



ST MARY'S RC HIGH SCHOOL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Policy owner: Assistant headteacher

Policy approval level: Safeguarding committee

Date policy approved: 12 June 2023

Review frequency: 3 yearly

Review date: June 2026

1. AIMS OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1.1 In our school we respect every person as a child of God.

1.2 Equality of opportunity at St Mary's RC High School ('the school') is about providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement.

1.3 Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community, students, staff, governors, parents and community members.

2. EQUALITY STATEMENT OF VALUES FOR A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

2.1 Christ is the foundation of everything we do and the Gospels provide us with our influence and inspiration. We are therefore committed to promoting:

The uniqueness of the individual. We believe that every person is a unique individual, created in God's image and loved by Him. We are therefore committed to treat every person with equality of esteem and the respect and dignity due to the child of God;

The search for excellence. We are called to seek perfection in all aspects of our lives. We celebrate the enrichment of the total community and are therefore committed to ensure that all are to be given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full;

The education of the whole person. We offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on Christian values. Through this, and a variety of educational experiences and interactions, we aim to prepare young people for a life

working with others in communities, which may be diverse socially, culturally and religiously. We recognise that it is also important to help students to understand their own ethnic identity and cultural heritage, as well as helping them to understand that of others;

The education of all. We have the duty to care for all, with preferential consideration for the poor, and to ensure that we provide for those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged;

Moral principles. Our belief in the gospel message commits us to be in the forefront of the movement for social justice and harmony. We believe this is fundamental to the common good. We aim to prepare our young people to serve as witnesses to these moral and spiritual values in the wider world.

2.2 Consequently, we will strive to ensure that:

any person recruited to the service of the school, whether as a member of staff or a volunteer, is made fully aware of our aims and objectives and required to support them;

children who are admitted to the school and their families are fully aware of our aims and objectives and undertake to support them;

all of our structures and policies are evaluated and kept under review in order to see that no individual is subject in any way to unlawful discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, and to ensure that all are enabled to reach their full potential.

3. THE SCHOOL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

3.1 We will make the school a place where everyone feels welcomed and valued. The differences between people will be respected and valued.

3.2 We will endeavour to prepare students for a life in a diverse society.

3.3 We are opposed to all forms of prejudice and harassment.

3.4 We will be proactive in tackling and eliminating unlawful discrimination. Planned pastoral lessons will tackle this issue.

3.5 We acknowledge that in society minority groups have often suffered disadvantage due to prejudice or ignorance.

3.6 We will promote good relations between different groups within the school and within the wider community.

3.7 We recognise that it is all too easy for the structures of institutions to result in "inequality by default".

3.8 Any incidents of prejudice, discrimination or harassment will be reported through the existing pastoral system in the school, with a copy given to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the deputy DSL. It will also be reported to the governors and LA.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 All school policies reflect a commitment to equal opportunities.
- 4.2 The governing body and the school senior leadership set a clear ethos which reflects the school's commitment to equality for all members of the school community.
- 4.3 The school senior leadership will work in partnership with others to promote equality of opportunity, oppose all forms of oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination.
- 4.4 Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of all students and appropriate breadth of content in relation to the school and the wider community.
- 4.5 Additional grants and resources are appropriately targeted and monitored.

5. STAFFING, RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal, and in line with statutory duties and LA and diocesan guidelines for Catholic schools.
- 5.2 Steps are taken to ensure that everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this policy. New members of staff are made familiar with it as part of their induction programme.
- 5.3 The skills of all staff, including support and part-time staff, are recognised and valued. All members of staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge.
- 5.4 Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are an entitlement for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this policy.
- 5.5 Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

6. CURRICULUM

- 6.1 Curriculum planning takes account of the ethnicity, backgrounds and needs of all students and should enable all students the opportunity to fulfill their potential.
- 6.2 The curriculum builds on students' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

Students learning English as an additional language;

Students from minority ethnic groups;

Students who are gifted and talented;

Students with special educational needs;

Students who are looked after by the local authority;

Students who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion;

Students who are carers.

6.3 All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of all students.

6.4 The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages students to explore and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

6.5 Extracurricular activities and special events cater for the interests and capabilities of all students and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture.

6.6 Careers advice and guidance is available and suited to the needs of the individual.

7. TEACHING AND LEARNING

7.1 Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which students feel that all their contributions are valued.

7.2 All students follow the mainstream curriculum.

7.3 Teaching is responsive to students' different learning styles and takes account of students' cultural backgrounds and linguistic needs.

7.4 Teachers take positive steps to include all groups or individuals.

7.5 Students grouping in the classroom is planned and varied.

7.6 Allocations to teaching groups are kept under review and are analyzed in line with Ofsted requirements.

7.7 The school provides facilities for the education of disabled students in terms of mobility around the school.

8. ASSESSMENT, STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS

8.1 All students have the opportunity to achieve their highest standards. Baseline assessment is used appropriately for all students.

8.2 The school ensures that assessment is free of bias and that their assessment methods are valid.

8.3 The school monitors and analyses student performance to fulfil Ofsted requirements and is therefore able to identify groups of students where there are patterns of different achievement. The school is working towards strategies to counter this.

8.4 Staff have high expectations of all students and continually challenge them to extend their learning and achieve higher standards.

- 8.5 The school recognizes and values all forms of achievement.
- 8.6 Self-assessment provides all students with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.
- 8.7 All students have opportunities to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do, and therefore to benefit from assessment that summarizes what they have learnt. Information from assessment is used to inform future learning.
- 8.8 Staff try to ensure that they are building resilience into the children they teach to prepare them for future challenges that may arise.
- 8.9 Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess student progress.

9. THE SCHOOL ETHOS

- 9.1 The school opposes all forms of harassment, prejudice and discrimination.
- 9.2 The school promotes good personal and community relations.
- 9.3 Diversity is recognized as having a positive role to play within the school.
- 9.4 Staff will endeavour to foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among students from all ethnic groups.
- 9.5 The school will cater for the dietary needs and dress requirements of different religious groups should they arise.
- 9.6 The school enables students to celebrate festivals and other events relevant to their particular faith and cultural identity and actively encourages all students to understand these.
- 9.7 Clear procedures are in place to ensure that staff deal with all forms of bullying and harassment promptly, firmly and consistently. Actions taken are in line with relevant LA policies and guidance such as those for anti-bullying and dealing with racist incidents.
- 9.8 All forms of harassment are recorded, monitored and managed with in line with school policies.
- 9.9 Students, staff and parents are made aware of the procedures for dealing with intolerant behaviour and that such behaviour is always unacceptable.
- 9.10 Staff training is available to deal with bullying, racist harassment and prejudice.

10. BEHAVIOUR, DISCIPLINE AND EXCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The school expects high standards of behaviour from all students. Respect and courtesy should be afforded to all members of the school community, including visitors.
- 10.2 There are strategies to reintegrate long-term absentees that address the needs of all students.

10.3 Exclusions are monitored by gender, ethnicity, special educational need and background and action is taken in order to reduce any disparities between different groups of students in line with local authority guidelines.

10.4 The school's procedures for disciplining students and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all. Discipline is based on justice.

10.5 All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and discipline as stated within the school's Student Behaviour Policy.

10.6 Students, staff and parents are made aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour, which is discriminatory is always unacceptable.

11. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE

11.1 Pastoral support takes account of the particular needs and circumstances of the individual. All members of the school community have access to appropriate channels of communication and a forum to express their views.

11.2 The school provides appropriate support for students learning English as an additional language, and encourages them to use their home and community languages.

11.3 The school takes account of, and meets the needs of, traveller students.

11.4 All students are provided with appropriate career and post 16 advice and guidance, which encourages them to consider the full range of options.

11.5 Work experience providers are required in their documentation to demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities.

11.6 Appropriate support is given to victims of harassment and intolerant behaviour, using the support of external agencies where appropriate.

11.7 Perpetrators are dealt with in accordance with school policies and provided with the relevant support to consider and modify their behavior through a restorative justice approach.

12. ADMISSIONS AND ATTENDANCE

12.1 The admissions process is monitored to ensure that it is administered fairly and consistently to all eligible students.

12.2 Comprehensive information about students' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical and special learning needs is obtained and appropriately stored and accessed when requested.

12.3 Students and their families are made aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to student attendance and absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel who are aware of personal circumstances.

12.4 Provision is considered for leave of absence for religious observance, which

includes staff as well as students.

12.5 Provision is made for students and staff on extended leave so that they are able to continue with their learning.

12.6 Attendance will be monitored and managed in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy and action taken in order to reduce any disparities between different groups of people.

13. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

13.1 Progress reports to parents are accessible and appropriate, in order to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue.

13.2 All parents are encouraged to participate in the full life of the school.

13.3 The school works in partnership with the parents and the community to develop positive attitudes to diversity and to address specific incidents.

13.4 The school takes steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under-represented groups of parents and sections of the community.

13.5 Information material for parents is easily accessible in user-friendly language and is available in languages and formats other than English, as appropriate.

13.6 Meetings for parents are made accessible to all. Parental involvement is monitored to ensure the participation of all groups.

13.7 Informal events are designed to include the whole community.

13.8 The school's premises and facilities are equally available and accessible for use by all groups within the community.

14. RESPONSIBILITIES

14.1 The governing body and headteacher will ensure that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation.

14.2 The governing body and headteacher will ensure that the policy and related procedures and strategies are implemented.

14.3 The headteacher will ensure that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities under this policy.

15. MONITORING

15.1 Monitoring will involve:

collecting and analysing data to measure the school's performance and effectiveness;

monitoring attainment and progress by racial group, analysing it and using it to

examine trends;

monitoring in other areas that could have an adverse impact on students' attainment such as exclusions, rewards and sanctions, attendance, racial harassment and bullying, parental involvement, membership of the governing body.

15.2 In particular, monitoring data will help the school to:

highlight any differences between students of different groups;

ask why these differences exist and test the explanations given;

decide what further action needs to be taken to improve the performance of students from different groups;

review and set targets in relevant strategic plans;

feed this into the curriculum.

This document/policy was approved at the meeting of the safeguarding committee of the governing body at their meeting on 12 June 2023. It will be reviewed every 3 years.

Signed:  Pete Fawcett Chair of safeguarding committee