (Prevent Duty)	August 2026

HCAT Equality Policy and Objectives

1. Introduction

HCAT is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive environment where every pupil, employee and member of the wider school community is treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

We value and celebrate the diversity of our pupils, staff, families and communities. We recognise that people have different backgrounds, experiences, identities and needs, and we believe these differences strengthen our schools and the Trust as a whole.

In fulfilling our responsibilities under the Equality Act, we are committed to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- advancing equality of opportunity for those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- fostering good relations between people from different backgrounds;
- identifying and removing barriers to participation, achievement and inclusion;
- promoting a culture of respect, belonging and inclusion;
- challenging prejudice, stereotypes, discriminatory language and behaviour;
- making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, staff and visitors;
- considering equality implications when developing policies, making decisions and allocating resources; and
- responding promptly and appropriately to allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

This policy sets out how HCAT promotes equality, diversity and inclusion and meets its statutory duties.

The policy applies to all pupils, prospective pupils, staff, prospective staff, Trustees, volunteers, parents, carers, visitors, contractors and members of the wider community who engage with the Trust. It should be read alongside other relevant Trust policies, including those relating to safeguarding, SEND, behaviour, complaints and recruitment

2. Policy Commitments

HCAT promotes equality, diversity and inclusion through its curriculum, culture, policies and practices.

Curriculum and school environment

We aim to provide all pupils with the opportunity to succeed and thrive. To achieve this, we will:

- ensure curriculum planning reflects our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- provide opportunities for pupils to explore identity, diversity, equality and respect;
- promote understanding of, and respect for, different backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and experiences;
- challenge discriminatory language, prejudice, stereotypes and discriminatory behaviour;
- use resources, texts and learning materials that reflect the diversity of modern society;
- ensure pupils can see themselves and others positively represented within the curriculum;
- celebrate the achievements and contributions of people from diverse backgrounds; and
- maintain a learning environment that promotes inclusion, belonging and mutual respect.

Attainment and Achievement

We have high expectations for all pupils and are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity regardless of protected characteristics or individual circumstances.

To secure the best possible outcomes, we will:

- provide positive role models who promote inclusion and respect;
- ensure teaching and learning meet the needs of individual pupils;
- identify and address barriers to achievement, attendance and participation;
- monitor the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL); and
- implement appropriate support and intervention where disparities are identified.

Ethos, engagement and inclusion

Equality, inclusion and respect are embedded throughout school life. We will:

- encourage pupils, parents and carers to raise concerns and seek support when needed;
- promote positive behaviour and respectful relationships through our Behaviour Policy;
- make reasonable adjustments to support access to education, information, services and activities;
- recognise and respect the cultural, moral, spiritual and social needs of our pupils;
- seek and value pupil voice through consultation, surveys and representative groups;
- promote a sense of belonging for all members of the school community; and
- use positive role models to foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

We are committed to fair, transparent and inclusive employment practices. We will:

- advertise vacancies openly and recruit on merit;
- ensure those involved in recruitment receive appropriate equality and safer recruitment training;
- take reasonable steps to attract applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds;
- provide equal access to training, development and career progression opportunities;
- address allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation promptly and appropriately;
- promote this policy through staff induction and ongoing professional development; and
- regularly review employment policies and practices to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice.

Countering and Challenging Harassment and Bullying

HCAT does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation of any kind. We will:

- challenge discriminatory behaviour and language whenever it occurs;
- ensure clear procedures are in place for reporting, recording, investigating and responding to incidents;
- support those affected by discrimination, prejudice-related incidents or bullying;
- monitor incidents and identify trends to inform future action; and
- report relevant information through Trust governance arrangements.

Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

We recognise the important role that parents, carers and the wider community play in supporting equality and inclusion. We will:

- encourage all parents and carers to participate in school life;
- maintain effective communication and seek feedback to inform school improvement;
- work collaboratively with community organisations and local partners;
- ensure all pupils and families feel welcomed and included;
- provide opportunities for pupils to engage with their local community through visits, visitors and enrichment activities; and
- support charitable and community initiatives that promote social responsibility and community cohesion.

3. Our Equality Objectives

The Trust reviews and publishes equality objectives at least every four years and monitors progress through its governance and school improvement processes.

Equality Objectives 2026-2030

- To ensure that all pupils access a curriculum that promotes equality, diversity, inclusion and respect.
- To reduce gaps in attendance, achievement and participation for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of pupils.
- To strengthen inclusive leadership and decision-making across the Trust.
- To promote a culture of belonging where all pupils, staff and families feel valued, respected and included.
- To use equality information and stakeholder feedback to identify and address barriers to participation and achievement.

4. Responsibility for the Policy

Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion is the responsibility of everyone within the Trust community.

The Associate Trustees have responsibility for ensuring that:

- equality objectives are reflected within school improvement planning;
- progress towards equality objectives is monitored and challenged appropriately;
- the school complies with relevant equality legislation and statutory duties;
- information relating to discriminatory incidents is scrutinised and appropriate action is taken; and
- diversity, equality and inclusion are actively promoted throughout the school community.

Trustees are responsible for ensuring that:

- the Trust complies with its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty;
- appropriate policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements are in place to promote equality, diversity and inclusion; and
- equality considerations are reflected in strategic decision-making across the Trust.

School leaders are responsible for:

- providing visible leadership in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion;
- implementing and reviewing equality objectives;
- ensuring equality considerations inform policy development and decision-making;
- recording, responding to and reporting discriminatory incidents appropriately;
- ensuring staff understand their responsibilities under this policy; and
- providing appropriate training, guidance and support to staff.

All staff are responsible for:

- treating others with dignity, respect and fairness;
- promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in their practice and interactions;
- challenging discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping and discriminatory language or behaviour;
- responding appropriately to incidents involving bullying, harassment or discrimination;
- supporting an inclusive environment where all pupils can thrive; and
- keeping their knowledge and understanding of equality matters up to date through training and professional development.

5. Monitoring and Review

The Trust's leadership teams are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy and its impact on pupils, staff and the wider school community.

This includes monitoring outcomes and experiences for different groups, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), looked after children and other groups identified through school and Trust data.

Monitoring may include analysis of:

- pupil achievement and progress;
- attendance, behaviour, suspension and exclusion data;
- admissions information;
- incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination and prejudice-related behaviour;
- participation in extracurricular activities and wider school opportunities;
- stakeholder feedback, including pupil, parent and staff voice;
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development; and
- the effectiveness of policies, practices and provision in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Trust will review this policy regularly to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation and reflects best practice.

In accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Trust will publish equality information and review its equality objectives at least every four years. Where required, the Trust will also publish gender pay gap information and supporting narrative on its website.

Appendix 1 – Our Legal Duties

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination, harassment and victimisation and promotes equality of opportunity.

The Act identifies the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

These protections apply to pupils, prospective pupils, staff, applicants for employment and others who engage with the Trust. The protected characteristics of age and marriage and civil partnership do not apply to pupils.

Public Sector Equality Duty

As a public body, HCAT is required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In addition, the Trust must:

- publish information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty; and
- publish and review equality objectives at least every four years.

Unlawful Conduct

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits the following forms of unlawful conduct:

Direct discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

Applying a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic and cannot be justified.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation

Treating a person unfavourably because they have made, supported or raised a complaint under equality legislation.

Discrimination arising from disability

Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something arising from their disability where this cannot be objectively justified.

Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility

The Trust has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, staff and visitors to reduce or remove substantial disadvantage.

This includes:

- reviewing policies, practices and procedures where they create barriers;
- providing auxiliary aids or services where appropriate;
- ensuring information is accessible;
- improving access to the curriculum for disabled pupils;
- improving the physical environment of schools; and
- improving access to information and communication.

HCAIT maintains Accessibility Plans and works in partnership with pupils, families and professionals to identify and respond to individual needs. The duty to make reasonable adjustments is both anticipatory and ongoing.

Related Legislation and Guidance

This policy should be read alongside relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version)

Community Cohesion

HCAIT is committed to encouraging an inclusive community where diversity is valued and positive relationships are promoted. Through our curriculum, policies and wider school activities, we encourage mutual respect, understanding and cooperation between people from different backgrounds, cultures, faiths and experiences. We strive to ensure that all members of our school communities feel welcomed, respected and able to contribute positively to school life and society.