

**Equality and Diversity Policy for Hyndhead Special School**

**1. Purpose and Principles**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Hyndhead Special School fosters an environment where all children and young people, regardless of their background, identity, or ability, are treated with respect, dignity, and equality. We are committed to promoting and embedding equality and diversity in every aspect of school life, and this policy outlines how we will meet our statutory and moral obligations in relation to the rights of the child, the Equalities Act, and relevant guidance and legislation from the Scottish Government and Fife Council.

Our principles are based on the belief that all children and young people are entitled to an education that is free from discrimination, that values diversity, that provides equal opportunities for all and enshrines equity.

**2. Legal Framework**

This policy has been developed with reference to the following key documents and legislation:

* **The Equalities Act 2010**: Protection against discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. These are known as “protected characteristics”.
* **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**: This includes principles such as non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, and the right to participation.
* **The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**: Recognising the rights of children and young people, including those with additional support needs.
* **Scottish Government Guidance on Inclusive Education**: Specific guidance on creating inclusive and supportive educational environments for children with additional support needs.
* **Education Scotland & HMIe**: articulates with guidance, good practice and recommendations from both Education Scotland and HMIe.
* **Fife Council’s Equalities and Diversity Policy**: The local authority’s approach to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within schools.

**3. Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity**

At Hyndhead Special School, we are committed to:

* **Values**: Our values are Safe, Kind, Nurturing and Fun
* **Respecting and valuing diversity**: We celebrate the uniqueness of each child and young person, embracing all backgrounds, abilities, and needs.
* **Providing equal access to education**: We ensure that all pupils, regardless of their individual needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, tailored to their specific requirements.
* **Recognising and addressing discrimination**: We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying, or harassment, whether based on ability, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, or any other protected characteristic.
* **Promoting positive relationships**: We foster an environment of mutual respect, understanding, and kindness, where everyone feels valued and supported.

**4. Implementation and Actions**

We will implement this policy through the following actions:

* **Child’s Plans**: All children and young people will have a Child’s Plan that addresses their specific needs and ensures equitable access to education.
* **Training and Professional Development**: Staff will receive ongoing training to enhance their understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion. This includes awareness of complex additional support needs and strategies to promote inclusive practice.
* **Curriculum Provision**: The curriculum will be adapted to meet the diverse needs of our learners, ensuring that all pupils are able to engage in meaningful learning activities.
* **Monitoring and Evaluation**: We will regularly monitor and assess our policies, practices, and outcomes to ensure that equality and diversity are being actively promoted and maintained.
* **Engaging with Parents and Carers**: We will engage with families to ensure that their views and experiences are considered in the development and delivery of support. This will help us create a truly inclusive environment for children and young people.
* **Clear Reporting Procedures and Processes**: We will provide clear pathways for reporting and addressing any concerns related to discrimination or inequality, ensuring that children, parents, and staff feel confident that any issue will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

**5. Promoting the Rights of the Child**

Our school fully upholds the rights of children, in line with the UNCRC, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, and the principles of inclusive education. We recognise that:

* All children, regardless of their abilities or needs, have the right to access education that allows them to reach their full potential.
* Children with additional support needs should be supported to make their voices heard, participate fully in decisions about their education, and be treated with respect, kindness and dignity at all times.
* We are committed to ensuring that children’s rights are respected, promoted, and protected in all aspects of school life, including the development of bespoke support strategies and ensuring their needs are met.

**6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Practice**

* **Disability**: We will ensure that the school environment is physically accessible, with reasonable adjustments made to support learners with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, or other complex needs.
* **Cultural and Religious Diversity**: We will respect and support the religious and cultural identities of our learners and families, ensuring that learning materials and school activities are sensitive to their needs.
* **Gender Equality**: We will provide an environment where all our learners, regardless of gender, are given equal opportunities to succeed and develop.
* **Mental Health and Wellbeing**: We recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing for all our learners. We will provide support and resources to ensure that every child feels nurtured, safe, supported, and able to thrive in school.

**7. Responsibility and Accountability**

The Headteacher, supported by the Senior Leadership Team, is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy. All staff members, including teaching and support staff, have a responsibility to uphold the principles of equality and diversity in their daily practice and interactions with students.

We will work closely with our partners, external agencies, local authority representatives, and families to ensure that our practices meet the needs of all learners and are in line with national and local policies.

**8. Review and Update**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains up to date with current legislation, best practice, and the needs of our students. Feedback from staff, students, and families will be considered as part of this review.

This policy is designed to ensure that all students at our school, including those with complex and significant additional support needs, can access a high-quality education in a supportive, respectful, and inclusive environment.

References –

(Drafted March 2025. To be reviewed session 2026-2027)