

St John's CE VC Primary School

Equality Policy

Introduction

St John's Primary School aims to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity, in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life. We tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, by challenging bullying and stereotypes and by creating an environment that champions respect for all.

In this policy we set out the general principles that inform our approach to promoting equality in our day-to-day practices and in our interaction with the school community. Those principles apply to the whole school – pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers, and everyone within our extended school community. We acknowledge the need to work together in achieving our aim of being fully inclusive and accessible.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Equality Action Plan, which details specific steps to be taken to promote equality. The following school policies are also relevant:

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy (absence for religious observance)
- Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff and Governors
- Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Policy
- Uniform Policy (modifications to accommodate religion or belief, ethnicity or disability).

The legal framework

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools not to discriminate in the **provision of education** on the basis of any of these protected characteristics:

- sex
- race

- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy and maternity, or
- gender reassignment.

Guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, 'What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools', explains the different forms of discrimination covered by the Equality Act 2010 and considers what schools must do to meet the requirements of the Act in relation to pupils.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination by schools in their role as **employers** on any of the grounds listed above, **and** on grounds of age or marriage/civil partnership.

Schools are also required by the 2010 Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations across all the protected groups (the 'public sector equality duty').

At St John's we recognise that socio-economic disadvantage can have a significant impact on children's opportunities and achievement. Although socio-economic background is not included in the Equality Act 2010 as a protected characteristic, it is covered by this policy.

Schools also have a statutory duty under S.21(5) of the Education Act 2002 (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) to promote community cohesion.

Pupils

St John's aims to provide all pupils with the opportunity to succeed and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. We will:

- monitor progress and attainment data by reference to the protected characteristics, where possible – in particular, gender, race/ethnicity, English as an additional language (EAL), SEND and socio-economic background (pupil premium)
- use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils
- use targeted interventions to narrow any gaps in achievement and offset any disadvantage experienced by individuals and groups of pupils
- make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND to ensure access to the school curriculum, improve the physical environment and improve the provision of information
- take account of the achievement and needs of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting targets
- prepare pupils for life in a diverse society
- use images and teaching materials that avoid stereotypes and positively reflect a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles
- promote attitudes and values that celebrate diversity

- provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own identity and culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures and religions
- develop pupils' understanding of their rights, the rights of others and their responsibilities to each other and the wider community
- actively seek and respect pupils' views – for example, through PSHE lessons, circle time, pupil surveys and the activities of the School Council
- challenge discriminatory attitudes, behaviour and language
- encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues
- seek parents' views on matters relating to equality – for example, through the annual parent questionnaire – and involve all parents in supporting their children's education
- create opportunities for pupils to be involved in their local community – for example, by attending events organised by All Saints Church and local community organisations
- promote community cohesion by giving pupils the opportunity to mix with and learn about those from different backgrounds – for example, through links with other schools and community organisations within the local and global communities.

We may afford pupils with EAL or SEND, or those in receipt of pupil premium, access to special provision to meet their needs – for example, additional learning support, language tuition or extracurricular activities.

Admissions arrangements for prospective pupils are set out in the school's Admissions Policy. They are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate by reference to any of the protected characteristics. We will closely monitor any exclusions to avoid potential adverse impact on particular groups and will ensure that any discrepancies are identified and addressed.

Staff

The principle of equal treatment applies to all employees (whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts), ex-employees, job applicants and other individuals such as supply staff, consultants, contractors and volunteers.

We strive to treat our staff equally and fairly in matters such as recruitment, terms and conditions of service, training, promotion, career development, discipline, redundancy and dismissal. In accordance with S.60 of the Equality Act 2010 we do not enquire about the health of a job applicant (unless specific requirements are intrinsic to the role) until a job offer has been made. Employment policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that they conform with current legislation and best practice.

Any member of staff who is disabled, or becomes disabled in the course of employment, is encouraged to tell us about their condition. This is to enable us to support them and to ensure that they are not discriminated against. The school may wish to consult the staff member and their medical adviser(s) about reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such adjustments and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of the job.

All employees, workers, contractors and volunteers at the school have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against, harass or victimise their co-workers. We will take seriously and act on incidents of alleged harassment and discrimination by or against any worker at the school.

Parents and carers

St John's seeks to develop an inclusive partnership with parents and carers. We:

- explain how the school operates through our weekly newsletter, website and information meetings
- offer a range of ways of communicating with parents that meet their needs and circumstances
- ensure that parents understand how well their child is progressing – for example, through parents' evenings and the end of year report
- explain how parents can support their child's education – for example, through parent workshops and information meetings
- maintain good channels of communication to ensure that parents' views on equality and other issues are captured – for example, by means of the annual parent questionnaire
- encourage all parents to participate in the life of the school – for example, by helping in classrooms and on trips, becoming class representatives, being involved in PTA activities or joining the Governing Body
- ensure that the parents/carers of newly arrived pupils are made to feel welcome.

Roles and responsibilities

All those who work in the school have a responsibility to promote equality and inclusion, and to avoid discrimination.

The **Headteacher** and **Senior Leadership Team** are responsible for:

- providing leadership and vision in respect of equality in partnership with the Governing Body
- overseeing the implementation of this policy and monitoring its impact
- publishing an annual equality report on the school's website detailing the impact and effectiveness of this policy
- ensuring that all who work at the school (including supply staff, contractors and volunteers) are aware of, and comply with, this policy
- ensuring that staff are given relevant training and support
- ensuring that staff and pupils are aware of the process for reporting any discriminatory incidents
- taking timely and appropriate action in response to any discriminatory incidents, and
- providing regular reports to the Governing Body on equality issues, including any discriminatory incidents.

The senior member of staff responsible for equality is Tony Weir.

The **Governing Body** is responsible for ensuring that:

- the school complies with relevant equality legislation

- this policy and the Equality Action Plan are maintained and updated as appropriate
- the actions related to this policy are implemented and monitored, and
- all other school policies promote equality.

The Governor for inclusion and equality is Sarah Leverton.

All school staff are responsible for:

- implementing this policy
- responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination
- tackling inappropriate language and behaviour
- knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping
- promoting an inclusive and collaborative ethos through their words and actions and ensuring they do not discriminate against any group or individual, and
- keeping up to date with equality legislation and best practice.

Pupils are responsible for:

- treating each other with respect and consideration, and
- refraining from discriminatory behaviour.

Visitors to the school are responsible for:

- making themselves familiar with, and complying with, this policy.

Breaches of the policy

If you believe that you have received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed in this policy, or if you consider that this policy has otherwise been breached, you are strongly encouraged to raise the matter through the school's Complaints Policy. Allegations regarding breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the Complaints Policy and/or current guidelines issued by Bristol City Council. We will treat seriously and urgently investigate every complaint.

Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the school community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy. Discriminatory incidents are reported termly to the Governing Body via the Headteacher's report. Information about racist, disablist or homophobic incidents is also reported to Bristol City Council as such incidents occur.

Monitoring and review

The school will monitor this policy for its equality impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers. In particular, we will monitor pupils' progress, attainment and attendance by reference to race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, EAL, SEND and, where possible, religion/belief. We will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.

An annual equality report detailing the impact and effectiveness of the policy will be published on the school's website. The findings of the report will be used to update the Equality Action Plan and inform the content of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years by the Governing Body.