

ST COLUMBA'S CATHOLIC BOYS' SCHOOL

**GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT**



# Equality Policy

Head Teacher: Mr N Fisher  
School Lead: Mr B Woodcock  
Chair of Governors: Mrs S Biggs

Originator Date	March 2016
Review Date (Three Yearly)	Spring 2019

## Introduction

The Governing Body of St Columba's Catholic Boys' School is fully committed to the principle of equality of opportunity for all staff and in the provision of teaching and learning. Within the context of being a Catholic school firmly based on Gospel values we take pride in our increasingly diverse community and the cultural richness it bring with it. Our Vision Statement, given in the Appendix, explicitly states that we believe that everyone is a unique and special creation of God.

This policy outlines our commitment to equality and diversity. It sets out our intention to create an environment in which everyone in our school community can take full part in the academic, social and cultural life of the school. It also sets out our commitment to promote equality and celebrate diversity amongst our students, their families and our staff.

## Context

The Governing Body recognises that certain groups of people in society have historically been disadvantaged on the basis of their race, gender, disability, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation or age. We will put in place a range of actions consistent with the Equalities Act 2010 to eliminate prejudice, unlawful discrimination and victimisation within the school community.

We will ensure that everything we do, helps to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance the equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This policy has been developed in line with the catholic values and principles of our school. All employees are required to support the ethos of the school in their professional life and our policies reflect that requirement. In summary this policy covers the need for equality in respect of the following protected characteristics:

- Gender;
- Gender reassignment;
- Disability;
- Age;
- Race, including ethnic or national background;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation;
- Marital status; and
- Pregnancy or maternity.

## Equalities Statement in the context of the School Ethos

The entitlement to develop learn and work in an environment free from discrimination is implicit in the vision of St Columba's, the core of which is the ultimate worth and dignity of every human being. No member of our school community shall suffer unlawful discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics of gender, gender reassignment, disability, age, race, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, religion or belief or pregnancy or maternity. Allegations of unlawful discrimination will be investigated and pursued in line with the schools grievance and disciplinary procedure. The school recognises that in some cases it may be necessary to put in

place favourable treatment for some individuals or groups in the interest of securing sustainable equality of access and opportunity within the limit of what is allowed by law.

The assurance of equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination must permeate all aspects of school life including:

- Teaching, learning and assessment;
- Behaviour and discipline, including sanctions;
- Student rewards;
- Advice and guidance;
- Personal development and pastoral care;
- Extra-curricular opportunities and participation;
- Admissions, attendance and punctuality;
- Curriculum and options;
- Staff recruitment, promotion and professional development;
- Employment policies and practice;
- Partnerships with other schools; and
- Partnerships with parents and communities.

We are committed to:

- Actively tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities and positive attitudes;
- Encouraging, supporting and helping our students and staff to reach their potential;
- Working with parents, carers and the wider community to tackle discrimination; and
- Making sure that the Equality Act 2010 is implemented and its effectiveness is monitored.

## **Responsibilities**

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school complies with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and any other relevant legislation; and
- Ensuring that the Equality Act 2010 is implemented and reviewed.

It achieves these broad aims by:

- Promoting equality as an explicit aim in all school policies;
- Ensuring that this policy reflects a belief in diversity that embraces individuals and promotes community spirit;
- Ensuring that policies are developed through wide consultation in school;
- Ensuring that no student is discriminated against in the provision of services offered to students that relate to education;
- Ensuring that all job descriptions include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their specifications;
- Ensuring that all recruitment, employment and promotion and staff development policies and practices reflect the ethos of the school and the requirements of equality legislation; and
- Incorporating equality targets into the School Improvement Plan to ensure that all individuals and groups (regardless of their protected characteristic status) achieve their potential and make good progress.

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Equality Policy is published and that students, parent and carers, staff and governors are informed;

- Ensuring that Employment Practices including promotion and staff development are fair and non-discriminatory;
- Ensuring that the Policy is delivered and reviewed and produce regular information about how the policy is working and providing training for staff if necessary;
- Ensuring that all governors know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying them out; and
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment or discrimination against a protected characteristic.

All staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with incidents of harassment based on protected characteristics and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- Promoting equal opportunities, positive attitudes and avoiding discrimination against anyone on the grounds of a protected characteristic;
- Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking up training and learning opportunities; and
- Being aware of the importance of equality of opportunities and fairness as a staff body and drawing attention to any areas or events which may cause concern.

## **Monitoring**

Data relating to student achievement, progress and behaviour will be monitored against protected characteristics and targets set as appropriate. That data will also inform planning and decision making. Other data will be monitored, including school trip take-up, participation in extra-curricular activities, and options decisions. The occurrence of incidents of discrimination will be logged. Any data relating to complaints or grievances regarding equalities or discrimination will also be considered. All of this data will be used to assess the impact of the Equality Policy and practice. Working practices will be reviewed as necessary in the light of the findings.

## **Assessing and Reviewing Policies**

All school policies are reviewed as part of a rolling programme. Any that are relevant to equalities will be judged against their effectiveness in tackling unlawful discrimination and promoting equal opportunities and positive attitudes. This policy shall be published as part of the governors' policy documentation and will be made available to any staff, student or parents or carer on request. It will also be uploaded to the schools website. Any breaches of this policy will be treated seriously.

## **Strategic Equality Objectives**

- To work towards addressing underachievement by any group of students with protected characteristics;
- To monitor the composition of staff by reference to protected characteristics and address identified imbalances and under representation compared with our local population;
- To review the reward and sanction data (including Fixed Term and Permanent Exclusions) and to ensure there is no bias towards any particular vulnerable group and take action where necessary;
- To ensure that all applications from underrepresented groups are encouraged when filling staff vacancies;
- To ensure that all staff undertake equalities training during the next 12 months and to ensure it is covered in induction training; and
- To consider establishing an Equalities Group to review and assess objectives and take action where necessary.

## **Compliance with the Equality Duty**

At St Columba's Catholic Boys' School we are happy to demonstrate how we meet the Equality Duty. We take our responsibilities very seriously and it is important to us. When we make decisions about the school, we consider the three aims of the Equality Duty:

1. How we eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
2. How we advance equality of opportunity; and
3. How we foster good relations between all people.

The school celebrates the diversity of its staff and student body. It is actively promoted through school publications including the website, prospectus, staff handbook and through wide range of activities for students including Black and Asian History Month.

As a school we make use of performance data and benchmarking across all aspects of teaching targets to support identified under-performing groups.

## **Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation**

Any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated within the school. Our Code of Conduct is published in all classrooms and provides the framework for how we expect our students to behave. All students will be asked to sign the Equal Opportunities statement which is in the Student Planner. The Behaviour for Learning Policy ensures that all students have a right to learn and that teachers have a right to teach and that any disruptive behaviour is dealt with calmly, quickly and fairly. It clearly outlines our expectations of every student and gives practical guidance to staff as to how best manage classroom situations.

The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which it follows. This emphasises that we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable in our school. We believe that all forms of bullying hurt and that nobody deserves to be a victim of bullying. Every individual has the right to be treated with respect. If bullying does occur, all students should know that we have multiple reporting strategies and be able to use them knowing incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Similarly, staff must also feel that they are safe from of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Celebrating diversity also forms part of our Curriculum. Students take part in regular extended tutorials where a wide range of themes are delivered; eSafety awareness; Lenten charity, Black History Week; Anti-Bullying; road safety awareness as well as a wide range of spiritual themes conducive to our Catholic ethos.

## **Advance Equality of Opportunity**

All students at the school are warmly welcomed and valued for the people they are and the contribution they make. They are taught with an expectation and within an environment that encourages them to be the very best they can be. All student data is monitored very closely with a dedicated team responsible for monitoring each Year group and the vulnerable individuals or groups it contains. Our target setting ensures that each and every student is working to their full capacity. Vulnerable groups are identified in each Year group and their progress is monitored by individual staff members with action plans in place to ensure that each student is supported to reach their full potential. An example of this is the students who come into school with below L4 in KS2 SATs tests. These students are those that traditionally fail to reach C grades at GCSE. Intervention groups have been set up in both literacy and numeracy by specialist teachers to ensure that these students achieve their best.

Parental involvement is closely monitored to ensure that all parents are able to communicate fully with the school and that any barriers to communication are effectively removed wherever possible. Parents are very much welcomed into the school and there are many occasions, both formal and informal, where this is facilitated. Attendance at Parents' Evenings is monitored and those who do not attend are followed by letter or telephone call. All parents are sent a weekly newsletter; a termly 'Reflection' publication, and the school's Twitter feed and website are updated regularly with school news and events. We are currently developing the SIMS Learning Gateway which is accessible for all staff, students and parents/ carers enabling data on attendance, achievements and targets to be viewed.

## **Fostering Good Relations between People**

Engagement with our local community is a key focus of the school. We have a well-developed and active student council who have suggested many improvements to the fabric of the school which have been implemented. The student leadership teams, comprising prefects, peer mentors and academic mentors impact on a daily basis the working life of the school, as do librarians, chaplaincy group members and cybermentors who graduated as part of the National Cybermentor Scheme.

## Appendix

### Vision Statement



*Our school is an inclusive place of learning that celebrates and welcomes diversity. Every member of our community is a unique and special creation of God and is known, cared for and valued for the contribution they make. Every student is challenged and supported to achieve his best.*