



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Equal Opportunity Policy Framework

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination, and fostering positive relations among all members of our community. We aim to nurture a school environment where everyone is respected, valued, and able to achieve their full potential regardless of their personal characteristics or background.

As a school, we embrace our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to protect individuals from discrimination and to promote greater equality. We are committed to actively tackling all forms of inequality, prejudice, and stereotyping across the school and ensuring that inclusive practice permeates all aspects of school life.

1.2 Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is underpinned by statutory duties, including:

- **Equality Act 2010**, which protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of nine protected characteristics.
- **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)** (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), requiring schools to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between different groups.
- Guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), including:
 - *Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE, 2014)*
 - *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)*
- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)** (2023), which evaluates how well schools promote equality in their curriculum, leadership, and personal development provisions.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 Policy Aims

The Equal Opportunity Policy aims to:

- Ensure that all members of the school community are treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.
- Promote equal access to educational opportunities and services for all pupils.
- Provide a learning environment in which the values of fairness, respect, and inclusion are actively promoted.
- Prevent all forms of discrimination.



2.2 Specific Objectives

The school establishes the following objectives:

- Provide a curriculum and environment that reflect diversity and promote cohesion.
- Use data to identify and address any disparities in attainment, behaviour or participation.
- Ensure recruitment and employment policies and practices are fair, consistent, and supportive of equality.
- Engage parents and wider stakeholders in the promotion of equality.

3. Scope of the Policy

3.1 Who is Covered

This policy applies to all individuals connected with the school, including:

- Pupils
- Staff (teaching and support)
- Volunteers
- Governors
- Parents, carers, visitors, and contractors

3.2 Where the Policy Applies

The principles and provisions of this policy apply to:

- Admissions and transitions
- Curriculum and teaching
- Behaviour, exclusion, and discipline
- Safeguarding and pastoral care
- Staff recruitment, retention, and CPD
- Extra-curricular activities and school trips
- Engagement with parents and the wider community

4. Protected Characteristics

4.1 Definition

The Equality Act 2010 outlines nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief



- Sex
- Sexual orientation

4.2 Application in School Context

As a school, we are committed to ensuring that:

- No person experiences less favourable treatment due to a protected characteristic.
- Reasonable adjustments are made to support individuals with disabilities.
- Policies, procedures, and practices are assessed for equality impact.
- Differences are respected and celebrated in the curriculum and the wider school ethos.

5. Equality in Practice

5.1 Admissions, Transitions, and Attendance

The school ensures:

- That our admissions arrangements are transparent and non-discriminatory.
- Support is in place for pupils during transitions between year groups or key stages.
- That attendance is monitored across different groups and strategies are implemented to address inequities.

5.2 Teaching and Learning

The school promotes inclusive teaching by:

- Having high expectations for all pupils, regardless of background.
- Differentiating learning to meet needs and remove barriers.
- Ensuring teaching materials represent diverse perspectives and avoid stereotypes.
- Monitoring pupil outcomes to ensure gaps are addressed and attainment is improved for vulnerable or under-performing groups.

5.3 Behaviour and Safeguarding

To ensure an equitable and safe school environment:

- Our Behaviour Policy reflects an inclusive approach and consistent application.
- Bullying, including bullying on the basis of protected characteristics, is not tolerated and is dealt with swiftly in line with school policy.
- Safeguarding systems take into account the needs of children who may be at additional risk because of a protected characteristic.
- Discriminatory incidents are recorded, followed up, and reported to governors and local authorities as appropriate.

5.4 Staff Recruitment and Development

The school ensures fair practices by:

- Using objective, bias-free criteria for recruitment, selection, and promotion.
- Actively promoting equality in Continuing Professional Development (CPD).



- Monitoring the composition of our workforce and recruitment outcomes by protected characteristics.
- Meeting our duty to make reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school complies with its legal duties under equality legislation.
- Monitoring the implementation and impact of the Equal Opportunity Policy.
- Approving and reviewing equality objectives in line with statutory requirements.

6.2 Headteacher and Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Provide proactive leadership in promoting equality and tackling discrimination.
- Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under equalities legislation.
- Oversee data collection and monitor outcomes by different pupil groups.
- Report regularly to governors on equality matters.

6.3 All Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive ethos that values diversity and equality.
- Tackle discrimination, stereotyping, and prejudice when witnessed.
- Support pupils to develop an understanding of equality and empathy.
- Report any concerns in line with safeguarding and whistleblowing policies.

6.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Treat one another with respect and dignity.
- Learn about and celebrate differences.
- Report discriminatory behaviour or bullying.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 Data Collection and Analysis

The school collects, analyses, and monitors data on:

- Attainment and progress by gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, SEND, etc.
- Attendance and exclusion patterns by different groups.
- Bullying and discrimination incidents related to protected characteristics.

Data is used to inform planning, interventions, and review progress towards equality objectives.

7.2 Equality Objectives

In line with the PSED, the school:

At St. Joseph's we live, love and learn by the example of Jesus.
Aspiring for excellence for all, together as a catholic community.



- Sets specific, measurable equality objectives at least every four years.
- Publishes equality information and objectives on our school website.
- Reviews these objectives annually through self-evaluation and reports to governors.

7.3 Reporting

- Governors receive termly reports on equalities-related priorities.
- The Senior Leadership Team includes equalities as part of the School Development Plan and SEF (Self-Evaluation Form).

8. Staff Training and Awareness

8.1 Training Programme

Our commitment to professional development ensures:

- All staff receive induction training on the Equality Act 2010 and this policy.
- CPD is offered regularly on topics such as unconscious bias, inclusive planning, and mental health.
- Senior leadership engages in ongoing training to understand statutory duties and strategic planning for equalities.
- Governors receive annual training on their responsibilities concerning equality and inclusion.

9. Concerns and Complaints

9.1 Reporting Inequality or Discrimination

- Pupils, parents, and staff are encouraged to report any incidents of discrimination or harassment to a named senior leader.
- Concerns are investigated thoroughly, fairly, and confidentially.
- Clear procedures are in place and accessible via the school website.

9.2 Responding to Incidents

- Complaints linked to equality or discrimination are handled in accordance with the school's complaints procedure.
- In serious cases, external agencies (such as the local authority or the police) may be involved.
- The wellbeing of individuals raising concerns is supported throughout the process.

10. Review of the Policy

10.1 Policy Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to:

- Changes in legislation or statutory guidance.
- Emerging school priorities based on evidence or consultation.
- Feedback from stakeholders.

10.2 Approval and Ratification

- Last Reviewed: [Insert Date]
- Next Scheduled Review: [Insert Date]



- Approved by: Governing Body

11. Associated Policies and Documents

This policy links to (and should be read alongside):

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- PSHE and RSE Policy
- Recruitment and Retention Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Complaints Policy

12. Appendices

12.1 Glossary of Key Terms

- **Direct discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably due to a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination:** Policies or practices that apply to everyone but unfairly disadvantage a particular group.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates a hostile environment.
- **Victimisation:** Treating someone badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act.
- **Reasonable adjustments:** Changes made to remove disadvantage for disabled individuals.

References

- Department for Education (2014). *The Equality Act 2010 and Schools*.
- Department for Education (2023). *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)
- Ofsted (2023). *Education Inspection Framework*.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission. *Technical Guidance for Schools in England*.

This policy shall be shared with all staff, governors, and relevant stakeholders and made available on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2027