



St Edward's Catholic First School

SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY

Single Equality Policy
Cycle review: 3 years
Ratified: October 2025
Review: September 2028

ST EDWARD'S CATHOLIC FIRST SCHOOL

St Edward's Catholic First School strives to provide a broad, balanced, and relevant Catholic education in which we recognise, through mutual respect, and our mission statement that *We See Jesus in Everything We Do*.

1. OBJECTIVES

At St Edward's Catholic First School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all children, staff, and parents, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or socio-economic background.

We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which everyone connected to the school feels proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. The achievement of pupils is monitored by race, gender, socio-economic background and disability, and we use this data to support pupils, raise standards, ensure inclusive teaching, and make sure that all groups of pupils are achieving well. We tackle discrimination through the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes, and creating an environment which champions respect for all.

The St Edward's Catholic First School community is incredibly diverse. We aim to celebrate this diversity, recognising it as a strength of the school. We have a strong history of ensuring that all children achieve national standards and above, irrespective of background, race, gender or disability.

Our Equality Objectives will be drawn up every four years, and we will annually publish information demonstrating how we are meeting the aims of the general public sector equality duty, in line with The Equality Act 2010.

The three main aims of the general equality duty are 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 who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The nine protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

2. ENSURING EQUALITY IN POLICY AND PRACTICE

As well as the specific actions set out within this policy, the school will operate equality of opportunity in its day-to-day practice in the following ways, to ensure equality of opportunity for children and adults under all protected characteristics:

2.1 Teaching and Learning

We aim to provide all pupils with the opportunity to succeed and reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability, and act on any gaps
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning future learning, setting challenging targets accordingly
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping
- Promote attitudes and values that challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
- Seek to involve parents in supporting their child's education
- Encourage discussion of equality issues in classrooms and staffrooms, reflecting on social stereotypes, expectations and their impact on learning
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils

2.2 Admissions and Exclusions

Our admissions process is fair and transparent, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions are based on the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and implemented in line with Government guidelines: *Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England* (DfE, 2017). We closely monitor exclusions to avoid potential adverse impact and ensure that discrepancies are identified and addressed. All Government and Local Authority principles and guidelines are followed to ensure no undue discrimination occurs.

3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF

At St Edward's Catholic First School, we are committed to ensuring equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions (including pay increases) are based on merit and

ability, and comply with the law. The school adopts a cyclical appraisal programme to monitor this.

3.1 Employer Duties

As an employer, we aim to eliminate discrimination and harassment in employment practice and actively promote equality across all workforce groups.

We monitor recruitment and retention. Equality aspects, including all nine protected characteristics, are considered when appointing staff or allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR). Staff structures are regularly reviewed to ensure decision-making is free from discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We ensure equality of continued professional development opportunities for all staff. Allegations of discrimination are taken seriously and recorded appropriately. All allegations are directed to the Headteacher for action. Incident reports are completed and returned to the borough.

4. EQUALITY AND THE LAW

A number of statutory duties must be met by every school in line with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Equality Duty (2005), Gender Equality Duty (2006) and the Equality Act (2010).

Daily practice and policy ensure equality of opportunity for all and take account of the protected characteristics.

The Equality Objectives at the end of this Single Equality Policy outline the actions St Edward's Catholic First School will take to meet the general duties detailed below.

4.1 Race Equality

This section of the plan reflects the duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Legal Duties

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups
- Under our specific duty we will:
- Prepare and publish our Equality Policy and Equality Objectives every four years and review these annually, publishing information to demonstrate how we are meeting the aims of the general public sector equality duty
- Ensure Equality Objectives cover requirements under The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, identifying race equality goals and actions to meet these
- Review and revise this Scheme every four years

- Assess and monitor the impact of this policy and the Equalities Objectives, on pupils, staff and parents/carers with a particular focus on the achievement of minority ethnic groups

4.2 Disability Equality

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and the school Accessibility Policy.

Definition of disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities
- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is "clinically well-recognised", although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Legal Duties

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish our Equality Policy and Equality Objectives every four years and review these annually, publishing information to demonstrate how we are meeting the aims of the general public sector equality duty
- Ensure Equality Objectives cover the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme, identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet these
- Review and revise this Scheme every four years

4.3 Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male pupils and between women and men and transgender people.

Legal duties

- Under our general duty we will actively seek to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment
 - Promote equality between males and females
- Under our specific duty we will:
 - Prepare and publish our Equality Policy and Equality Objectives every four years and review these annually, publishing information to demonstrate how we are meeting the aims of the general public sector equality duty
 - Ensure Equality Objectives cover requirements under the Gender Equality Duty 2006, identifying gender equality goals and actions to meet these
 - Review and revise this Scheme every four years

4.4 Community Cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths/beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

5. CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

It is a requirement that the input of staff, children and parents have informed the development of this policy and the Equality Objectives. We have used the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from our parent representation group
- Feedback from pupils through pupil surveys, school evaluations and more specific input from school council
- Input from the leadership team
- Input from local governors including parent and foundation governors
- Input from staff through staff meetings/INSET
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on SEND Support Plans

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The role of Governors:

- The governing board has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs and the needs of all staff based on the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- The governing board seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, and pupils (see Accessibility Policy)
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socioeconomic background, race, gender or disability.
- The governing board ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

6.2 The role of the Headteacher

- It is the Headteacher's role to implement the school's Equality Policy and Equality Objectives and he is supported by the governing board in doing so.
- It is the Headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Policy and Equality Objectives, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The Headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The Headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

6.3 The role of all Staff

- All staff ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy and Equality Objectives.
- All staff will strive to provide material that promotes positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Headteacher.

- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

7.1 What is a Discriminatory Incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments and jokes.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.'

Types of Discriminatory Incident

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability or gender
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes
- Racist or sexist graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist or sexist badges or insignia
- Bringing racist, sexist or discriminatory material into school
- Verbal abuse and threats
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability or gender
- Racist, sexist or discriminatory comments in the course of discussion
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g., food, music, religion, dress etc.
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender or disability
- Written derogatory remarks

8. REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND IMPACT

The Governing Board has agreed this policy. At St Edward's Catholic First School, we have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we review progress against our Equality Objectives annually and review the entire policy and accompanying Equality Objectives every four years.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender, disability and socio-economic factors to ensure all groups are making the best possible progress.