



Equalities Policy Statement

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| Date approved | 28 November 2019 | Approved by | St Mary's Voluntary Catholic Academy |
| Review cycle | 4 years | Signature | <i>Fionuala Boucher</i> |
| Due for review by | Advent 2023 | Name | Fionuala Boucher, Executive Headteacher |

Scope of this policy

This policy statement applies to all academies within the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust (The Trust), our pupils, staff, parents, carers and suppliers.

Objective of this policy

The objective of this policy is to ensure that our obligations and duties under the Equalities Act are discharged effectively and that each academy sets its own equalities objective(s) and monitors progress against them annually.

Ownership of this policy

This policy is owned by the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust Board. Each academy will adopt this policy statement and add its own Equalities Objective(s).

Monitoring of this policy

Local Governing Bodies will monitor their own Equalities Objectives and will publish a report showing progress against the objective(s) annually. The Trust Board will monitor compliance with the requirement for every academy to publish a report.

Relevant legislation

Race Relations 1976 as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
All as amended by the Equality Act 2006 and by the Equality Act 2010

Related policies/documents

The Trust Admissions Policy
The Trust British Values Statement
Academy Equality Objectives, report and action plan
Academy SEND Policies
Academy Accessibility Plans
Academy Behaviour Policies
Bishop's Memorandum on appointment of teachers in Catholic Schools

Guidance is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission:
[PublicSectorEqualityDutyGuideforSchoolsEngland.docx](#)

Policy

We welcome our general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations, and our specific duties to publish equalities information every year about our academies; to explain how we have due regard for equality; and to publish equality objectives which show how we plan to tackle particular inequalities, and reduce or remove them. We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.



Protected Characteristics

We recognise the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin

We will not discriminate either:

- **Directly*** - by treating someone less favourably than we treat or would treat others because of one of the protected characteristics;
- **Indirectly** - by imposing a provision / criterion / practice (PCP);
- **By association** – because of someone’s association with a person with a protected characteristic;
- When someone makes a **complaint** about discrimination or supports someone else’s claim; or
- Because of something arising from a **Disability**.

*We will have certain posts reserved for practising Catholics ie Chief Executive Officers and their deputies, Headteachers and their deputies, Lay Chaplains, Heads of Religious Education.

We recognise that protection from discrimination applies:

- at work – to employees;
- in education – to pupils;
- as a supplier – when providing goods or services.

General Principles

We will act within the 7 principles set in the Equality Act:

1. All learners are of equal value: all learners and potential learners are of equal value and should benefit from the Schools policies, practices and programmes.
2. Relevant differences should be recognised: treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Policies, practices and programmes must not discriminate, but may be differentiated to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people face.
3. Workforce development: policies and programmes should benefit all members of the workforce, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.
4. Positive attitudes and relationships should be fostered: policies and programmes should promote positive attitudes, good relations and positive interaction between all members of the community
5. Society as a whole should benefit: policies and programmes should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater cohesion, and greater participation in public life.
6. Current inequalities and barriers should be addressed and reduced: in addition to mitigating, avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, policies and programmes should take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by addressing, reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist.

Publishing Information

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to publish information that demonstrates that we have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct 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 between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We will collect and use equality information to help us to:

- Understand the impact of our policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics, and thereby plan them more effectively to advance equality of opportunity;
- Assess whether we are discriminating unlawfully when carrying out any of our functions;
- Identify what the key equality issues are for each of our academies and plan accordingly;
- Benchmark our performance against those of similar organisations, nationally or locally;
- Take steps to meet the needs of staff who share relevant protected characteristics;
- Identify if there are any actions we can take to avoid discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations, including training for staff;
- Make informed decisions about policies and practices which are based on evidence about the impact of our activities on equality;

Each academy will set its own Equality Objective(s) and progress will be monitored through an action plan.

Meeting our duties for our Staff

Recruitment and Selection: Our policy on recruitment and selection follows model policy guidelines and ACAS best practice. Appointments are made based on merit, matching knowledge, skills and attributes to the essential and desirable criteria for the post. Our selection procedures are fair, transparent and recorded. Selection panels include at least one member trained in safer recruitment. Where employees have a disability then we will make every effort to provide reasonable adjustments to the working environment.

Staff Development and Training: We ensure that all staff, regardless of job role, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. Priorities for training are identified in the relevant Improvement Plan for each academy. Staff with line management responsibility will be provided with advice and support from the central HR team to ensure that HR policies are applied fairly and consistently making reasonable adjustments where necessary.

We will publish our Gender Pay Gap Report annually on the government portal and on our website. We will monitor our Key Performance Indicators regularly to ascertain whether our policies and procedures have a disproportionate impact on any of the protected groups and this information will be reported to the Trust Board and action taken where appropriate.

Meeting our duties for our Pupils

Ethos and Religious Observance: As a Catholic community we strive to create an ethos which reflects Christian values and these are evident throughout each academy in our daily Acts of Worship and in displays and on our websites. We will continue to promote and express these values. However, we respect the views and practices of other beliefs and religions and allow for expression of these views, including time off to celebrate key religious festivals and wearing of items which are essential to a religion where these do not present a health and safety risk.

Curriculum and Learning & Teaching: We keep each curriculum area or subject under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning addresses gaps in attainment between groups. Our teaching resources are reviewed to ensure there is no inbuilt bias which would negatively impact on a protected group. Our teaching seeks to challenge stereotypes by providing positive role models and appropriate teaching materials. We recognise that treating everyone equally does not mean treating everyone in the same way and we differentiate teaching materials to give all pupils equal access.

Teaching of Religious Education: Religious Education is taught from a Christian perspective with particular emphasis on the teachings of the Catholic Church. However, the curriculum for religious education is broad and balanced and allows for the exploration and understanding of other cultures and beliefs.

Admissions: We recognise that a significant proportion of our intake will be Catholic students and this is reflected in our Admissions Policies and Oversubscription Criteria which are fully compliant with the Admissions Code. Decisions relating to admissions are made solely on the basis of the agreed Admissions Policies which are set at Diocesan and Trust level and published in advance on the academy websites. Children with a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plan, where parents name one of our academies, are given priority for admission under the Admissions Policy.

Accessibility: Each academy is developing an accessibility plan reflecting their accommodation and their pupils. Pupils with additional needs constitute a very diverse group: they include pupils with physical, emotional, behavioural, sensory or learning needs. We seek assistance from a wide range of agencies where appropriate: for example speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, medical practitioners, social workers and psychologists. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to enable pupils with additional needs to participate in academy life to the fullest possible extent. The academies work in close collaboration to ensure that the transition between phases is as smooth as possible for pupils.

Responsibility to our Wider Community: We strive as a Catholic community to develop responsible citizens with a strong sense of moral purpose. This is achieved through the many cross curricular projects and activities taking place, through our links with local parishes and through our charity fund raising to support local causes.

Positive Behaviour Strategy: Our academies operate positive behaviour strategies which reward appropriate behaviour based on our values and sets clear expectations relating to unacceptable behaviour, in particular any form of prejudice. Each academy records and reports on prejudice related incidents, particularly those categorised as homophobic or racist, and any bullying for whatever reason. Each academy has age appropriate behaviour policies in place to ensure that prejudice of any kind is challenged.

Roles and responsibilities

The Trust together with the relevant **Local Governing Body** is responsible for ensuring that each academy complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

The Chair of Governors in each academy will monitor progress against the Equality Objective(s).

The Headteacher at each academy is responsible for implementing the policy, for setting Equalities Objectives and publishing information; 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.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their work
- treat work colleagues with respect and in line with the principles of this policy

All pupils are expected to:

- comply with the classroom codes appropriate to them and work with others in their classroom
- report any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- behave appropriately at all times in line with their academy behaviour policy