



Equality Policy

The School aims:

- to provide the best possible educational and pastoral care for each of our pupils
- to pass on to the children an awareness and appreciation of Gospel values
- to develop good relationships, understanding and interaction between children, parents, staff and the community
- to provide a friendly, loving, welcoming environment for all teaching staff, non-teaching staff and parents as well as pupils

1 Introduction

This equality policy brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those previously held for Race, Gender and Disability. This policy includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects, which have the potential to discriminate against or devalue any individuals within our community.

St. Jerome's Catholic Primary School is further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN convention on the Rights of the Child. The guiding principles in this policy refer to all individuals and therefore are equally applicable to pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers and visitors to St. Jerome's Catholic Primary School.

2 Background and Legal Framework

Over recent years, we recognise that schools have been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their communities, and recognising their role in promoting an understanding of equality for different groups of people. Much of this work is in response to legislation that places an increased duty within the specific context of a school's role in providing learning and other opportunities for all - it is about fairness, rights and justice.

Inequality still exists in the UK despite 40 years of equality legislation. In Sefton, we know some groups do less well than their peers in terms of progress, achievement and later life chances. This picture is reflected nationally. The recognition of diversity and the promotion of inclusive and equal practices will help to overcome this disparity. The equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that came before it. The Act refers to nine protected characteristics:

1. Age (adults only)
2. Disability
3. Race (including Gypsy and Traveller groups)
4. Religion, Faith or Belief
5. Gender
6. Gender Identity and Transgender
7. Sexual Orientation
8. Pregnancy and Maternity
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership

Each relates to direct discrimination, discrimination by association, discrimination by perception, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. St. Jerome's Catholic Primary School will seek to achieve positive action in respect of the Act.

3 Equality Duty

St. Jerome's Catholic Primary School recognises the Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools and academies. This combined Equality Duty came into effect in April 2011. St. Jerome's Catholic Primary School is mindful that the duty has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not.

Having *due regard* means to consciously think about the three aims of the Equality Duty as outlined above. i.e.:

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have "due regard" when making a decision or taking an action which may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality before and at the time that they develop policies and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep it under review on a continuing basis.
- The Equality Duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school's functions, and the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open-mind and to recognise it is not a tick box exercise.

Having due regard to the need to *advance equality of opportunity* involves considering the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

4 Specific Duties:

St. Jerome's Catholic Primary School seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence. We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same. We build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

5 **Good Practice:**

We strive to achieve a cohesive community and expect that all children respect one another and behave with respect to one another, and that their parents/carers feel fully engaged in the school. We aim to enhance a wider sense of community locally, as well as in the context of the UK and the world communities. We support the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998. Through our policies and actions we undertake to ensure that every child and young person is healthy, safe, is able to enjoy and achieve in their learning experience, and is able to contribute to the wider community. We consider it prudent and sensible to maintain the practice of logging racist incidents and reporting them to the Local Authority. We monitor and log incidents that discriminate against children and young people or adults in our school with protected characteristics, e.g. homophobic bullying. We also monitor and log bullying incidents directed towards those with special educational needs.

6 **Guiding Principles:**

We are guided by eight principles.

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents, carers, of equal value:

- Whether or not they are disabled;
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status;
- Whatever their gender or gender identity;
- Whatever their sexual identity.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily mean treating them all the same. Policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers people may face, in relation to:

- Disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made;
- Ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised;
- Gender, so that the different experiences of girls and boys, women and men are recognised;
- Sexual identity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

Policies, procedure and activities promote:

- Positive attitudes and actions towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people;
- Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice related bullying and incidents;
- Mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men and an absence of homophobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development:

- Whether or not they are disabled;
- Whatever their race, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status;
- Whatever their gender and sexual identity and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- Disabled and non-disabled people
- People of different racial, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- Girls and boys, women and men;
- Gay people and heterosexual people.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies and in the review of existing ones. Consultation involves all members of the school community including:

- disabled and non-disabled
- people of different racial, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- girls and boys, women and men
- gay and heterosexual people.

Principle 7: We address prejudice and prejudice related bullying

We oppose all forms of prejudice, which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties listed below:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs;
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed against religious groups and communities, for example, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those directed against travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;
- prejudice reflecting sexism or homophobia.

Principle 8: Society as a whole should benefit

Policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, fostering greater social and community cohesion and greater participation in the public life of:

- disabled and non-disabled people;
- people of different racial, ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds;
- girls and boys, women and men;
- gay people and heterosexual people.

7 Curriculum:

Curriculum information will also be evaluated by looking specifically at equality groups and adjustments made as appropriate to ensure that protected characteristic groups are supported positively. All other data relating to whole school monitoring will encompass scrutiny of equality information so that groups are supported positively.

8 Staff and Governors:

Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are embedded.

A member of the Governing Body has the role of monitoring the implementation of the policy.

The head teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and, for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination or practices. A senior member of staff has day to day responsibility for coordinating the implementation of this policy.

All staff are expected to:

- adhere to this policy
- promote equality and inclusion in their classroom, amongst pupils, colleagues and with visitors to the school;
- deal with any prejudice related incidents that may occur;
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect our guiding principles;
- attend appropriate training that enables St. Jerome's Catholic Primary School to keep up to date with equality issues.

All staff and governors are expected to:

- have access to training and a selection of resources which discuss and explain the concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion. We value the opportunity to take a holistic approach in fulfilling our equality duties;
- exercise their safeguarding responsibilities in relation to equality matters and ensure that any bullying or challenging of Human Rights is addressed immediately and appropriately.

Pupils will:

- be involved in the development of the policy and understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability;
- be expected to act in accordance with the policy;
- be encouraged to actively support the policy.

Parents/Carers will:

- be encouraged to actively support the policy;
- have access to the policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements;
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy;
- be informed of any incident related to this policy, which could directly affect their child.

Support Staff will:

- be involved in the development of the policy;
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them;
- understand that this is a whole school issue aimed at embedding equality into the school ethos;
- make known any queries or training requirements.

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- be involved in the development and delivery of the policy;
- be encouraged to support and promote the policy;
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy.

St. Jerome's Catholic Primary School is opposed to all forms of prejudice that could act as a barrier to achieving our legal duties and to creating a cohesive and inclusive community. These include prejudice towards:

- Disability
- Special Educational Needs
- Racism and Xenophobia
- Gender and Transgender
- Religious groups and communities
- Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- Homosexuality

This policy will be reviewed annually.
Review Date: February 2022