



St. John Fisher

CATHOLIC COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Incorporating the Equal Opportunities Policy, the Racial Equality Policy, the Gender Equality Scheme and in conjunction with the Disability Equality Scheme

The Mission Statement:

'St. John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School inspires students, spiritually and educationally, forming them through Faith so they can achieve their aspirations and contribute to their community.'

Date of Review:	January 2025
Date of Ratification:	3 rd February 2025
Date of Next Review:	February 2027
Chair of Governors:	Mr. O. McColgan
Policy Approving Body:	Catholic Mission and Ethos Committee
Policy Owner:	Mrs. L. Bennett
Statutorily Published on Website:	Yes

Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

Ethos

St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School is firmly committed to equality and diversity. The Equality and Diversity Policy at SJF is a statement of good practice that covers all aspects of the school that contribute to fulfilment of the school's mission statement through the development and maintenance of a positive approach to all members of the school community regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, health etc. All members of the school are expected to help maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and development, with courtesy and mutual respect as the basic requirements. This will be achieved through the application of the Code of Conduct, which is rooted in mutual respect.

Aims

- To promote a positive and welcoming culture and ensure that all members of the SJF community enjoy a safe and secure working environment and equal access to all learning opportunities.
- To contribute to mutual respect.
- To eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

The Context

The National Context

Schools have a number of responsibilities and duties under legislation relating to equality and diversity. Recent and forthcoming legislation covers equality issues in relation to:

- gender
- age
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or Maternity

School Context

St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School serves a diverse ethnic range of students, predominantly from the Medway Towns.

This policy does not stand-alone but should be read alongside:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- School Uniform Policy

Definitions

Under the law, there are different categories of discrimination, with differences in the legal framework surrounding them. These are:

Direct discrimination: Is unlawful for all protected grounds except, in some circumstances, age and disability in schools. Direct Discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably than others in comparable circumstances because of a special characteristic such as sex, race or a disability. In the case of direct age discrimination, this is unlawful only if it cannot be objectively justified.

Indirect Discrimination: In essence occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to all but has a different impact on members of one or more protected groups, of which the complainant is one, and is placed at a disadvantage as a result. Indirect discrimination is unlawful unless it can be justified for reasons unrelated to the characteristic in question. (An example might be a physical strength test, which would discriminate against women, and which might be justified in relation to a job necessitating heavy lifting, but not in relation to teaching.)

Victimisation – treating a person less favourably because they have taken action in respect of discrimination, e.g. by bringing a complaint or giving evidence for a colleague – is also unlawful.

Harassment – unwanted conduct which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, on grounds of one of the relevant characteristics such as sex or race – is also unlawful in many of the situations covered by discrimination law.

Gender Reassignment - Including people who have expressed an intention to undergo, are undergoing or have completed a process of gender reassignment.

Sexual Orientation - Discrimination on grounds of perceived as well as actual sexual orientation, and/or that of friends or associates of the person discriminated against is also unlawful.

Age - in some cases, direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of age may be lawful if it can be shown to be objectively justified.

Religion – The requirement not to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief is expected to come into effect from April 2017. Regulations are also planned which will prohibit discrimination against pupils or potential pupils on grounds of sexual orientation

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body are responsible for:

Equality and Diversity Policy

- Ensuring the Recruitment Policy at SJF for short listing and interviewing staff does not discriminate in the employment of staff on grounds of gender, transsexual status (including people who have expressed an intention to undergo, are undergoing or have completed a process of gender reassignment), race, disability, sexual orientation or age. This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices such as dress codes and disciplinary procedures.
- **Specific guidance from the Catholic Education Service regarding Employment:**

There are some specific exceptions to the religion or belief provisions of the Equality Act for employment by schools designated as having a religious character. This means that for Catholic schools' preference may be given in connection with the employment, remuneration or promotion of teachers, to those whose religious beliefs and practice is in accordance with the tenets of the school's religion or religious denomination or who give or are willing to give religious education in accordance with the tenets of the faith. Conduct that is incompatible with the precepts of the Church, or which fails to uphold its tenets, may be taken into consideration in determining whether the teacher's employment should be terminated.
- Ensuring any complaint regarding appointments and admissions will be fully investigated, recorded, and acted upon. The Governors shall, annually, review the results of any investigations.
- Ensuring that the Disability Equality Scheme makes such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.
- Ensuring the school records racist incidents and reports them to the local authority on a regular basis.
- Ensuring the Curriculum Policy places emphasis on equal entitlement to a broad curriculum for all students from Years 7 through to Year 13
- Assessing and monitoring the impact of policies on students, staff and parents, in particular the achievements of students from different racial groups, their choices of options, intentions to leave or to stay on, the choices of higher education courses and careers.
- Such steps as are reasonably practicable should be taken to publish annually the results of the monitoring. Ofsted will inspect and report on whether schools are meeting the general and specific duties.
- Ensuring all students are entitled to take part in the full range of school activities and that students are not discriminated against due to restricted finances.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Equality and Diversity policy is readily available and that all members of the school community are familiar with it
- Carrying out procedures for short listing and interviewing staff to ensure that the school does not discriminate in the employment of staff on grounds of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training, and employment practices such as religious dress codes and disciplinary procedures.
- Ensuring the Admissions Policy is applied correctly.

Equality and Diversity Policy

- Working with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that Governors are informed about any reasonable adjustments that are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.
- Arranging, with the Pastoral Leader and Welfare Manager, for financial assistance for the student's parents where a financial deterrent exists, especially for all curriculum trips and for school uniform needs.

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:

- Working together to ensure all members of the team and the Governors are informed of reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled
- Promoting the policy with staff, students, and parents.
- Ensuring the curriculum areas and pastoral groups they line manage conform with the policy

The Deputy Head Teacher (Curriculum and Achievement) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the timetable and curriculum enables participation of all students and that they are not discriminated against on grounds of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, religion, belief or age.

The Assistant Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Working with the Pastoral Leaders to ensure that all students are able to achieve and fulfil their potential and that they are not discriminated against on grounds of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age.

The Chief Operations Officer is responsible for:

- Providing for the Governors the information regarding the cost of any reasonable adjustments to the fabric of the building as are necessary to prevent substantial disadvantage to a disabled person, to enable effective budgeting.
- Ensuring any changes sanctioned by the Governing Body have been carried out.
- Organising the application for any grants towards the cost of making any adjustments to the fabric of the building.

The Head of Year is responsible for:

- Ensuring the pastoral team, they line manage conform to the policy.
- Monitoring progress of the students in their Year group to ensure they are able to achieve and fulfil their potential, and that they are not discriminated against on grounds of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age.
- Deal promptly and firmly with any incidents of discrimination, recognise and tackle racial bias and stereotyping; promote equal opportunities and good race relations, and avoid discrimination against

Equality and Diversity Policy

anyone for reasons of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age.

- Working with the Head teacher and Assistant Headteacher to offer financial support for the parents of students that would be discriminated against on the grounds of financial difficulty
- Identifying where the first language of families is not English and identify which documents should be available in main languages.

The Curriculum Leader is responsible for:

- Promoting an ethos within their curriculum area in which staff set out to create an environment where all pupils can contribute fully and feel valued and different cultural traditions are valued and made meaningful to students
- Promoting teaching approaches, where necessary, take account of pupils' cultural backgrounds, language needs, and different learning styles
- Ensuring teachers challenge stereotypes and give pupils the understanding they need to recognise prejudice and reject discrimination on any grounds.
- Including a reference in department handbooks to policy on equal opportunities. The statement will explain how resources within the faculty are monitored to promote policy of fairness and respect for all members of the community and how textbooks, novels and other materials are regularly monitored.
- Monitoring progress of the students in their curriculum area to ensure they are able to achieve and fulfil their potential, and that they are not discriminated against on grounds of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age.
- Provide reports for Governors on the attendance, rewards and sanctions and the progress and results of students in their curriculum area.
- Take appropriate action if discrimination occurs.

The Curriculum Leaders for Religious Education and PSHE are responsible for:

- Ensuring assemblies feature spiritual guidance, meditation and readings and music that reflects the wide range of backgrounds in the school.
- Encouraging the organisation of events that celebrate different cultures.

All staff will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the policy.
- Dealing promptly and firmly with any incidents of discrimination, recognise and tackle racial bias and stereotyping; promote equal opportunities and good race relations, and avoid discrimination against

Equality and Diversity Policy

anyone for reasons of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age

- Ensuring their classroom displays reflect the principles outlined in the policy.

Students

- Adhere to the policy and show respect for all members of the school community.

Parents and carers

- Supporting the school by following the principles in the policy and showing respect for all members of the school community.

Action in the event of an incident

Where incidents arise that breach the policy, action should be taken as laid down in the Anti Bullying Policy or the Dignity at Work (Medway) policy as appropriate. Students should report the incident to their Head of Year or Pastoral Care Leader or to a member of staff they feel comfortable talking to.

Staff should report the incident to the Headteacher. If the complaint is against the Headteacher the incident should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

ANNEX A

KEY LEGISLATION

(Please note legislation made prior to 1988 is not available online)

Area	Legislation
Gender (sex)	Sex Discrimination Act 1975 Equality Act 2010
Gender (reassignment)	Equality Act 2010
Race	Race Relations Act 1976, as amended Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Disability	Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 Equality Act 2010
Sexual orientation	Employment Equality Act 2010 Equality Act 2010
Religion or belief	Employment Equality Act 2010 Equality Act 2010
Age	Employment Equality Act 2010 Equality Act 2010