



HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

'Kindness, aspiration & self-belief'

DISABILITY & DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Policy Holder	Deputy Head Head of Learning Strategies
Date Approved	October 2026
Approval	SLT
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INTRODUCTION

Holmewood House School is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all pupils are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and are able to participate fully in school life.

This policy should be read alongside the School's:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy;
- Accessibility Policy Statement and Accessibility Plan;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness Policy;
- Admissions Policy; and
- Complaints Procedure.

HOW IS DISABILITY DEFINED?

A child or young person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

Examples of physical or mental impairments include:

- sensory impairments (such as visual or hearing loss)
- hidden disabilities (such as some mental health conditions)
- neurodivergent conditions (such as autism, or ADHD)
- specific learning difficulties (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia)
- long-term health conditions (such as diabetes or epilepsy)

This is a whole school policy which also applies to Boarding and the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Not all conditions automatically amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010; it depends on the severity and duration of their impact on day-to-day functioning.

DISCRIMINATION

The School will not unlawfully discriminate against a pupil, prospective pupil or other member of the school community because of a disability.

We give equal consideration to all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of:

- Age
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Sex
- Disability
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins)
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief (or lack thereof)
- Pregnancy and maternity

Together known as “protected characteristics”.

The School adopts the legal definitions of:

- **Direct discrimination** - treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination can include associative discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of their association with an individual with a protected characteristic, and perception discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably because of the mistaken belief that they possess a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** - a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others, and is not justified. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- **Harassment** - this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- **Victimisation** - retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment. This includes where someone mistakenly believes that the person victimised has done so.
- **Disability discrimination** - this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

For the purposes of this Policy, ‘reasonable adjustments’ refers to modifications or support put in place to reduce or remove barriers to an individual’s ability to access life at Holmewood House. While there is no fixed legal definition of what is “reasonable,” this will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual needs of the individual, the specific circumstances of the school, and the resources available at the time.

Progressive Conditions Considered to be a Disability

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairments are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Conditions That Are Specifically Excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The School recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010:

- Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services.
- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably.
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty) in matters of admission and education.
- To have and regularly to update an Accessibility Plan.

The School recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities and respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality.

The School provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted, where reasonable, to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; and endorses the key principles which underpin an inclusive curriculum:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Over and above its willingness to discharge the above duties, the School seeks actively to support children with disabilities in accordance with its stated ethos and aims. As set out in the 'Ethos and Aims', at Holmewood House, education is centred around instilling a life-long love of learning in each child by developing their skills and nurturing their growth as individuals.

ADMISSIONS

The School welcomes applications from pupils with disabilities and will consider all applicants in accordance with its Admissions Policy.

The School will not discriminate unlawfully in its admissions arrangements and will consider reasonable adjustments throughout the admissions process.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Support for pupils with disabilities is coordinated through the School's Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and related procedures.

PASTORAL CARE

The School's approach to pastoral care is founded on the belief that emotional and social well-being and growth, self-esteem and confidence are of prime importance in themselves and are inextricably linked with academic progress.

The Pastoral Care policy outlines:

- Arrangements for PSHE and PSHE related provision within the School (My Heart My Mind My World)
- Opportunities for children to contribute to the welfare of the School community
- Opportunities to contribute to charitable work beyond the School community, much of which is devoted to raising awareness of and contributing to provision for disability
- Arrangements for pupil monitoring
- Arrangements for contact with home,
- The School's approach to Bullying and other major pastoral concerns
- The School's approach to sanctions
- The School's approach to temporary and permanent exclusion

The tutor, the Assistant Head of Pastoral and Wellbeing, the Head of Year and medical staff (as necessary), and the School's Senior Management (as necessary) will be aware of and involved in addressing the pastoral and other needs of any child with a learning difficulty or disability. Our staff understand that pastoral care is everyone's responsibility.

Attention will be paid to the needs of a child beyond, as well as in the classroom.

- Break times can be taken within supervised areas on each of the School's two sites.
- Lunch is a time when children can be sociable and every effort would be made to enable the disabled child to take part.
- The School recognises that social skills can be affected by conditions such as ADHD/ADD and Dyspraxia.
- 'Social skills' teaching is given in small groups as appropriate to the children's needs.
- Peer group awareness of any relevant condition is promoted through PSE, with the parents' consent and children are often willingly enlisted to act as 'buddies' to those with difficulties that may affect their broader social life.

The School places the greatest emphasis on tolerance and care, and it is in this context that, in accordance with its pastoral policy, any incident of bullying related to a disability would be considered as a major pastoral concern.

Arrangements for communication with home are essential to the effective management of pastoral care. Where a parental disability obstructs such communication, the School undertakes to seek ways of overcoming any problems.

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The procedure for parental complaints is set out in the Complaints Policy on the website. In accordance with the procedure outlined therein, complaints regarding any breach of the School's disability policy would, if not resolved through the normal channels, be heard by a Complaints Panel.

ACCESSIBILITY

The School maintains an Accessibility Policy and Plan which sets out its approach to:

- improving access to the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment; and
- improving access to information for disabled pupils.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community share responsibility for promoting inclusion and preventing discrimination.

Staff are expected to:

- support the implementation of this policy;
- foster an inclusive environment;
- identify potential barriers to participation; and
- raise concerns where discrimination or disadvantage may arise.

Governors and senior leaders are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the School's arrangements and ensuring compliance with applicable legal requirements.

QUERIES AND COMPLAINTS

Any queries or concerns regarding disability discrimination or the implementation of reasonable adjustments should be raised with the School in the first instance.

Complaints will be considered in accordance with the School's Complaints Procedure..