



EQUALITY POLICY

St John's Catholic Comprehensive School

MISSION STATEMENT

Excellence for All

Service to Others

Inspired by Christ

This Policy was adopted by the Strategy Team

Policy holder: M Barron

Reviewer: D Walton

Equal Opportunities Statement of Commitment

The Governing Body and school are committed to a policy of equality. As a school we are guided by the principles of the Catholic faith. We aim to ensure that no employee, job applicant, pupil or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief.

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. We aim to provide equal access to high quality educational opportunities and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to provide a safe and happy environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

We aim to empower our pupils to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the school's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the policy.

All members of the school community are responsible for promoting the school's equal opportunities policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

Aims and objectives

The governing body and school, through its adopted Equal Opportunities Policy, aims to:

- carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation (*including The Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Employment Equality Regulations*);
- reinforce the school's position as a provider of high quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities;
- ensure that equality remains high on the school's strategic agenda;
- establish good people management practice and to set out a proactive agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response;
- achieve a staffing composition that reflects the composition of the wider community;
- ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every pupil;
- ensure that pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals;
- ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the school's equal opportunities policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated either under the disciplinary or grievance procedure as appropriate).

All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.

Policy and planning

Equal opportunities implications, including race equality, will be considered whenever school policies are developed or reviewed. All policies will be regularly reviewed to provide a comprehensive and consistent process of monitoring and evaluation.

Employment matters

The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair. Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis. Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel it will be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to. As an employer, the school strives to ensure that discrimination and harassment is eliminated in our employment practice and we actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. The school will not discriminate against a potential employee in respect of whether to offer a job or the terms on which a job is offered. With regards to existing employees, the school will not discriminate against an individual in respect of the benefits, facilities and services it offers including training opportunities, promotion or dismissal (including discipline and suspension). All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit, ability and in compliance with the law. The school is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to disability for employees or potential employees and will ensure that staff with disabilities have access to appropriate support in the form of aids, adaptations and other specialist services and will make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices to alleviate disadvantage.

Family-friendly policies: the Governing Body/school is a family-friendly employer and will do its best to respond to the changing needs of all staff by publicising existing schemes designed to support employees in combining work and other responsibilities (parental leave arrangements, job share opportunities, flexitime where appropriate, carers' leave provision).

Training and development

The success of the Equal Opportunities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training. Governors will be encouraged to take up all relevant opportunities provided by the Local Authority's Governors' Training Programme.

The school will endeavour to:

- enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status;
- provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all staff, including part time, on the basis of their assessed training needs;
- promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution which staff, governors, parents/guardians and pupils can make;
- equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions, discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote anti-discriminatory behaviour generally.

Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation. The school places great importance on the relationship between team leaders and their teams and will ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of the school's performance management system.

Pupils and the curriculum

The school follows Governing Body pupil admission policies that do not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as criteria for admission. The school's aim is to provide for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin. *The Education Reform Act 1988* stated that 'the school curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse society to which pupils belong and of which they will become adult members.' Pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which avoids stereotypes and provides

good role models for all pupils. Equality of opportunity should inform the whole of the curriculum and be reviewed regularly.

Equal opportunities issues will be taken account of in planning the curriculum. This should be reflected in curriculum planning documentation.

Internal managerial issues

These guidelines are primarily designed to address employment aspects of governance and management. However, in consulting on the policy and developing it further, head teachers and members of the senior leadership team will wish to take a range of other internal issues into account. Many of the issues listed will already be the subject of detailed agreed policies.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

Governors have a duty to ensure that policies are regularly monitored and reviewed. Monitoring is an essential aspect of this policy, as it should provide important information by which the school can measure its performance against its aims and objectives. Statistical information can also enable the Governors and Headteacher to detect where potential or actual imbalances exist and to take steps to correct them.

Monitoring with respect to employment will be undertaken in the following areas on at least an annual basis by sex, race, disability, grade and subject area:

- composition of the school staff;
- recruitment trends;
- take up of training opportunities;
- promotion patterns;
- use of complaints procedure;
- use of grievance, disciplinary, etc.;
- use of sanctions;
- take-up of family-friendly policies, e.g. flexible working arrangements.

Exit interviews can also provide further helpful information and feedback.

Governors should ensure that the Equality Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

