Single Equalities Policy

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

The School Mission Statement

To love, serve and learn as Jesus shows us

DOCUMENT STATUS

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INTRODUCTION

This equalities policy amalgamates all the equalities legislation into one single equality policy for St Vincent's Catholic Primary School. We are a Catholic school and at all times we serve as a witness for the Catholic faith. The Mission statement of our school clearly demonstrates the Christian ethos of our school:

To love, serve and learn as Jesus shows us

The high quality of personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils, based upon the gospel values, are central in our everyday life. It is recognized that the vast majority of pupils in our school, respond positively to the deep rooted values which are practiced by staff and are at the very heart of our school community. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The policy outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School to promote equality both as an employer and a service-provider. This involves tackling the barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes so that there is equality of access and the diversity within the school community is celebrated and valued.

We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. At St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, equality is a key principle for treating all people the same irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs/faith tradition, sexual orientation, age or any other of the protected characteristics (Single Equalities Act 2010).

This policy has been drawn up as a result of discussion within a working party and has been shared with the whole school community.

- We try to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
- We want to make sure that our school is a safe, secure and stimulating place for everyone.
- We recognise that people have different needs, and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same.
- We recognise that for some pupils extra support is needed to help them to achieve and be successful.
- We try to make sure that people from different groups are consulted and involved in our decisions, for example through talking to pupils and parents/carers, and also through our School Council.
- We aim to make sure that no-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age; any disability they may have; their ethnicity, colour or national origin; their gender; their gender identity or reassignment; their marital or civil partnership status; being pregnant or having recently had a baby; their religion or beliefs; their sexual identity and orientation.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual identity.

2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

3. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in 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.

4. We welcome the emphasis in the OfSTED inspection framework on the importance of narrowing gaps in achievement which affect, amongst others:
    - pupils from certain cultural and ethnic backgrounds
    - pupils who belong to low-income households and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
    - pupils who are disabled
    - pupils who have special educational needs
    - boys in certain subjects, and girls in certain other subjects.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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.

In fulfilling these legal obligations, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.
We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual identity.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.
Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our 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 barrier and disadvantage which 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 needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual identity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.
We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes 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 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, and women anD men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
We ensure that policies and procedures should 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 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 ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely
We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, and girls and boys.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit
We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, girls and boys

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence
We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to disability; ethnicity, religion and culture; gender.

Principle 9: Objectives
We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement in which we have been involved (principle 7), in relation to disability; ethnicity, religion and culture; gender.

We recognise that the actions resulting from this policy statement are what make a difference.

Every three years, accordingly, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

Policy Commitments
At St Vincent's Catholic Primary School we fulfil the legal obligations outlined above guided by the principles described through:

The Curriculum
We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed. To achieve this we will ensure:

- Curriculum planning reflects a commitment to equality;
- The curriculum prepares pupils for life in a diverse society and uses opportunities to reflect the background and experience of pupils and families in the school;
- There will be opportunities in the curriculum to explore concepts and issues related to identity and equality;
- The promotion of attitudes and values that celebrate and respect diversity and challenge discriminatory behaviour and language wherever it occurs;
- The use of images and materials which positively reflect a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles.

- This will be achieved through PSHE (Jigsaw), RSE (Journey in Love – Sr Jude Groden) and through the use of texts linked to the different aspects of the Equality Act.

High Expectations of Achievement
There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, social background and sexual orientation. To secure the best possible outcomes we recognise that:

- Adults in the school will be expected to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity;
- It is important to identify the particular needs of individuals and groups within the school and to use targeted interventions to narrow gaps in achievement;
- A range of teaching methods is used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils.
- All pupils are actively encouraged to engage fully pupils in their own learning.

The ethos and culture of the school

- At St Vincent's Catholic Primary School we are aware that those involved in the leadership of the school community are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community;
- We strive to achieve a feeling of openness and tolerance which welcomes everyone to the school;
- The children are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect;

- The displays around the school reflect diversity across all aspects of equality and are frequently monitored;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure access for pupils, staff and visitors (including parents) with disabilities (this not only includes physical access, but takes account wider access to school information and activities);
- Provision is made to cater for the cultural, moral and spiritual needs of all children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and off-site activities;
- Pupils' views are actively encouraged and respected. Pupils are given an effective voice for example, through the School Council, pupil perception surveys and there are regular opportunities to engage with pupils about their learning and the life of the school;
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils feel welcomed and included.
- We ensure the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:
    - pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
    - pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
    - teaching styles and strategies
    - admissions and attendance
    - staff recruitment, retention and professional development
    - care, guidance and support
    - behaviour, discipline and exclusions
    - working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
    - working with the wider community.

Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

- All posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants;
- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do avoid discrimination to ensure equality of opportunity.
- Steps are taken to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels of the school;
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds;
- Equalities policy and practice is covered in all staff inductions;
- All supply staff and contractors are made aware of the equalities policy and practice;
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and the impact of policies are kept under regular review

Countering and Challenging Harassment and Bullying

- The school counters and challenges all types of discriminatory behaviour and this is made clear to staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- The school has a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with prejudice related bullying incidents and has clear procedures for recording and monitoring incidents;
- The school reports to Governors, parents and LA on an annual basis the number of prejudice related incidents recorded in the school.
- We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the LA about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School aims to work in partnership with parents/carers. We:

- Take action to ensure all parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the life of the school;
- Maintain good channels of communication to ensure parents' views are captured to inform practice;
- Encourage members of the local community to join in school activities and celebrations;

- Ensure that the parents/carers of newly arrived pupils e.g. EAL or pupils with disabilities are made to feel welcome.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POLICY

In our school, all members of the school community have a responsibility for promoting equalities.

The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring that:

- The school complies with all equalities legislation relevant to the school community;
- The school's Equalities Policy is maintained and updated regularly; and that equality schemes are easily identifiable (these may be included within the School Improvement Plan, the school's Accessibility Plan or may be separate documents);
- The actions, procedures and strategies related to the policy are implemented;
- The Pupil Support and Ethos Committee will have an overview, on behalf of the Governing Body, on all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to these incidents.

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership team has responsibility for:

- In partnership with the Governing body, providing leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- Overseeing the implementation of the equality policy and schemes;
- Co-ordinating the activities related to equality and evaluating impact;
- Ensuring that all who enter the school are aware of, and comply with, the equalities policy;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support;
- Taking appropriate action in response to any prejudice-related incidents.

All school staff have responsibility for:

- The implementation of the school's equalities policy and schemes;
- Dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- Ensuring they do not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity and culture, disability, sexual orientation or other groups vulnerable to discrimination.
- Keeping up to date with equalities legislation.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice (See Authorised Absence Policy).

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the headteacher and governing body.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Headteacher is responsible for co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation of this policy through:

- Updating staff, Governors and parents on equalities legislation and the school's responsibilities in this regard;
- Working closely with the governing body;
- Supporting positively the evaluation activities that monitor the impact and success of the policy on pupils from different groups, e.g disabilities and special educational needs; FSM; Children in Care; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender, in the following recommended areas:
    - Pupils' progress and attainment
    - Learning and teaching
    - Behaviour discipline and exclusions
    - Attendance
    - Admissions
    - Incidents of prejudice related bullying and all forms of bullying
    - Parental involvement
    - Participation in extra-curricular and extended school activities
    - Staff recruitment and retention
    - Visits and visitors
- In order to do this, quantitative and qualitative information relating to the implementation of this policy is gathered and adjustments are made as appropriate.

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE POLICY

The equalities policy and all other relevant policies will be evaluated and monitored for their equality impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school. This will be communicated with staff, parents, carers and governors by the Head Teacher.