

*Through God's grace, a community growing in
knowledge and understanding*



St. Laurence Catholic Primary School

Equality Policy

**Ratified by Full Governing Body on 6th October 2016
Next Review Due: October 2019**



“Through God’s grace, a community growing in knowledge and understanding”

St. Laurence Catholic Primary School Equality Policy

Introduction

In accordance with the belief and teaching of the Catholic Church, the Governors and staff of St. Laurence Catholic School affirm the right of every human person to the dignity, respect and freedom due to a son or daughter of God, and are concerned that equality of opportunity should be offered to all.

This policy relates to the Equality Act (2010) and incorporates advice on Exceptions for Schools with a Religious Character (in “Equality Act 2010 Advice for School Leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities”, Department for Education 2011) This Equality Policy works alongside the school’s Equality & Diversity Policy which relates to staff conditions of employment.

Legal framework

1. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, and of maternity and pregnancy), marriage or civil partnership, religion and belief, and sexual identity.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status

- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual identity or marital status.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender and gender identity, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual identity or marital status.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Teaching Staff:

As a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School, we normally give preference to teachers who are highly supportive of a Catholic vision of education. The ability to support and work within the mission, ethos and ethical framework of a Catholic school is essential for all members of our staff.

We do not discriminate on any other grounds (eg marital status, sexual orientation) when recruiting staff.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- people of different genders

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We may consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- people of different genders gay people as well as straight.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- people of different genders gay people as well as straight.

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information showing our compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Principle 9: Objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement in which we have been involved (principle 7).

The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

The curriculum

4. We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the principles set out in the guiding principles above. As a Catholic school, the primary focus of our religious education is on the teachings of the Catholic Church. However, we respect the teachings of other faith backgrounds and teach the children about other faiths as part of the religious education curriculum.

Socio-economic inequalities

5. Although the Equality Act 2010 does not refer to inequalities relating to socio-economic circumstances, at St Laurence school we are mindful of the impact of such inequalities. The rest of this document, therefore, refers as much to potential socio-economic inequalities as to others encompassed in the 9 principles above.

Ethos and organisation

6. We ensure the nine guiding principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:
 - pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
 - pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
 - teaching styles and strategies
 - 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.

Admissions:

As a voluntary aided Catholic School, we apply religious criteria in the case of being oversubscribed. Please see our Admissions Policy for full details.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

7. The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1–3:
 - prejudices around disability and special educational needs
 - prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
 - prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents and, if requested, provide a report to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

Roles and responsibilities

8. The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.
9. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.
10. The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.
11. All staff are expected to:
 - promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
 - model appropriate standards of behaviour
 - deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
 - plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the 9 guiding principles above
 - support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
 - keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.
 - promote an inclusive ethos with regard to other members of staff
 - promote an inclusive ethos with regard to parents, volunteers and visitors

Information and resources

12. We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.
13. 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.

Religious observance

14. Collective Acts of Worship in school are in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church. However, we respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff development and training

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

Breaches of the policy

16. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the headteacher and governing body.

Monitoring and review

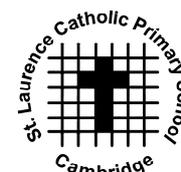
17. We collect study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.
18. In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to special educational needs and disabilities; ethnicity, language, gender and free school meals (our main indicator of socio-economic inequality).

Date approved by the Governing Body: 6.10.2016

Policy review due: October 2019

Signed:

**Mary Jane O'Sullivan,
Chair of Governors**

Policy Name: **Equality Policy**Policy Date: 22.3.12, reviewed October 2016**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT for SCHOOL POLICIES**

		Yes / No	Comments
1.	Does the Policy/Guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:	Y	As a Catholic Voluntary School, religious criteria are applied (see below)
	• Age (for policies affecting staff)	N	
	• Disability	N	
	• Sex	N	
	• Gender reassignment	N	
	• Pregnancy/maternity	N	
	• Race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)	N	
	• Sexual orientation	N	Although religious criteria are applied in recruitment etc of teaching staff, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is not permitted.
	• Religion or belief	Y	Religious criteria are applied when recruiting or dismissing teaching staff ie preference given to Catholics. Religious criteria are also applied in admissions
	• Marriage / civil partnership	N	Although religious criteria are applied in recruitment etc of teaching staff, discrimination on the grounds of marital status is not permitted.
2.	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	Y	Non Catholics would be less likely than Catholics to obtain teaching positions in the school & non Catholics would be less likely to be admitted (as per admission criteria)
3.	If we have identified potential discrimination are any exceptions reasonable, legal and justifiable?	Y	Preference is given to Catholics in teaching posts & admissions in order to maintain the school's Catholic ethos. Discrimination in favour of Catholic teaching staff is in line with advice on Exceptions for Schools with a Religious Character (in "Equality Act 2010 Advice for School Leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities", Department for Education 2011). Preference is given to Catholics and other Christians in our admissions

			criteria – this is in line with Dfe guidance. Once admitted, discrimination between Catholic and non-Catholic pupils is not permitted.
4.	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	N	Evidence from parent surveys, internal monitoring and external inspections is that the Catholic ethos of the school is a strength of the school that underpins outstanding spiritual, moral social and cultural wellbeing of pupils.
5.	If so, can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
6.	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N/A	
7.	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	

Equality Impact Assessment carried out by :MJ O'Sullivan / J Scally, Full Governing Body

Date:6.10.16