

Equality Policy

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School



*Excellence for All
Service to Others
Inspired by Christ*

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Our Equality Statement

St John's is first and foremost a Catholic school. It follows from this that the ethos of our school should reflect the values proclaimed by Christ in the Gospels and recognise the unique value of each individual. Everyone at St John's has the right to be treated with respect at all times.

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School is fully committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and access in employment and education. We seek to create an environment where all members of the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation, age or socio-economic background, are treated with respect and are valued for the contribution each makes. The Governing Body will ensure all our school policies are assessed for their impact and the governors will develop their knowledge and understanding of diversity and equality. We will monitor our policies carefully in order to continuously improve.

The school is permitted under the law to give preference to Catholic children in its admissions arrangements. It follows the current guidelines for voluntary aided/faith schools. The school follows current guidelines on employment as they apply to voluntary aided/faith schools.

Every aspect of the school's work is embedded with the principles of equal opportunities and therefore this document cannot be read in isolation. It must be considered in conjunction with other written school policies e.g.; the school prospectus, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Anti-Bullying, HR policies etc. The school's pastoral care procedures and its code of conduct for students and staff also need to be taken into consideration as well as unwritten custom and practice procedures.

This policy applies to all governors, staff, students, parents / carers and visitors to the school including contractors. It will be the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure this policy is successfully implemented and that all those who work in the school understand what is expected of them and that they have relevant training and support. The headteacher will ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event that this policy is not complied with.

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School strives at all times to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all students, parents, staff and visitors. We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Our school aims to promote respect for difference and diversity in accordance with the values outlined in our Equality Statement above.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination.
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives.

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

- The relevant protected characteristics covered by The Equality Act 2010 and by this policy include:
 - age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race;
 - religion or belief;
 - sex;
 - sexual orientation.
- Conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to:
 - a breach of an equality clause or rule;
 - breach of a non-discrimination rule.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, students and parents.
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 2 years.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteacher.

An assigned member of the governing body will:

- Meet with the designated members of staff for equality, and any other relevant staff members, on at least an annual basis to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed.
- Ensure they're familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document.
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training.
- Report back to the full governing board regarding any issues.

The headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and students.
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors.

The designated member(s) of staff for equality will:

- Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and students.
- Meet with the assigned member of the governing body on at least an annual basis to raise and discuss any issues.
- Support the headteacher in identifying any staff training needs and deliver training as necessary.

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the aims of the policy and the objectives as set out in section 8.

4. Eliminating Discrimination

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act – for example, during meetings. Where equality has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

All staff receive information about the school's key policies, including this Equality Policy, when they join St John's and they are reminded of the location of our school policies and their responsibility to follow them each year.

The school has designated member(s) of staff for monitoring equality issues, and a member of the Governing Body is assigned to monitor and support this key area. The designated member(s) regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and governors aware of these as appropriate.

5. Advancing Equality of Opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, this involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic (e.g.; students with disabilities, or gay students who are being subjected to homophobic bullying).
 - Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it (e.g.; enabling Muslim students to pray at prescribed times).
 - Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low (e.g.; encouraging all students to be involved in the full school curriculum and extra-curricular activities).

- Considering the steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
 - tackle prejudice, and
 - promote understanding
- Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Analyse attainment data of students with different characteristics and determine strengths and areas for improvement, implementing actions in response.
- Analyse other data (e.g., rewards and sanctions data, bullying incidents) of students with different characteristics and determine strengths and areas for improvement, implementing actions in response.

6. Fostering Good Relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, students will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures.
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Students will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute.
- Promoting and celebrating cultural diversity during our annual whole school Cultural Day event.

- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of students within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of students from a range of backgrounds. All students are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures.
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach.

7. Equality Considerations in Decision-Making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays.
- Is accessible to students with disabilities.
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls.

8. Our Equality Objectives

At St John's we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all students, staff, parents, carers and our wider St John's community, irrespective of race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation, age or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and ability to participate fully in school life.

The Appendix included on page 9 shows examples of specific initiatives and objectives we have considered and implemented at St John's in order to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups and
- Foster good relations between different groups.

9. Monitoring arrangements

The specific objectives outlined in Appendix 1 will be regularly reviewed and progress in relation to these objectives will be shared by the headteacher with our Governing Body at least once every year.

The information shared with the Governing Body will also include the school's specific actions in relation to sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 above.

This policy document will be approved and ratified by the Full Governing Body.

10. Links with Other Policies

At St John's we have a whole range of policies and documents which complement and underpin our core equality values, examples include:

- Accessibility Policy and Action Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Careers Policy
- Challenging Homophobic Behaviour Guidance
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- Education in Human Love Policy
- Exams Policy
- Habitual Vexatious Complaints Policy
- Personal Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Provider Access Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- School Improvement Plan
- School Prospectus
- SEN and Disability Policy and SEN Information Report
- Sixth Form Admissions Policy
- Staff Bullying Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Staff Discipline and Conduct Policy
- Staff Flexible Working Policy and Procedure
- Uniform Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

Appendix - Our Equality Objectives

a) Students' attainment and progress

St John's expects the highest possible standards. Staff have high expectations of all students and continually challenge them to reach higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement. We monitor and analyse student performance by ethnicity, gender, disability and special educational need and disadvantaged status (i.e., Pupil Premium). Any disparities which are identified will be addressed through targeted interventions.

b) The quality of provision - teaching and learning

All staff ensure the classroom is an inclusive environment in which students feel all contributions are valued. Positive steps are taken to include students who may otherwise be marginalized. We take account of students' experiences and starting points and are responsive to students' different learning styles.

Student grouping is planned and varied to reflect the requirements of learners and their social development needs. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under continual review and analysed by ethnicity, gender and disadvantaged status (i.e., Pupil Premium). Staff will use a range of methods and strategies to assess student progress. Assessments are analysed for gender, cultural and social bias, and take account of access issues, e.g.; print size.

c) The quality of provision - curriculum and other activities

St John's provides an appropriate curriculum for students of all backgrounds. We monitor and evaluate its effectiveness through target setting and attainment analysis. All students participate in the mainstream curriculum of the school.

The curriculum builds on students' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- Boys, girls and any other gender identities.
- Students learning English as an additional language.
- Students from minority ethnic groups, including Gypsies and Travellers.
- Students who are gifted and talented.
- Students with special educational needs.
- Students with a disability.
- Students who are in public care.
- Students who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning young people.

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of all students. The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages students to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

Extra-curricular activities and special events e.g., school productions cater for the interests and capabilities of all students and take account of parental preferences related to religion and culture.

d) The quality of provision – guidance and support

St John's actively promotes good personal and community relations and recognises diversity as having a positive role to play within the school. All staff are expected to foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among boys and girls from all ethnic groups and range of abilities.

Staff challenge stereotypes and foster students' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.

Our pastoral support takes account of religious, cultural and ethnic differences, special educational needs, disability and the experiences and needs of Traveller students, refugees and asylum seeker children. The school provides appropriate support for students learning English as an additional language.

We expect work experience providers to demonstrate their commitment to equality, including disability, gender and race equality.

Victims of harassment and bullying are given appropriate support. The perpetrators are dealt with in line with school policy and are provided with relevant support to consider and modify their behaviour.

e) Behaviour and Attendance

St John's expects high standards of behaviour from all students, appropriate for their developmental level.

We have procedures for disciplining students and managing behaviour that are fair and applied equally to all. All staff are expected to operate consistent systems of rewards and sanctions. Our school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Clear procedures are in place so that all forms of bullying and harassment, including racism and harassment related to disability, sexism and homophobia, are dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently and are in line with policies and guidance such as those for anti-bullying and dealing with racist incidents. All forms of harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with the schools' bullying and harassment and behaviour policies. Guidance and support are provided to staff to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice.

We encourage staff to explore their own views and attitudes to difference and to monitor their practice in relation to this policy. Adults in school take care to lead through example, demonstrating high expectations of all students.

We monitor exclusions by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. disadvantaged status (i.e., Pupil Premium) is also considered. This school will take all reasonable steps to prevent the exclusion of a student for a reason related to any disability they may have.

Students, staff and parents are aware of policies and procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour, which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any minority group, is always unacceptable.

We make provision for leave of absence for religious observance, for staff as well as students

We monitor attendance by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Disadvantaged status (i.e., Pupil Premium) is also considered. Action is taken in order to address any disparities between different groups of students. The school will fully support children with long-term medical needs who may have an erratic attendance due to frequent hospital stays and medical care.

We expect full-time attendance of Traveller and Gypsy students. (Should you have a query regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the school).

f) Partnership with students, parents, carers and the wider community

Progress reports to parents/carers are clearly written and free from jargon to encourage parents to participate in their child's education. Where requested, information is available in languages and formats other than English. Parents with a disability or with learning difficulties are encouraged to work with the school to access school information.

Parents are fully involved in the school-based response for their child with special educational needs and the purpose of any support, intervention or programme of action implemented is clearly communicated to parents.

When necessary, the school works in partnership with parents and the community to address

specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to difference.

The school's premises and facilities are equally available and accessible via our third-party letting company for use by all groups within the community.

g) Leadership and Management

Steps are taken to ensure the school's admission process is fair and equitable to all students, including short-stay Traveller and Refugee students and those with English as an additional language.

This school does not discriminate against a disabled student in the arrangements it makes for determining admission.

We will admit students with already identified special educational needs. Students with statements of special educational needs will always be admitted unless, through the statutory assessment process, it is demonstrated that the students' inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children.

Comprehensive information about students' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet, etc. is included in our admissions forms and gathered during the admissions process.

The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equitable and in line with statutory duties.

We welcome people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school and ensure recruitment and selection processes are monitored. Equality and diversity issues are reflected in our school's employment practices.

This policy is accessible to all stakeholders on our school website. All staff and visitors must support the ethos of the school, promoting equality and challenging bias and stereotyping wherever they observe it.

All staff receive information about the school's key policies, including this Equality Policy, when they join St John's and they are reminded of the location of our school policies and their responsibility to follow them each year.

The skills of all staff, including non-teaching and part-time staff, are recognised and valued. All staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge.

Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and the school strives to reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

This school opposes all forms of racism, homophobia, prejudice and discrimination.

h) Linguistic Diversity

St John's welcomes the diversity of languages in our school and we give them all status and value. We look for opportunities to use our languages to enrich the curricular experience and attainment of all our students and we draw upon the expertise of our school community wherever possible.