

# ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE



**“FEARLESS FAITH”**

**EQUALITY POLICY**

## Introduction

As a Catholic College, St. Joseph's is committed to equality of opportunity for all, regardless of race, nationality, colour, ethnic or national origin, we support the declaration of the Vatican II Council that "the Church repudiates as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against people or any harassment of them on the basis of their race, colour, condition in life or religion". (*Nostra Aetate, Oct 1965*)

***"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit: and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord: and there are varieties of working but it is the same God who inspires them all in every way". (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)***

### Therefore

***"... forms of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God; design". (Vatican 11 Gaudium et Spes, n 29)***

St Joseph's College is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every young person and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

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.

All we do at St. Joseph's College is based around our 5 values

Respect for Faith  
Respect for Self  
Respect for Others  
Respect for Learning  
Respect for our Community

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles

1. All learners are 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 and whatever their sexual orientation.
2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, work at and visit the College.
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our community to feel a sense of belonging within the College and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.

5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.
6. We have the highest expectations of all our students. We expect that all students can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
7. We work to raise standards for all students, but especially for the most vulnerable.
8. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of students raises standards across the whole College.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against students or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity. Age and marriage and civil partnership are also 'protected characteristics' but are not part of the College's provisions related to students.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools, to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties

The Public Sector Equality Duty or 'general duty' - This requires all public organisations, including schools, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation advance equality of opportunity between different groups foster good relations between different groups

Two Specific Duties this requires all public organisations, including schools, to:

Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by April 6th 2012. Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable by April 6th 2012

This policy describes how the College is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Appendix 1 is a checklist of key equality considerations.

### **Development of the Policy**

When developing the policy, we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Ofsted Inspection Framework 2012, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization.

We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our students and the way we provide access for students to facilities and services.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against students by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment.

The College policy on Behaviour takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act.

We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from the school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled students – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled students and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

The Headmaster ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

We 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 take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day to day life of the school

Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying:

- The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality.
- Prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- Prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and
- Islamophobia, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- Prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes.

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents; provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of these incidents and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents.

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our student admissions meetings.

We know the needs of our students very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements. We collect data, monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills.

We collect, analyse and publish data on:

- the school population by gender and ethnicity;
- the proportion of students identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability;
- proficiency in English.

We publish an analysis of standards reached by different groups across the College at the end of key stage 4 and 5:

- White English
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Free School Meals and non-Free School Meals
- English as an Additional Language
- Special Educational Needs
- Looked after Children

We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.

We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any students' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as 'less able'. We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and equality.

We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all students.

We provide support to students at risk of underachieving. We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of students with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the College's Equality Objectives.

We ensure equality of access for all students to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

We implement an Accessibility Plan designed to increase the extent to which students with a disability can participate in the curriculum; improve the physical environment and improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

### **What we are doing to foster good relations**

- We prepare our students for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students.
- We teach about difference, diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE, Citizenship and across the curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the College, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote a whole College ethos and values that challenge prejudice based on discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We include the contribution of different cultures to world history.
- We provide opportunities for students to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole school events eg Black History Month (CACCA).

### **Our Equality Objectives are:**

- Increase the percentage of students with SEN/D who make 3 levels of progress across 8 subject areas, and over three years secure a Progress 8 figure of at least 0.0.

- Achieve a year on year (over three years) reduction in the percentage of fixed term exclusions for students with protected characteristics, in particular: boys, white English students and those with SEN/D.

We review and update our equality objectives every two years and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, students, governors, parents, and carers.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect all members of the College community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

#### **Governing Body**

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. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the College's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the College environment. Governors review the Equality Policy annually and evaluate the success of the College's equalities work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys).

#### **The Headmaster and Senior Leadership Team**

The Headmaster 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.

A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. They will have expert and informed knowledge of the Equality Act.

#### **Teaching, Support and Operational Staff**

All teaching, support and operational staff will:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Plan and deliver curricular and lessons that reflect the College's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- Maintain the highest expectations of success for all students
- Support different groups of students in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the College as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year.

### **Visitors**

All visitors to the College, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in school newsletters to enable them to do this.

### **Equal Opportunities for staff**

- We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.
- All staff appointments and promotions are made based on merit and ability and in compliance with the law.
- We ensure that wherever possible the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.
- As an employer, we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.
- We respect the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, students and parents, and consider reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
- 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.

### **Accessibility**

At St Joseph's College we are committed to providing premises that are suitable and sufficient for all educational purposes and give access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all our students. In particular, we are aware of students whose needs and/or disabilities require additional attention.

The College will actively seek to improve access to services and will continually review resources and changing needs.

#### **We will:**

Ensure the curriculum is differentiated to meet the learning needs of students with SEND and disabilities and that target setting is effective and appropriate for these students. Make available the written material usually provided to all students, in an appropriately presented format and also to ensure that classroom organisation is planned to maximise learning opportunities.

Where financially possible, manage and improve the physical environment of the school buildings and grounds to meet the needs of a range of disabled students currently on roll and prospective students.

Aim to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum by improving the physical environment enabling them to make better use of facilities and services provided.

### **Complaints**

Complaints arising from the operation of this policy will be dealt with in line with the College's complaints procedure.

## Appendix 1

Check list for school staff and governors:

- The College collects information on race, disability and gender about both students and staff, e.g. student achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides
- The Equality Policy and Plan and Objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, governors, students and other stakeholders
- The College publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties
- The College analyses Student achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when there trends or patterns indicate a need
- The College sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable students and monitors progress on reaching these objectives
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes
- The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The College ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all students to understand and celebrate diversity and difference
- All groups of students are encouraged to participate in College life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and the College Student Leadership structure and House teams.
- The College monitors bullying and harassment of students in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern
- We endeavor to ensure Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the school community
- Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and class assemblies
- The College takes part in annual events such as Black History Month etc to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender.
- The College environment is very restrictive to students, staff and parents with accessibility needs. Where it is reasonable so to do, we make every effort to accommodate such needs, however, this is often impossible.
- The accessibility needs of parents, students and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information
- The Governing Body is increasingly representative of the community it serves.
- Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to all.