

SACRED HEART  
CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY



LIVE LEARN LOVE

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION  
POLICY

APPROVED BY  
THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY  
NOVEMBER 2021 – NOVEMBER 2025

REVIEW DATE – NOVEMBER 2025



# **SINGLE EQUALITIES POLICY**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy is part of the Catholic Church; as such it is hallmarked by God's word in Holy Scripture. In the area of 'Equality', we take as our starting point the words of Saint Paul to the Romans:

*'All of us in union with Christ form one body and as part of it we belong to each other. Love each other as much as brothers and sisters should and have a profound respect for each other'.*

Every member of the Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy is regarded as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of his/her creed, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality or ability. A good education for all our pupils is possible only if equal opportunities practices are an integral feature of all aspects of the life of the school.

Equalities practices should be evident in:

- The formal curriculum (the programme of lessons);
- The informal curriculum (extra-curricular activities);
- The hidden curriculum (the ethos of the Catholic Voluntary Academy, the quality of personal relationships etc).

All members of Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy should be aware of our Single Equalities Policy; this includes pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff, governors, parents, carers and the wider community and is placed on the website.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

In fulfilling the legal obligations referred to by the legal framework outlined at the end of this document, we are guided by seven key principles:

- All learners and their parents/carers are of equal value;
- We recognise, respect and value difference;
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging;
- We ensure policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion and in continual professional development;
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist;
- When constructing a policy, we aim to consult and involve all those groups affected by it in its design and review;
- All policies and activities should benefit society as a whole both locally and nationally fostering greater cohesion and greater participation in public life.

### **3. INTEGRATING THE PRINCIPLES INTO OUR KEY AREAS**

#### **3.1 Creed**

- As a Catholic academy, we acknowledge that members come from diverse backgrounds: some have no religious faith; others are committed to a greater or lesser extent to a variety of religions. We seek to promote an ethos of tolerance based on understanding of the respect for the beliefs and practices of others;
- We are happy for pupils to wear special forms of dress where these are an essential part of their religious or cultural background unless these contravene health and safety policy and practices;
- As a Catholic academy, the pastoral education of our pupils is considered of high importance. However, with regard to teaching Religious Education, we consider the role of the teacher is to encourage good moral values and kindness to others;
- We take opportunities to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative aspects of our policies by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between people of different religious backgrounds;
- We aim to involve people from a wide range of religious backgrounds in the design and review of policies which affect them by direct invitation to comment or posting the policy on the website and invite contribution;
- We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater community cohesion and greater participation in the public life of people with a wide range of religious backgrounds;
- Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same. We need to differentiate as appropriate. We do not discriminate but as, appropriate, take into account difference in religion.

#### **3.2 Culture**

- We value the history, experience and contribution of our multicultural community and seek to express this in the curriculum and within our school; all members should feel that their language or dialect is valued and that bilingualism is regarded as advantageous. We try to counter negative, patronising and stereotypical views; a prime cause of prejudice is ignorance and misunderstanding;
- We understand the need to be different without being excluded;
- Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but are differentiated as appropriate to ensure that people from different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised;
- Policies, procedures and activities should promote positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, national origin or status and an absence of prejudice related bullying and incidents;
- We take opportunities to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative aspects of our policies by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds;

- We aim to involve people from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the design and review of policies which affect them, by direct invitation to comment or posting the policy on the website and inviting contribution;
- We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater community cohesion and greater participation in the public life of people with a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

### **3.3 Socio-Economic Status**

- We recognise the inequalities of opportunity which exist within society for individuals and groups and are determined to take positive action to enable every individual to raise his/her self esteem, expectations and performance so as to have wider choices in life;
- We intend that our policies should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally by fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in public life;
- We acknowledge that members of Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy come from diverse cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds and we endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help promote a society in which there is social, religious and racial harmony;
- We take opportunities to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative aspects of our policies by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between people of different socio-economic backgrounds;
- We aim to involve people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds in the design and review of policies which affect them by direct invitation to comment or posting the policy on the website and inviting contribution;
- We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater community cohesion and greater participation in the public life of people with a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds;
- Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same, we need to differentiate as appropriate. We do not discriminate but as appropriate, take into account difference in life experience, outlook and background.

### **3.4 Ethnicity**

- We will not tolerate racist behaviour in any form;
- We acknowledge that members of Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy come from diverse cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds and we endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help promote a society in which there is social, religious and racial harmony;
- We take opportunities to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative aspects of our policies by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- We aim to involve people from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the design and review of policies which affect them by direct invitation to comment or posting the policy on the website and inviting contribution;

- We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater community cohesion and greater participation in the public life of people with a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds;
- Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same, we need to differentiate as appropriate. We do not discriminate, but as appropriate, take into account difference in ethnicity so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised.

### **3.5 Gender**

- As a Catholic academy, we accept that there are gender inequalities in our society which impose limits on expectations and behaviour, so we constantly examine our curriculum procedures and materials for gender bias or inequality;
- We encourage pupils to be aware of the rigid sex stereotypes presented by, for example, the media. We try to ensure that our resources include non-sexist books which value the achievements of both sexes equally;
- We are committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions. All pupils experience subjects previously considered to be suitable for single sex;
- We try to ensure that teachers allocate their time fairly between sexes;
- We try to ensure that all pupils have opportunities working with pupils from both sexes;
- We try to ensure that we break down traditional gender stereotypes;
- We try to ensure that pupils have opportunities for examining their own preconceived ideas of gender roles;
- We try to ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to pursue less conventional subjects (e.g. food technology for boys or design technology for girls);
- We try to ensure that whenever possible, classes have equal numbers of boys and girls, unless evidence shows that this is not beneficial for learning;
- We try to avoid stereotyped assumptions about the behaviour of boys and girls as these can often influence identification and assessment procedures;
- Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same, we need to differentiate as appropriate. We do not discriminate but, as appropriate, take into account difference in gender so that the different needs of girls and boys, and women and men are recognised;
- We take opportunities to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative aspects of our policies by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between people of different genders;
- We aim to involve both males and females in the design and review of policies which affect them by direct invitation to comment or posting the policy on the website and invite contribution;
- We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater community cohesion and greater participation in the public life of people of different genders;
- The Governing Body regularly reviews attainment levels and learning outcomes of boys and girls, monitoring the difference;
- Policies, procedures and activities should promote mutual respect between boys and girls, women and men and an absence of sexual harassment.

### **3.6 Sexuality**

- As a Catholic academy, we make no assumptions about the sexuality of any of our members;
- In our curricula, sexuality is taught in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and within the context of loving relationships. Whilst heterosexual relationships are the most common in our society, we acknowledge that a number of our pupils may develop a homosexual or bisexual orientation. Pupils' questions are answered as they arise as honestly, factually and non-judgementally as possible at an age appropriate level;
- Derogatory name calling (of any sort) is unacceptable;
- Policies, procedures and activities should promote mutual respect between boys and girls, women and men and an absence of sexual harassment;
- Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same; we need to differentiate as appropriate. We do not discriminate but, as appropriate, take into account differences in sexuality;
- Gender reassignment is a personal process (rather than a medical process) which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with (See Appendix);
- A reference to a Transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. (Equality Act 2010 Section 7)

### **3.7 Disability**

- We welcome pupils with additional needs (learning and physical). We undertake to assess and meet the need of all our pupils as far as we are able. We aim to create a happy and educationally exciting environment in which all pupils can prosper;
- As pupils develop at different rates for different activities, we adopt a child-centred approach to learning which is based on each pupil's needs;
- Pupils with additional needs constitute a very diverse group: they include pupils with physical, emotional, behavioural, sensory or learning needs. We acknowledge that especially able students have additional needs too;
- We seek assistance from a wide range of agencies where appropriate: for example speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, medical practitioners, social workers, psychologists etc;
- We try to ensure that pupils with additional needs are facilitated in participating in the school's curriculum to the fullest possible extent;
- We try to make reasonable adjustments to ensure pupils with additional needs are treated equally;
- We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote positive attitudes towards people with additional needs, good relations between those with and without additional needs and an absence of harassment of people with additional needs;
- We take opportunities to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative aspects of our policies by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between people of different abilities;

- We aim to involve people from a wide range of abilities in the design and review of policies which affect them by direct invitation to comment or posting the policy on the website and inviting contribution;
- We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater community cohesion and greater participation in the public life of people with a wide range of abilities;
- Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same, we need to differentiate as appropriate. We do not discriminate but, as appropriate, take into account difference in abilities and experiences of prejudice are recognised;
- We welcome all parents, carers and those in the wider community who have additional needs, we aim where possible to assess and accommodate their requirements.

#### **4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY STRUCTURE**

##### **4.1 Recruitment and Selection**

- The Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Academy's staff development and recruitment and selection policies are based on good single equalities practice;
- We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees for example in recruitment, promotion and continual professional development whatever their ability, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, national status, gender or sexuality;
- As a Catholic academy we unequivocally state that our admissions criteria will give precedence to Catholic applicants and that we will abide by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales guidance on the appointment of staff.

##### **4.2 Action Plans**

- We recognise that the actions resulting from this policy are what make a difference;
- The school identifies vulnerable groups and aims to make reasonable adjustments and put in place intervention strategies to support progress;
- Each year we put in place an action within the school development plan, setting out specific actions and projects to implement this policy;
- All teachers across the school develop a range of intervention strategies where lack of progress has been identified for individual students in vulnerable groups and appropriate action is taken to address the balance and then monitored;
- All success achieved is celebrated and rewarded;
- Where progress is slow or stalled monitoring is continued and further strategies are implemented.

##### **4.3 The Curriculum**

- We keep the curriculum, subject or area under review in order to ensure that the seven guiding principles are reflected;

- Each subject delivery is based on the principles and practices of the Single Equalities Policy and is reflected in their schemes of work, planning and assessment criteria.

#### **4.4 Ethos and Organisation**

We ensure that the guiding principles apply to the full range of policies and practices including those 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
- SEND

#### **4.5 Addressing Prejudice and Prejudice Related Bullying**

- The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to within the legal framework (See 4.12);
- The school is opposed to prejudices around ability or additional needs;
- The school is opposed to prejudices around Racism, Xenophobia, including those directed towards religious groups such as anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and those directed at travellers, migrants, refugees and those seeking asylum;
- The school is opposed to prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia;
- There is guidance for staff on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with;
- We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with;
- The school works closely with other schools in the local area and with the local Community Police Department to improve community links.

#### **4.6 Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation and that this policy and its related procedures and action plan are implemented;
- A member or members of the Governing Body has/have a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy;
- The Head Teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring all staff are aware of their responsibilities; are given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination;
- The Head Teacher and Deputy Head have day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.



All staff are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom;
- Deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur including reported them to SLT;
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the Guiding Principles and promote SMSC and British Values;
- Support pupils in their classroom for whom English is an additional language;
- Keep up to date with Equalities Legislation relevant to their work.

All pupils are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom;
- Deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur;
- Know, be aware and follow the Behaviour policy;
- Support the School Council in all aspects of equality.

#### **4.7 Information and Resources**

- We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff, Governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents, carers and associated agencies and is placed on the website;
- 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.

#### **4.8 Religious Observance**

- We respect the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils, parents and carers and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

#### **4.9 Staff Development and Training**

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

#### **4.10 Breaches of Policy**

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaching of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head Teacher and the Governing Body.

#### **4.11 Monitoring and Evaluation**

- We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy and make adjustments as appropriate;
- In particular, we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to abilities and additional needs, ethnicity, culture, language, national origin, national status, gender and other vulnerable groups as identified by the school;

- We use the data collected to form strategies for improvement to try to ensure equality in learning.

#### **4.12 Legal Framework**

- The Equality Act 2010  
The Equality Act brings together nine separate pieces of legislation into one Single Act simplifying the law and strengthening it in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality.
  - age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage and civil partnership
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality
  - religion or belief
  - sex, and
  - sexual orientation

A simple guide to the Act can be found at the Government Equalities Office Website

- We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and in particular, the general equality duty to have a due regard to the need 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.

## Appendix 1

### Update 22 April 2015

Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic. The Equality Act 2010 increased the protection provided to this particular protected characteristic. Some of the guidance documents referred to have been updated:

- The DfE guidance – *Equality Act 2010 – Advice for School Leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities* was updated in February 2013 but can still be accessed via the web link given in the paper. The references in the paper taken from old guidance have not changed in the new:
- The EHRC guidance was last updated in August 2010 and can be accessed via the web link page in the paper. The reference in the paper of course have not therefore changed:
- The DfE issued new guidance – Preventing and Tackling Bullying – in July 2013 which can be accessed via: <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f0076899/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>
- The link to the GIREs (Gender Identity Research and Education Society) website is still operative.

## Appendix 2

Equality Act 2010 - Glossary on Protected Characteristics In sections 4 – 12 of the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against people who belong to the following nine protected characteristics:

**Age:** refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32-year-olds) or being within an age group (e.g. 18-30-year-olds). This includes all ages, including children & young people.

**Disability:** a person has a disability if s/he has a physical, sensory or mental health disability, learning disability or difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Gender reassignment:** the process of transitioning from one gender/sex to another.

**Marriage & Civil Partnership:** marriage is defined as a union between a man and a woman. Civil partnership is the legal recognition of same-sex couple's relationships, which must be treated the same as married couples on a range of legal matters. Marriage and civil partnership only apply to the first aim of the general duty (i.e. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation), not to the others.

**Pregnancy & Maternity:** pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity is the period after the birth.

**Race:** is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

**Religion or belief:** includes any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

**Sex:** a man or a woman. **Sexual orientation:** is whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

(NB: The above protected characteristics are also referred to as protected group.)

