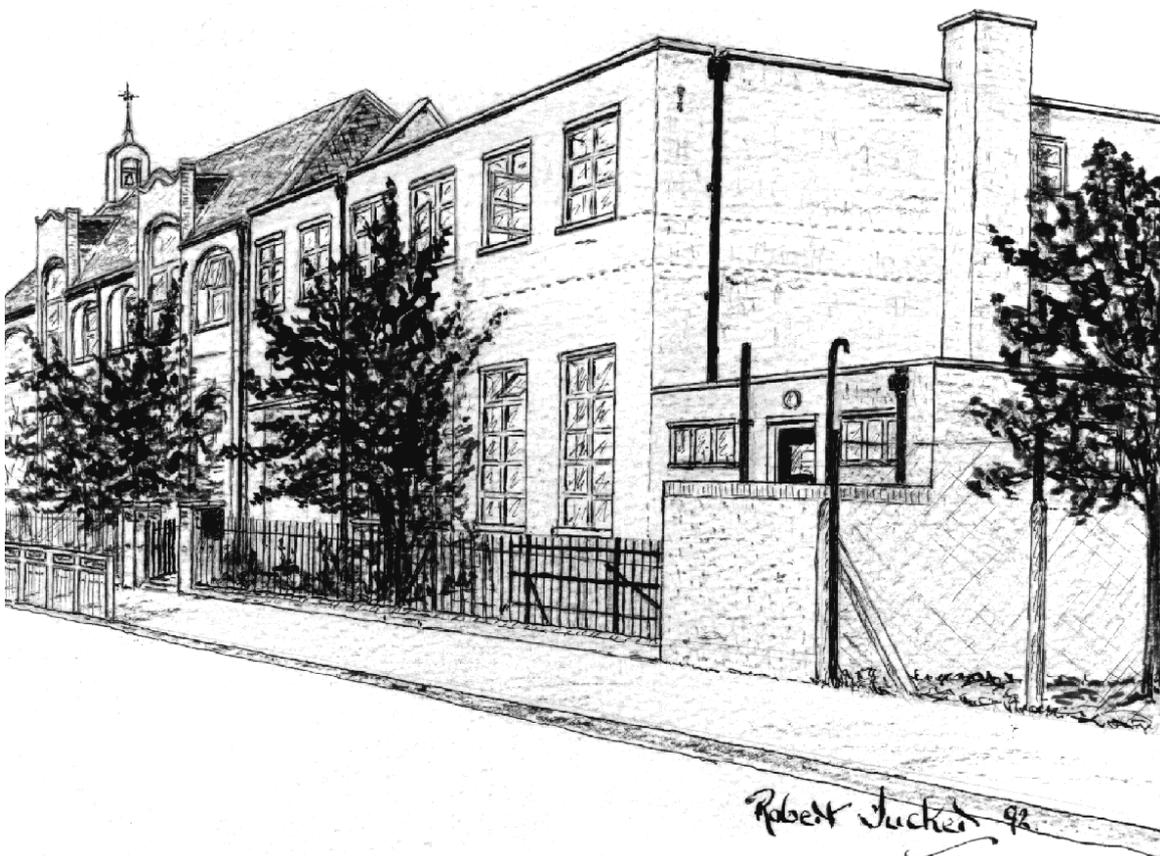


**ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



DOCUMENT TITLE	Equality Policy
COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY	Resources Committee
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POLICY AUTHOR	Mr Tris Brown – PA to Headteacher
APPROVAL BY	

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

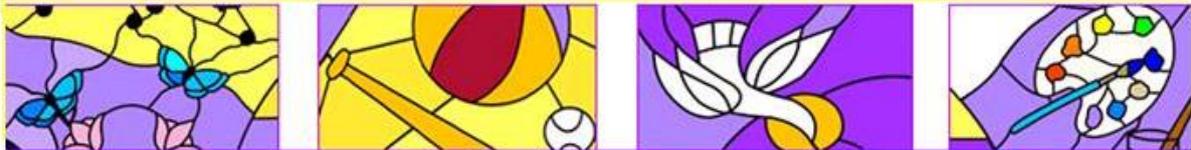


## To be the best that we can be.

We are uniquely created by God,  
Each of us is equally valued and cherished for who we are.

Together we **learn** and grow with God.  
Together we **support** and motivate one another.  
Together we **respect** each other and the world in which we live.  
Together we **forgive** as God forgives us.  
Together we **inspire** lively and enquiring minds.  
Together we **encourage** creativity, independence and responsibility.

Together we are home, school, parish, community.  
We work together through the Gospel values central to the Catholic faith.



### The Aims of Our School Are:

- To provide for the full personal and spiritual development of the pupils as they move on their journey of faith.
- To help the pupil to understand that every human being is uniquely created by God and destined to share in the life and love of the Father, Son and Spirit and that each is valued equally and cherished for who s/he is.
- To develop in the children enquiring minds, perseverance and the capacity to; question and listen, discuss rationally, be tolerant and work together or independently.
- To provide a broad balanced curriculum for the child, this, when applicable, takes into full account the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- To provide equal access to the full curriculum for all the children in our school.
- To provide opportunities for worshipping as a community.

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

This Equality Policy has been written to meet St Mary's Catholic Primary School's requirement to carry out its Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and replaced previous legislation that the private, public and voluntary sectors needed to follow (including the Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, The Equal Pay Act 1970, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975). This policy therefore supersedes all previous school policies on Disability, Ethnicity and Gender.

The Equality Act combined existing duties into one new Equality Duty that covers all nine of the 'protected characteristics':

- \* Age
- \* Race
- \* Disability
- \* Sex / Gender
- \* Gender Reassignment
- \* Sexual orientation
- \* Religion or belief
- \* Pregnancy or maternity
- \* Marriage or civil partnership

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that it is unlawful to discriminate against an employee, a pupil or prospective pupil, a parent or care-giver, or service provider by treating them less favourably on the basis of a 'protected characteristic'.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the school must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a prohibited characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relationships across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having 'due regard' in this context means that when significant decisions are being taken, thought must be given to the equality implications.

## **SECTION 2: PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This policy sets out St Mary's Catholic Primary School's commitment to promoting equality and diversity. We believe that it is our responsibility to promote equality and diversity and work to remove barriers. We will not unfairly discriminate on any grounds.

We do this by:

- \* Making appropriate changes to teaching resources
- \* Accessing Local Authority services
- \* Supporting children's emotional needs through counselling

\* Providing a curriculum which promotes positive understanding of different characteristics, recognising the contribution that individuals and groups with protected characteristics make to society.

\* Challenging stereotyping and discrimination, e.g. through our behaviour management system

Monitoring and review of this policy will take place annually. The policy will be accessible on the school website or in alternative formats as requested. This policy applies to:

\* School Governors

\* Staff

\* Parents

\* Children

\* Visitors to the school

\* Multi-agency professionals

\* Contractors

### **SECTION 3: ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL'S STATEMENT OF EQUALITY**

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of any 'protected characteristics'.

Our aim is to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. We want all our pupils to achieve the highest standards. We support this by offering a broad and balanced curriculum and have the highest expectations for all pupils.

We actively seek to remove any barriers to learning and participation that might hinder individuals or groups of pupils from reaching their potential. We will tackle discrimination by positively promoting equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes. We will create an environment which champions respect for all. Our school believes that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Values such as respect, honesty and perseverance are emphasised within the classroom and good behaviour is positively reinforced. Pupils develop good relationships with their teachers and their peers. They understand that supporting one another, regardless of their age, gender or background is an important aspect of school life.

Equality of opportunity is a fundamental aspect of the ethos at St Mary's Catholic Primary School. It is the responsibility of the governors, Headteacher and all personnel involved in the school to ensure that at every level, in all our work and throughout all aspects of our school community and its life, everyone will be treated equally. We will treat everyone fairly, celebrating difference and meeting different needs so that all members of our school community are free to live, learn and to achieve their potential.

As part of vision for equality, we aim to:

\* Maintain and promote a working partnership between the school, parents and community which fosters respect, honesty, truth, co-operation and tolerance

\* Help the children understand the world in which they live, have mutual respect for the values of others and work together as a team

\* To value each individual and ensure that everyone, whatever their needs and capabilities, is included and catered for

In addition to the specific actions set out in the Equality Plan, equality of opportunity is embedded in St Mary's Catholic Primary School's day-to-day practice.

## **SECTION 4: PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS – AND SPECIAL ISSUES RELATING TO SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS**

### **EQUALITY**

Equality is about fairness and equality of opportunity. Advancing equality of opportunity involves treating people differently. People should not be treated the same. Some people may need extra help or adjustments to be part of the school community. This includes teachers, administrative staff, cleaning or catering staff employed in our school, as well as pupils, parents and school governors.

### **DIVERSITY**

Diversity is about valuing people as individuals and learning from our differences. Our differences can be visible and non-visible. In promoting diversity, we can meet different needs creatively to ensure opportunities are available to all and potential is fulfilled. Promoting a diversity-friendly school culture helps us to meet our school aims and objectives more efficiently. Culture is about the way we behave towards one another – school governors, all employees in the school, parents, children and the whole school community. It is about how we treat each other and respect our differences. Our school culture helps to create a more productive school community.

### **AGE**

'Age' is a protected characteristic in relation to employment, and the provision for goods and services. It does not however apply to pupils, and so the school is free to arrange pupils in classes based on their age group with materials appropriate to them.

### **RACE**

The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Schools have a duty to make sure pupils, staff, and governors are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to others as a result of their race.

### **DISABILITY**

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities. The Act defines 'long-term' as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

The Act places a duty on schools to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. Where something in school places a disabled pupil, employee, governor or member of the school community at a disadvantage, the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage. Schools are expected to provide auxiliary aids or services for disabled pupils, staff, governors or other members of the school community when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the individual faces in comparison to non-disabled people. Schools have a duty to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils, staff, governors and other members of the school community.

Accessibility plans should aim to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled members of the school can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled individuals to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled individuals

## **GENDER**

Schools must ensure that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment from that given to other members of the school community. It is not unlawful to have some single-sex classes in a mixed school, providing it does not give children in such classes an unfair advantage or disadvantage. The Act also contains an exception that allows single sex sport.

## **GENDER REASSIGNMENT**

This is defined as anyone who is undergoing, has undergone or is proposing to undergo a process of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes.

In order to be protected under the Act, a member of the school community will not necessarily have to be undergoing a medical procedure, but must be taking steps to live in the opposite gender or proposing to do so. The school needs to ensure that no gender variant members of the school community are singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to any other individual.

## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

Schools have a duty to make sure gay, lesbian, transgender or bi-sexual members of the school community are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to any other individual. Teaching about marriage must be done in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way. No school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples. Teaching should be based on facts and should enable pupils to develop an understanding of how the law applies to different relationships. Teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education and to meet duties under equality and human rights law. Where individual teachers are concerned, having a view about something does not amount to discrimination. So it should not be unlawful for a teacher in any school to express personal views on sexual orientation provided that it is done in an appropriate manner and context (for example, responding to questions from pupils, or in a RE or PSHE lesson). However, it must be remembered that teachers are in a very influential position and their actions and responsibilities are bound by much wider duties.

## **RELIGION OR BELIEF**

The Act defines 'religion' as being of any religion, and 'belief' as any religious or philosophical belief. A lack of religion or lack of belief is also protected characteristics. To benefit from the Act, a religion or belief must have a clear structure and belief system and should contain a certain level of cogency, seriousness and cohesion, and not be incompatible with human dignity. The Act is clear that unlawful religious discrimination can include discrimination against another person of the same religion or belief as the discriminator.

## **SECTION 5: ADMISSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS**

- Our admission arrangements are the responsibility of the Local Authority. They are fair and transparent. They do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.
- Exclusions are always based on the School's Behaviour Policy. We closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

## **SECTION 6: STAFF**

Our commitment to equal opportunities means that we monitor and actively promote equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. We are concerned to ensure, wherever possible, that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

As an employer, we aim to eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Equality aspects are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination. Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- \* Monitoring recruitment and retention, including bullying and harassment of staff
- \* Continued professional development opportunities for all staff
- \* Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality for all

## **SECTION 7: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **GOVERNORS**

The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, staff, governors, parents and the wider school community, and responsive to their needs based on protected characteristics. The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of the protected characteristics. The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils. The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socioeconomic background, race, gender or disability. The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability, gender, religion or belief.

### **HEADTEACHER**

It is the Headteacher's role to implement the school's Equality Plan and she is supported by the governing body in doing so. It is the Headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that Teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations. The Headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities. The Headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum. The Headteacher promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life. The Headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

### **STAFF (TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING)**

All staff will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Plan. All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images. All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Headteacher. Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

## SECTION 8: TACKLING DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination and/or harassment on account of any 'protected characteristic' is not tolerated within the school environment. All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Staff and governors should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences.

***DIRECT DISCRIMINATION:*** Occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

***INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION:*** Occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally, but has the effect of putting people with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to class teacher, assistant head, deputy head and head teacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the head teacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body on a termly basis.

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as 'unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person'.

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ('a prohibited act') in connection with the Act. E.g. making an allegation of discrimination.

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- \* Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender
- \* Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes
- \* Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti
- \* Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic badges or insignia
- \* Bringing discriminatory material into school
- \* Verbal abuse and threats
- \* Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- \* Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion
- \* Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups
- \* Ridicule of an individual for difference, e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc.
- \* Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

## SECTION 9: REVIEW OF IMPACT

The policy has been agreed by the Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Policy annually and review the accompanying action plan on a four year cycle.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure

that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

## **SECTION 10: PUBLICATION**

We have a statutory duty to publish information to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We will publish our information and objectives on the school website. We will raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, staff meetings and other communications. We will make hard copies available.

## **APPENDIX A – ENSURING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION**

### **The school will ensure that:**

\* Pupil achievement is monitored by race, gender and disability. Any trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action to narrow the gap will be addressed

\* All staff are aware of the Equality Plan

\* There is an inclusive approach to ensuring all pupils are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school, e.g. through involvement in the Pastoral Council, class assemblies, fund-raising etc.

\* Disabled children can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits and journeys, lunchtime activities, PE etc.

\* Extended school activities such as breakfast and afterschool clubs take into account pupil needs and access issues and pupils attending reflect the diversity of the school population in terms of race, gender, disability and socio-economic status

\* Staff, pupils, parents and carers will be involved in the future development of the Equality Plan through input and feedback from surveys, staff meetings, school council meetings, parents' evenings etc.

### **The school will provide:**

\* Additional support for pupils who are underachieving, in order to make progress in their learning, persona and well-being, e.g. ensuring that children with visual impairment have accessible texts; that children with hearing impairments have an enhanced acoustic classroom environment

\* Additional support for parents with underachieving children, e.g. reporting progress, discussing need etc.

\* Additional support for disabled parents / carers and staff to help them play a full part in the life of the school, e.g. providing an interpreter for parents who cannot speak English, ensuring that meetings are held in accessible areas of the school to support wheelchair users

### **The school will promote positive attitudes by:**

\* Promoting positive images which reflect the diversity of the school community in terms of race, gender and disability, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials, and in a classroom / corridor display

\* Actively seeking to recruit disabled people to the school and support them in their work and career development

- \* Actively taking steps to reflect the diversity of the school community in its workforce
- \* Actively seeking to recruit disabled people to the governing body and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can fully participate and contribute
- \* Providing reasonable means for children, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools and communities
- \* Providing extended services, with opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups
- \* Supporting disabled pupils in the transition between primary and secondary school to ease the stress of moving and increase their familiarity with new surroundings
- \* Helping children to understand others and value diversity
- \* Promoting shared values, awareness of human rights and how to apply and defend them

**To eliminate discrimination and harassment, the school will:**

- \* Develop and adapt its procedures in anti-bullying to include equality perspectives
- \* Support staff to challenge and address any bullying and harassment that is based on a protected characteristic
- \* Keep a record of and report how these incidents are dealt with to the Governing Body on a termly basis
- \* Review its approach to race, gender and disability whenever it reviews its policy on behaviour

The Governing Body will report annually on the effectiveness and success of the Equality Plan. This will be placed on the school website.