

# **Our Lady's Catholic High school**

## **Equality & Diversity Policy**

*'Our Lady's is first and foremost a Catholic school. It follows from this that the ethos of our school should reflect the values proclaimed by Christ in the Gospels and recognise the unique value of each individual. Everyone at Our Lady's has the right to be treated with respect at all times'.  
(from OLCHS Mission Statement)*

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# 1 DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

Our Lady's Catholic High School is fully committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and access in employment and education. We seek to create an environment where all members of the school are treated with respect and are valued for the contribution each makes.

The Governing Body will ensure all our school policies are assessed for their impact and the governors will develop their knowledge and understanding of diversity and equality. We will monitor our policies carefully in order to seek to continuously improve.

This policy applies all Governors, staff, pupils, parents / carers and visitors to the school including contractors.

It will be the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure this policy is successfully implemented and that all those who work in the school understand what is expected of them and that they have relevant training and support. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event that this policy is not complied with.

## 2 DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY LEGISLATION

We fully accept our responsibilities under British and European discrimination law.

This includes the:

- Equal Pay Act 1970;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986;
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003;
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003;
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005;
- Equality Act 2006; and
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

We will make sure we meet all of our responsibilities under this legislation.

## 3 AIMS OF THE POLICY

**3.1** To ensure that all pupils:

- have the opportunity to benefit from the entire curriculum and to participate in extra-curricular activities organised by the school;
- have an awareness and appreciation of the diversity of individuals within modern society;
- understand the nature of stereotyping of individuals and are not treated according to such stereotypes;
- are made aware of the meaning of prejudice and discrimination in the context of equality of opportunity; and
- are helped to develop positive interpersonal skills.

### **3.2** To ensure that all staff:

- are selected for employment on the basis of fair judgement of their knowledge, experience, skills, abilities and aptitudes in relation to the employment needs of the school;
- have equitable treatment in relation to pay and conditions of service and are given equal consideration for any opportunities for promotion or enhancement of pay; and
- have equal access to development opportunities.

### **3.3** To ensure that governors:

- give consideration to equal opportunities issues in their consideration of budgets, staff deployment and curriculum; and
- receive regular reports on the implementation of the policy.

## **4 RACE EQUALITY DUTY**

Our Race Equality Policy builds upon the core values and ethos of the whole school community. We recognise our statutory duty to eliminate racial discrimination and promote race equality and good race relations in all that we do. This policy will be an integral part of our school life. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will have designated responsibility for race equality. Responsibilities will include the monitoring and reporting of racist incidents to the Governing body and the Local Authority.

The governors expect that all staff will know how to recognise and deal with racist incidents, and to challenge racial bias and stereotyping, both inside and outside the classroom. Teaching staff have a central role in promoting race equality. The effectiveness of our policies will be judged by how successfully they encourage, support and enable all pupils to reach their full potential, by how they ensure that all racial groups have full access to the curriculum and by how they promote race equality through teaching and learning, the curriculum and the quality of pastoral care and guidance.

### **4.1 Legal Requirements**

#### **4.1.1 The Race Relations Act 1976 and The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**

The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended in 2000, places a statutory general duty on public authorities to promote race equality – to provide fair and accessible services, and to improve equal opportunities in employment. The duty states that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equal opportunities; and
- promote good relations between people from different racial groups.

#### **4.1.2 The Race Equality Duty**

Since May 2002 all schools have had to meet a set of specific duties to:

- prepare and maintain a race equality policy and action plan;
- involve appropriate and diverse stakeholders in developing the policy;
- assess the impact of all our policies on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups;
- monitor by reference to their impact on such pupils, staff and parents, the operation of such policies;

- implement the actions set out in the policy within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so; and
- take reasonable steps to report on progress annually and review and revise the scheme at least every three years.

## **4.2 How the school will fulfil its commitment to Race Equality**

The school will fulfil commitment to Race Equality by:

- valuing diversity and by actively promoting good inter-personal and community relationships;
- promoting an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among all members of the school community;
- ensuring that al/ staff, pupils and parents are treated with respect and dignity;
- dealing firmly, consistently and effectively with racist incidents, harassment and bullying. The school will ensure that all such incidents are recorded, investigated and reported to the Local Authority;
- ensuring that the curriculum incorporates the principles of race equality and promotes knowledge and understanding of, and positive attitudes towards diversity;
- ensuring access to the curriculum for all pupils to meet their individual needs;
- ensuring that teachers' planning and delivery takes account of racial and cultural diversity and the need to 'challenge stereotypes;
- creating learning environments where all pupils can contribute fully and feel valued;
- ensuring that resources in all areas of the curriculum promote an understanding of racial and cultural diversity;
- having procedures to monitor attainment and achievement by racial group in order to identify and respond to trends and patterns, the school will strive to maintain equally high expectations of all pupils;
- monitoring pupil attendance by racial group and by using the data to develop strategies to address poor attendance;
- monitoring pupil behaviour and exclusions by racial group and by using the data to ensure that procedures are applied fairly and equitably to all;
- by monitoring and evaluating employment practices and by reporting to the Local Authority to allow it to fulfil its specific duty under the Act;
- by working in partnership with parents and the community to develop positive attitudes to racial diversity;
- striving to ensure that membership of the governing body reflects the community it serves; and
- ensuring equality of access to' professional development and training for all staff.

## **5 DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

Our Lady's Catholic High School is committed to taking the necessary action to remove the barriers that prevent disabled people having equality of opportunity within our school and we will promote greater knowledge and understanding of disability and encourage a positive attitude towards it.

This Disability Equality Scheme identifies our approach to ensuring that disabled people are treated equally, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

## 5.1 Legal Requirements

### 5.1.1 Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to place a duty on all public sector organisations, including schools to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- eliminate discrimination unlawful under the Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- take steps to take account of disabled person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

### 5.1.2 The Disability Equality Scheme

The Disability Duty requires all schools to develop a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) to explain our approach to eliminating discrimination and disadvantage experienced by disabled people.

The Disability Equality Scheme must:

- tell people, including governors, staff, unions and pupils, what our responsibilities are and how we intend to meet them;
- show how we have involved disabled people in the development and monitoring of the scheme;
- explain how we will assess the impact of possible changes to policies and practises so that we can ensure they do not discriminate against disabled people;
- include the arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment and delivery of education;
- explain how we will use the information gathered to review the effectiveness of our action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes; and
- show the steps which the school will take towards fulfilling its general duty by creating an Action Plan which will identify barriers faced by disabled people and take action to remove them;

The DDA 2005 requires us to take the steps set out in our action plan within 3 years (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for us to do so) and to publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of information gathering and the use to which we have put the information.

### 5.1.3 The Special Needs and Disability Act 2001

In addition to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, this DES supports compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. We will also take proactive steps to promote disability equality for pupils, employees and service users. This DES has been developed alongside our Accessibility Strategy, which seeks to ensure there is a plan of action that will lead to a fully accessible school, within an inclusive learning environment that will enable all young people to work towards their full potential.

*It must be noted that a full assessment of our school building was commissioned in 2016 with the aim of discovering the implications of making our school fully accessible and the costs were exceptionally high and the implications for existing pupils were considerable. The current estimates for such work if a total re-build is not possible) is well in excess of £1,000,000. (due to the school having very narrow corridors and being built on a slope the stair lifts required for access would block the corridors and infringe on safe movement around school and safe escape in the every of fire).*

## 5.2 What is a Disability?

Under the Disability Discrimination Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment [includes learning disabilities], which has a substantial (more than minor or trivial), and long-term (more than 12 months, rest of life, recurring condition) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. However the Government's 2005 report 'Improving the Life Chances of disabled people' identified that disability should be distinguished from impairment and ill health and defined disability as, "Disadvantage experienced by an individual resulting from barriers to independent living, education, employment or other opportunities that impact on people with impairments and or/ ill health" [and identified that Impairments are long-term characteristics of an individual that affects their functioning and /or appearance].

## 5.3 Involving Disabled People

The school is committed to involving and giving disabled people every opportunity to comment on how our school can improve the support it provides to disabled pupils, staff and the wider community. We will involve disabled people on employment matters and education including:

- finding out what barriers disabled people face and taking steps to remove them;
- asking if disabled people are happy with the facilities and support we provide;
- setting priorities and helping us to plan things;
- monitoring and checking how well things are done; and
- reviewing and revising the scheme.

# 6 GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

Our Lady's Catholic High School High School recognises our statutory duty to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will have designated responsibility for Gender Equality. The governors expect that all staff will know how to challenge gender bias and stereotyping, both inside and outside the classroom. Teaching staff have a central role in promoting gender equality. The effectiveness of our policies will be judged by how successfully they encourage, support and enable boys and girls to reach their full potential; by how they ensure that boys and girls have full and equal access to the curriculum and by how they promote gender equality through learning and teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care and guidance.

## 6.1 Legal Requirements

### 6.1.1 The Equality Act 2006

The Equality Act 2006 updates the Sex Discrimination Act 1995 so that all public authorities have a general legal duty to:

- take suitable action to eliminate illegal discrimination and harassment; and
- promote equal opportunities for both men and women.

### 6.1.2 The Gender Equality Scheme

All schools are required to develop a Gender Equality Scheme (DES) to explain how it intends to fulfil its duties. The Gender Equality Scheme must:

- tell people, including governors, staff, unions and pupils, what our responsibilities are and how we intend to meet them;
- show how we will consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives;
- explain how we will assess the impact of possible changes to policies and practises on gender equality;
- explain how we will gather and use information on how the schools policies and practises affect gender equality in relation to employment and delivery of education; and
- show how the school will implement the actions set out in the scheme within 3 years.

The school will report its actions against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

## **6.2 How the school will fulfil its commitment to gender equality**

The school will fulfil its commitment to gender equality by:

- promoting an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect among all members of the school community regardless of gender;
- ensuring that all staff / parents / carers, pupils and visitors are treated with dignity;
- challenging gender stereotypes in all aspects of school life;
- encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of gender issues which reflect on gender stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- striving to eliminate sexual and sexist bullying and violence;
- ensuring equality of access for both boys and girls to all areas of the curriculum, to include subject choice and careers advice to meet pupils' individual needs;
- ensuring that the curriculum is balanced and broadly based;
- ensuring that teachers' planning, and delivery takes account of gender issues and the need to challenge stereotypes;
- ensuring that resources in all areas of the curriculum promote knowledge and understanding of gender issues;
- ensuring that any particular learning needs of boys and girls are met;
- having procedures to monitor and track progress and achievement by gender in order to identify and respond to trends and patterns;
- striving to maintain equally high expectations of all pupils;
- monitoring pupil attendance by gender;
- using the data to develop strategies to address poor attendance;
- monitoring pupil behaviour and exclusions by gender;
- using the information collected to ensure that procedures are applied fairly and equitably to all pupils, ensuring their safety and security in the school;
- developing and implementing strategies to address any gender specific examples of inappropriate behaviour;
- ensuring that all staff and governors responsible for appointing staff and reviewing staff performance and pay do not discriminate against women or men;
- taking account of the requirement to eliminate unlawful pay discrimination;
- ensuring that opportunities for professional development, career progression and promotion are free from unlawful sex discrimination; and
- working in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community to develop positive attitudes to gender issues.

## **7 GATHERING AND USING INFORMATION**

Our Lady's Catholic High School will gather and collate information relevant to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. We will use the information gathered to help us decide where action is most needed, how best to take action, how effective we are, and what further work needs to be done. We will consult with relevant stakeholders, including staff, parents / carers and pupils so that views and concerns can be voiced and considered to help us to set priorities, monitor how well things are done and to review and revise the scheme.

## **8 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

The school will undertake an impact assessment of any proposed change to school policy, procedures or activities. The purpose of an impact assessment is to ensure that school activities:

- do not disadvantage any individual;
- identify potential barriers in advance; and
- best promote equality of opportunity.

## **9 REVIEW AND MONITORING**

The school will review this policy to establish progress against the Action Plan. This process will include refinement and changes to the policy to ensure its continued effectiveness. It will be formally evaluated and reviewed every three years.