

Our Lady's Catholic High School

Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Love, Learn, Grow

At Our Lady's, we place Christ at the heart of everything we do. Through our school 'Being One of Ours' virtues, we nurture each individual to love, learn and grow in their unique, God-given potential, ready to be of service to the world.

Reviewed: Summer Term 2026

Review date: Summer Term 2028

Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy

1. Statement of Intent

As a Roman Catholic School, Our Lady's Catholic High School is fully committed to promoting equality, inclusion and dignity for all within our school community. We are a diverse, welcoming Christian learning community committed to nurturing respectful and responsible citizens, empowering all learners to flourish academically, spiritually and personally. Rooted in our mission to *"Love, Learn and Grow"*, we seek to create an environment where every member of the community feels valued, safe, included and able to participate fully in school life.

At Our Lady's, we believe that *"being one of ours"* means being known, valued and supported as a unique child of God. We strive to ensure that every pupil experiences a genuine sense of belonging and is given the opportunity to thrive within a culture of compassion, respect and high expectations.

As stated in the Second Vatican Council:

"All human beings are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's image; they have the same nature and origin and, being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same divine calling and destiny... The forms of social or cultural discrimination... must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design."
(*Gaudium et Spes*)

Guided by the Gospel values of justice, compassion, dignity and service, we recognise that inclusion is central to our Catholic mission. We are committed to ensuring high expectations and opportunities for all, particularly those who may face barriers to learning, participation or wellbeing.

The ethos and mission of the school promote a culture of respect, dignity and belonging, where prejudice and discrimination are challenged and all members of the community are valued. Equality and inclusion are central to our Catholic identity and shape all aspects of school life. In living out these values, the school also fulfils its legal duties to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations within our community.

2. Legal Framework

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to the nine protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the school will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Having due regard means that equality and inclusion considerations are actively and consciously considered in all policies, decisions and practices, supported by evidence, monitoring and evaluation.

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

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards, including:

- the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

- the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- the Human Rights Act 1998

3. Notes Relating to the Equality Act 2010

- The characteristic “race” includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin.
- “Religion” includes religious or philosophical belief or lack of belief.

The Act identifies:

- direct discrimination: less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic
- indirect discrimination: policies or practices that disadvantage certain groups without justification
- harassment: unwanted conduct that violates dignity or creates a hostile or offensive environment
- victimisation: treating someone unfairly because they have raised or supported a complaint

The school will not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, nor tolerate harassment or victimisation in:

- admissions
- the provision of education
- access to benefits, facilities or services
- exclusions
- employment practices
- any aspect of school life

4. Guiding Principles

In fulfilling our legal obligations and living out our Catholic mission, we are guided by the following principles:

Principle 1: All are made in the image of God

We believe every person possesses equal dignity and worth and should be treated with respect, compassion and fairness.

Principle 2: Inclusion and belonging matter

We are committed to creating a culture where all pupils and staff feel safe, welcomed, respected and able to participate fully in the life of the school. We believe that *being one of ours* means every member of the community experiences dignity, belonging and support.

Principle 3: High expectations for all

We maintain ambitious expectations for all learners, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and those facing barriers to learning or wellbeing, ensuring support enables success and independence.

Principle 4: We foster positive relationships

We promote mutual respect, understanding and dialogue, and actively challenge prejudice, discrimination, bullying and derogatory language.

Principle 5: We reduce inequalities and barriers

We actively identify and remove barriers to participation, attendance, achievement and personal development so that all learners can flourish.

5. The Curriculum

We keep each curriculum area under review to ensure that teaching and learning:

- reflect equality and inclusion principles
- promote understanding of diversity and human dignity
- challenge prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination
- provide equal opportunities for participation and achievement

- support pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- promote respect, responsibility and active citizenship

We recognise the importance of an inclusive curriculum and personal development programme in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain while remaining rooted in Catholic values.

6. Ethos and Organisation

We ensure the principles in this policy apply across all areas of school life, including:

- student progress, attainment and achievement
- personal development, welfare and wellbeing
- attendance and behaviour
- teaching strategies and curriculum design
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment and development
- pastoral support and safeguarding
- partnership with parents, carers and the wider community

Equality, inclusion and belonging are embedded in leadership, decision-making and school improvement processes. Through our mission to *“Love, Learn and Grow”*, we seek to foster a culture where every member of the community feels respected, supported and proud of being part of Our Lady’s Catholic High School.

7. Addressing Prejudice and Prejudice-Related Bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice and discriminatory behaviour, including:

- disability discrimination
- racism, xenophobia and religious intolerance
- sexism, homophobia and transphobia
- bullying linked to protected characteristics

We:

- challenge discriminatory language and behaviour
- educate pupils about respect, dignity and inclusion
- record and monitor incidents
- support pupils affected by discrimination or bullying
- report incidents where required

We aim to foster a culture in which all pupils feel safe, respected and able to belong within the school community.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

- ensures compliance with legislation
- monitors impact and progress
- sets equality objectives
- promotes an inclusive Catholic ethos

Headteacher

- implements the policy
- ensures staff training and awareness
- promotes inclusive leadership and practice
- addresses incidents of discrimination

Staff

- promote inclusion, equality and dignity
- challenge prejudice and discriminatory behaviour
- deliver an inclusive curriculum
- support pupils' wellbeing and belonging

9. Information and Resources

We ensure this policy is communicated to staff, governors, pupils and parents, and that appropriate resources, training and support are available to enable effective implementation.

10. Religious Observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the school community and accommodate reasonable requests where possible, while maintaining the Catholic character and mission of the school.

11. Staff Development and Training

We provide ongoing professional development to ensure staff:

- understand equality legislation and inclusive practice
- promote belonging and high expectations for all pupils
- respond effectively to discrimination, prejudice and bullying
- understand barriers faced by vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

12. Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with school procedures, ensuring fairness, consistency and accountability.

13. Monitoring and Review

We collect, monitor and analyse a range of qualitative and quantitative information relating to the implementation and impact of this policy, including:

- pupil achievement and progress
- attendance, punctuality and behaviour
- participation and engagement in school life
- incidents of discrimination, bullying or prejudice-related behaviour
- wellbeing, pastoral support and sense of belonging
- participation in enrichment opportunities
- outcomes for vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and those facing barriers to learning or wellbeing

The school uses this information to identify trends, gaps and priorities for improvement, and to evaluate the effectiveness of support, interventions and inclusive practices. Information gathered from pupils, parents, staff and governors also contributes to ongoing review and development.

This ensures that equality, inclusion and dignity remain central to school improvement and to our mission as a Catholic community where all are encouraged to *Love, Learn and Grow* and where every child experiences the value of *being one of ours*.