



Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Policy Statement

At NewHeart Learning, we recognise that some children may be at an increased risk of abuse or neglect—both online and offline—and that additional barriers may exist which make it more difficult for some pupils to recognise, report, or disclose harm.

We are firmly committed to anti-discriminatory practice and to creating an environment where every child is respected, valued, and safeguarded—regardless of their background, identity, or personal circumstances.

We work to ensure that all pupils receive the same high level of protection and support, and we take proactive steps to identify and reduce risks for those who may be more vulnerable.

We give particular attention to children and young people who:

- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or ongoing medical or health needs
- Are young carers, with responsibilities at home
- May face discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation
- Speak English as an additional language
- Live in challenging circumstances, such as temporary accommodation, or are affected by substance misuse, domestic abuse, or other household vulnerabilities
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), child sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers or newly arrived in the UK
- Are affected by mental health concerns, either their own or those of a family member
- Are looked after children (LAC) or have previously been in care
- Are frequently absent or missing from education
- Have a parent or carer who has expressed an intention to electively home educate

Our safeguarding practice reflects an inclusive, child-centred approach that acknowledges and responds to each pupil's unique vulnerabilities and needs.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and with respect.
- Prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Promote a culture of inclusivity and understanding.
- Meet our legal obligations under the **Equality Act 2010**.
- Provide a framework for implementing and monitoring equality and diversity initiatives.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- Teaching and support staff
- Students and pupils
- Volunteers and contractors
- Recruitment, admissions, and placements

- Curriculum, assessment, and pastoral activities

4. Responsibilities

All staff at NewHeart Learning Limited share a responsibility to promote equality, inclusion, and prevent unfair discrimination. The Directors are accountable for taking appropriate action in cases of harassment or discrimination. The SENDCo leads on Individualised Academic Education Plans (IAEPs) and communicates with referring schools and agencies regarding individual targets.

Staff responsibilities include:

- Addressing incidents of sexual harassment, bullying, or discrimination.
- Supporting the elimination of unlawful discrimination.
- Contributing to the design and delivery of the curriculum, teaching methods, assessment procedures, and behaviour management strategies that actively promote equality and inclusion.
- Working collaboratively with parents and carers to support students' learning and wellbeing.

Pupils, parents, and visitors are expected to understand and act in accordance with this policy. We recognise that any pupil can be affected by gender stereotyping, and that policies or practices may impact different genders—men, women, boys, and girls—differently. Adjustments will be made where necessary to ensure fairness.

We also acknowledge that individuals of all genders may experience different forms of discrimination based on factors such as ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, age, or disability. These complexities will be considered to improve outcomes and relationships for all students, staff, and the wider NewHeart Learning community.

5. Principles

1. **Fairness and Equality:** We aim to provide equal opportunities for all students and staff.
2. **Diversity and Inclusion:** We celebrate diversity and seek to create an inclusive environment.
3. **Respect:** Everyone's contributions, backgrounds, and perspectives are valued.
4. **Accessibility:** We will ensure that our facilities, resources, and curriculum are accessible to all.
5. **Accountability:** Any breaches of this policy will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

6. Types of discrimination

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, discrimination may occur in the following forms:

Direct Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, age or marriage/civil partnership).

Indirect Discrimination

Applying a provision, criterion or practice that appears neutral but disadvantages individuals who share a protected characteristic, unless it can be objectively justified.

Discrimination Arising from Disability

Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability, without objective justification.

Harassment

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

Victimisation

Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination.

6. Implementation

- **Recruitment and Employment:** Ensure fair and unbiased recruitment processes.
- **Admissions:** Decisions based on suitability, needs, and availability, without discrimination.
- **Curriculum:** Teaching materials and methods will reflect diverse perspectives.
- **Training:** Staff will receive training on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- **Monitoring:** Regular review of policies, procedures, and incidents to ensure compliance.

7. Curriculum

NewHeart Learning provides a curriculum that is appropriate, engaging, and responsive to the needs of the pupils it serves. Its effectiveness is monitored and evaluated through Individualised Academic Education Plan (IAEP) and EHCP reviews, as well as analysis of academic progress.

The curriculum is designed to build on each pupil's starting point and is adapted to ensure the inclusion of:

- Boys and girls
- Pupils learning English as an additional language
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Pupils who are gifted and talented
- Pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils with disabilities
- Pupils in public care
- Vulnerable pupils

Each area of the curriculum incorporates the principles of equality and actively promotes positive attitudes toward diversity. The content reflects and values diversity, encouraging pupils to explore bias, challenge prejudice, and question stereotypes.

8. Teaching and Learning

All staff at NewHeart Learning work to ensure that the school is an inclusive environment where every pupil feels that their contributions are valued. Positive steps are taken to engage pupils who might otherwise be marginalised. Teaching takes account of pupils' experiences, starting points, and individual learning styles.

Pupils are regularly consulted about their learning, and groupings are planned and varied to meet both educational and social development needs. All pupils are encouraged to question, discuss, and collaborate during problem-solving tasks, and to support one another as resources within group activities.

Staff promote independence, helping pupils take responsibility for managing their own learning and behaviour. Stereotypes are actively challenged, and pupils' critical awareness and understanding of fairness are developed, enabling them to recognise bias and challenge inequality.

9. Referrals and admissions

We support students with identified special educational needs, as well as those who may require further assessment. Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) can be referred by their current school or by the local authority. Comprehensive information about each pupil—including ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, and dietary requirements—is collected through admission forms or during the admissions interview.

Referrals are made using the NewHeart Learning referral form, which includes the Individualised Academic Education Plan (IAEP). Following the referral, an induction meeting is arranged with the pupil, their parent/carer, and, where appropriate, a member of staff who knows the pupil well. A gradual transition into NewHeart Learning can be planned following this meeting to ensure a smooth and supportive start.

10. Attendance

Families are informed of their rights and responsibilities regarding pupil attendance, and any absence is followed up sensitively, taking into account cultural considerations or a child's disability. Provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance for both pupils and staff.

We take action to address any disparities in attendance between different groups of pupils. NewHeart Learning fully supports children with long-term medical needs, recognising that their attendance may be irregular due to hospital stays or ongoing treatment.

11. Reporting and Complaints

NewHeart Learning takes all concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or breaches of equality seriously.

A complaint can be made:

- In person to the Head of Provision
- By email to: daniella@newheartlearning.co.uk

If the complaint relates to the Head of Provision, it should be directed to the Advisory Board. Pupils may raise concerns through a trusted adult, key worker, or the DSL.

Timescales

- Acknowledgement of complaint: Within 5 working days
- Investigation commenced: Within 5 working days
- Written outcome provided: Within 20 working days

If additional time is required due to complexity, this will be communicated in writing.

Investigation process

All equality-related complaints will:

- Be handled confidentially and sensitively
- Be investigated impartially
- Consider all relevant evidence
- Include discussion with relevant parties
- Result in written findings and, where necessary, remedial action

Where a complaint meets safeguarding thresholds, it will be managed under the Safeguarding Policy.

Escalation

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may:

- Request a review by the Advisory Board
- Contact Cambridgeshire Local Authority (where relevant to placement)
- Seek independent advice from appropriate external bodies

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or school practices.

Date of last review:	20 February 2026
Date to review:	21 February 2027
Author:	Daniella Hart Head of Provision
Signed:	<i>Daniella Hart</i>