

SACRED HEART OF MARY GIRLS' SCHOOL



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Policy adopted	September 2025	
SLT Member Responsible	Miss B McConville	
To be reviewed	Every 2 Years	
Date of next review	September 2027	
Headteacher	Ms V Qurrey	Date: September 2025

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The legal and local framework for this policy is **The Equality Act 2010** which replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.

Sacred Heart of Mary is a Catholic Community that aims to carry out its mission “Ut Vitam Habeant” - that they may have life, Life to the Full.

This policy aims to help all stakeholders live out the Gospel values as given by Jesus Christ in The Beatitudes.

These reveal the goal of human existence and are the objective values as given by Christ;

- Forgiveness & Mercy
- Truth & Justice
- Tolerance & Peace
- Dignity & Compassion
- Purity & Holiness
- Humility & Gentleness
- Faithfulness & Integrity
- Preferential Option for the Poor & Vulnerable
- Sanctity of Life & Care for God’s Creation
- Solidarity & The Common Good
- Charity & Subsidiarity
- Distributism & Social Justice

Since the foundation of Sacred Heart of Mary Girls’ School by the Sacred Heart of Mary Sisters these values have formed the basis of all relationships.

All adults that have chosen to work and oversee this community must ensure that they fulfil their mission of Catholic education by displaying, modelling and promoting these values.

All who work in or oversee a Catholic school must conduct themselves in a way which does not conflict with the “precept” and “tenets” of the Catholic Church and are bound by their contractual obligations “not to do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest of the Catholic character of the school”.

Every individual in a Catholic school have the entitlement to be treated with the love, respect and dignity that comes from being a child of God, with the face of Christ.

This policy has expectations for all that are rooted in these Gospel Values and conform to the teaching of the Catholic Church. The implementation of all school policies should demonstrate the importance of personal responsibility and the need for justice but also facilitate healing and reconciliation.

The Equality Act 2010 combines the below strands:

- Sex Discrimination Direct sex discrimination is where A treats B less favourably than A

treats others, or would treat others if the reason for the less-favourable treatments is B's sex. This covers recruitment policies, dismissals and redundancies, fringe benefits and other non-contractual matters and requires that women and men should be treated equally.

- Gender reassignment discrimination The Equality Act 2010 reminds us that gender reassignment is a process and not an event. Discrimination in connection with the provision of education on grounds of past, present or proposed gender reassignment is unlawful
- Sexual orientation discrimination Discrimination in connection with the provision of education on grounds of sexual orientation is unlawful under the provisions of The Equality Act 2010
- Race discrimination Race as defined in The Equality Act 2010 includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Race is essentially a group characteristic, but one racial group can be part of a larger racial group. Discrimination in connection with provision of education on grounds of race is unlawful under the Act.
- Religion or belief discrimination In The Equality Act 2010, religion means any religion or belief and reference to religion includes a reference to the lack of religion. Similarly, belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief
- At this school, we work hard to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between all those within our school community. We do this with regard to the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation

Admissions

As a Catholic school, we acknowledge our right to give preference to practising Catholic pupils. However, Catholics of all racial groups have equal access to the school and criteria for the admission of non-Catholic pupils does not favour any one racial group over another

At the Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School, we are committed to the following guiding principles :

- All are of equal importance in the sight of God and should be equally afforded dignity and respect
- Diversity resulting from age, gender, racial and social origins, culture and practice should be regarded as enriching our Catholic community • Every child is to be held in equal esteem as a child of God. Their individual needs are to be carefully assessed and monitored in the light of their talents, abilities and previous and present experience
- Every child should have access to full and appropriate educational and spiritual provision

Aims

1. To confirm the Christian message of equality of all in the sight of God;
2. To acknowledge our obligation as Catholics to support those in the community who are the weakest and most in need;
3. To prepare students for life in a diverse society in which our pupils are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
4. To provide positive non-stereotyping information about different groups of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age;
5. To develop the liturgical, academic and pastoral curriculum that promotes an appreciation of difference and actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage;
6. To ensure equality of esteem for all subject areas and courses of study;
7. To create a school culture of understanding, tolerance, and respect whereby individuals are judged on their own merits;
8. To ensure that the girls are given full access to all areas of the curriculum unimpeded by stereotyping;
9. To give pupils with special educational needs the fullest possible access to learning opportunities consistent with their abilities;
10. To follow procedures which detect and deal with any discriminatory behaviour which may take place within the community

To achieve these aims we will:

- involve stakeholders in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures
- publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community
- collect and analyse data to ensure all groups are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage
- use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for all, respond to pupils' diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning
- ensure that the wider school curriculum makes explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity
- have high expectations of behaviour which demonstrates respect to others: ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made to ensure equality of opportunity

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body

It is the Governing Body's responsibility to:

- ensure compliance with equality legislation;
- meet requirements to publish equality information and objectives;

- ensure that the college's policy and its procedures and strategies are carried out and monitored with appropriate impact assessments informing future plans;
- scrutinise the recording and reporting procedures at least annually;
- monitor attendance and take appropriate action where necessary;
- have equal opportunities in staff recruitment and professional development and membership of the Governing Body;
- provide information in appropriate, accessible formats;
- be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy;
- be pro-active in recruiting high-quality applicants from under-represented groups.

The Head Teacher

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to:

- implement the policy and its strategies and procedures;
- provide regular information for staff and Governors about the policy and to provide relevant training if necessary;
- make sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out if necessary
- actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice;
- deal with any reported incidents of harassment or bullying
- ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality and diversity policy;
- produce a report on progress for governors annually.

All Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- be vigilant for any type of harassment and bullying;
- deal effectively with all incidents from overt name-calling to the more subtle forms of victimisation caused by perceived differences;
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture;
- promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, religion, age and sexual orientation;
- promote an inclusive curriculum and whole school ethos which reflects our diverse society;
- keep up to date with equality legislation, development and issues by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

Community Cohesion

We are committed to supporting community cohesion by:

- developing a common vision and sense of belonging
- developing an appreciation of the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances
- creating opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential and building strong and positive relationships

We engage with the wider community in the following ways :

- Strong links with Brentwood Diocese Secondary Schools
- School to School Support Partnership with Champion School for Boys and 8 local feeder primary schools
- Membership of the Havering Learning Partnership
- Teachers have links with other schools and promote good role models when interacting with staff from other schools, through a range of CPD activities, TeachMeets and Network Meetings
- Learners have a strong voice and opportunities to take responsibility through our Student Council and engage with local Debating competitions, DoE scheme, Maths and Science competitions and the Jack Petchey Award Scheme
- We engage parents through a range of activities, consultation evenings, Information Evenings on issues affecting young people and their families and the PTFA
- We have strong links with external agencies including social services, the EWO service, the health service and police
- Outreach work via family support team including preventative work and crisis intervention, home visits and needs-led support
- Relevant signposting to other agencies in the community
- Community use of the 'Old Chapel'

The Curriculum

The School Curriculum should ensure that what is taught conveys truths about the world from a global perspective.

Every Department must make sure that schemes of work and teaching materials do not promote negative attitudes towards anyone of a particular gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age.

Personal Development and Well-being

All pupils should:

- Have equal access to their teacher's time and attention
- Have equal access to resources
- Perceive themselves to be equally valued and as having equal access to all school activities
- Pupils should be encouraged to discuss their attitudes and opinions on topics of current concern within an informed, controlled and trusting environment
- Individual support and guidance takes account of personal and cultural needs specific to particular groups
- The full range of post-school options is explored in careers education and all pupils are encouraged to consider all the options
- Extra-curricula activities are inclusive and attempt to deal with any social or cultural isolation that pupils from any group might feel
- Pupils who are pregnant will be given full access to curriculum support as appropriate
- Pupils undergoing gender reassignment will be given full pastoral support care will be taken to ensure the wishes of the individual pupil and their family are taken into account, with a view to supporting them during potential transition.

Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusion

- Procedures for managing behaviour and disciplining pupils are fair and applied equally to all pupils
- Rewards and sanctions are applied without prejudice
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Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Each student's progress is monitored and tracked. The resulting data is analysed in respect of gender, race, ability or additional needs, looked-after status.

In addition to monitoring to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the college meets its duty to positively promote diversity. (e.g. lesson observations record evidence of differentiation and texts are reviewed to ensure appropriateness and inclusivity.)

The data collected is used to inform further school planning, target-setting and decision-making.

Worship

When planning assemblies teachers should ensure that the content and language is inclusive and does not discriminate or exclude any members of an ethnic, religious, gender or ability group. Staff should aim to include contributions of all people to world development and reflect diversity within the School and the local community.

In all liturgical celebrations the entire school community should be involved and feel engaged.

Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

- Recruitment and selection procedures are consistent with the Equality Act (2010) • Members of the Governing Body are familiar with the code and are aware of the need to use the code to ensure good practice in recruitment, selection and promotion processes
- Any person recruited to the school will be made fully aware of the aims and objectives of the Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School and will be required to support the Catholic ethos of the school irrespective of their own religious, faith, or ethnic background
- All members of staff are given equal access to training and professional development opportunities **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY WILL BE SEEN AS A SERIOUS BREACH OF SCHOOL POLICY AND CONTRARY TO THE EQUALITY ACT (2010) AND WILL BE DEALT WITH BY THE HEAD TEACHER AS A SERIOUS MATTER.**

Reviewed November 2022