

# ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## School Equality Plan 2012-15

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These policies are placed together in one document but may be used separately if so required. To go with them there are audits and checklists for schools and frameworks for Action Plans as required under the Acts. In addition all policies are to be used in conjunction with the Equality Guidance notes provided by the CES (see Section 7)

### **1. The Equality Plan - Policy Outline**

#### **1. Introduction**

Specific duties that schools must follow are outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act..2005 and the Equality Act 2006 respectively and the accompanying regulations. This Equality Plan sets out in detail how the school intends to meet its statutory duties and follow best practice. It is effectively a strategy and action plan which summarises the school's approach to equality across the whole school community and future actions will become part of the School Development Plan where appropriate.

#### **2. Purpose - Aims and values**

- The purpose of the Equality Plan is about providing equality and excellence for all, in order to promote the highest possible standards. The principles of this plan apply to all members of the school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.
- The overall objective is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality objectives to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of

diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

- The school will endeavour to create a community where pupils are well prepared for life in a diverse, pluralist society.
- The school aims to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents or carers or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, social class, where the person lives or spent convictions.
- The plan is based on the following core values as expressed in the Schools' aims and values

### **3. Leadership, Management and Governance**

- The governing body is committed to meeting its duties under equality legislation. It is the responsibility of all staff, including those helping on a voluntary basis, and partner organisations to promote equality.
- The governing body will endeavour to ensure that all relevant policies reflect the school's commitment to the principles of equality and that this commitment is reflected clearly in all its work. The school ensures the involvement of staff and governors and, where appropriate, takes steps to enable the contribution of pupils and their parents/carers and other relevant parties.
- Outcomes of monitoring and assessment will be reported to the governing body and other key partners. Members of the school community will be kept informed of Equality and Diversity initiatives being undertaken.
- The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and line with statutory duties, local authority guidance and, where appropriate, diocesan guidelines.

### **4. Personal development and pastoral care**

- The pastoral support system takes account of disability, gender, religious and ethnic differences, and the experiences and particular needs of people living in a diverse society.
- Support is given to victims and perpetrators of harassment and unacceptable behaviour. External agencies are involved, where appropriate
- The school will use monitored data, including that relating to disability, ethnicity, gender and SEN will be used to monitor admissions, attendance, exclusions and the use of sanctions and rewards. including that relating to disability, ethnicity, gender and SEN will be used to monitor the attainment, progress and the well-being of pupils, and, where appropriate, targets will be set. Analysed results will be used to inform planning and decision-making.

### **5. Learning and Teaching**

- All pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum in accordance with DfE guidelines.
- Classroom staff ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel safe, included and their contributions are valued. Teaching styles include collaborative learning so that pupils appreciate the value of working together. All pupils are encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem-solving tasks.
- Pupil grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under review.
- Classroom staff encourage pupils to become independent and to take appropriate responsibility for their own learning.
- Staff challenge stereotypes and foster pupils' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.

## **6. School Curriculum**

- Curriculum planning takes account of the needs of all pupils and considers them in relation to the various equality strands. The school monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds.
- The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and needs and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of, boys and girls; pupils who are disabled; pupils learning English as an additional language; pupils from minority groups; pupils who are gifted and talented; pupils with special educational needs; pupils who are looked after by the local authority and pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.
- Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.
- The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.
- Extra-curricular activities and special events, e.g. school productions, cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils. The school will give due regard to parental preferences and concerns.
- Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of pupils from all groups.

## **7 Admissions attendance, behaviour, discipline and exclusion**

- The admissions process is monitored by a range of equality indicators to ensure that it is administered fairly and equitably to all pupils.
- The school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all. However, it is recognised that social/cultural background and other personal factors may affect behaviour. The school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. All staff apply consistent systems of rewards and sanctions.

- Exclusions and attendance are monitored and effective action is taken in order to reduce gaps between different groups of pupils. Absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel. Those involved in this work are aware of and sensitive to community issues.
- Pupils, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any group is always unacceptable
- Appropriate provision will be made for leave of absence for religious observance for pupils and staff.

## **8. Attainment, progress and assessment**

- Staff have high expectations of all pupils and they continually challenge them to reach higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement.
- The monitoring and analysing of pupil performance by disability, special educational needs, gender, ethnicity and other social/cultural indicators enables the identification of groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. The school ensures that action is taken to counteract this.
- Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupil progress. The school ensures, where possible, that assessment is free of gender, racial, cultural and social bias.
- Self-assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress giving all pupils full opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do and, therefore, to benefit from the process.

## **9. Partnership with parents and the community**

- The school endeavours to provide information material for parents in accessible, user-friendly language and formats and the school will endeavour to provide information in community languages, and alternative formats when requested.
- Progress reports to parents can be provided in a range of formats in order to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue.
- All parents are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the school. Information and meetings for parents are made accessible for all. Parental involvement is monitored to ensure the participation of parents from all groups whose children are pupils at the school. Actions are included in the school's action plan to address any inconsistencies.
- When appropriate the school will take steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under-represented groups of parents and sections of the community.
- The school works in partnership with parents and the community to address specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to diversity. Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalised groups.
- The school's premises and facilities are available for use by all groups within the community. The school endeavours to address accessibility difficulties.

- The school recognises it also has a responsibility to promote equality through its procurement and commissioning activities and endeavours to ensure the services it uses are aware of its equality objectives.

## **10. Measuring Progress**

Progress on this Equality Plan will be reviewed through the school Self-evaluation cycle and process on an annual regular basis. The results of reviews will be published in formats that give the widest accessibility. However, the schemes contained within this plan and their accompanying action plans each have a statutory timetable for publication. This may mean that sections of this plan will be reviewed at different times.

The school uses a range of mechanisms to consult with and obtain feedback from its pupils, parents and staff and other interested parties. This is done through face to face discussions, questionnaires and surveys, the school website etc.

## 2. Disability Equality Scheme

*“Disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities” (DDA 1995 Part 1 para. 1.1.)*

*This definition was amended and broadened in December 2005 under the 2005 Disability Amendment Act:*

This school uses the “social model” of disability, as advised by the Disability Rights Commission.

### 1. The General Duty – (Disability Equality Duty)

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a duty on schools, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- take steps to take account of disabled persons’ disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

### 2. The Specific Duties

The Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2005 require maintained schools to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme, demonstrating how they are meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, to implement certain aspects of the Scheme and to report on it. In summary: a school should publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties

### 3. Developing a voice for disabled pupils, staff and parents/carers

The school follows good practice for including pupils and parents/carers in review meetings, transition planning, etc.

### 4. The Governing Body

The Governing Body regularly provides information and consults parents and community groups through school newsletters, publications, the website and questionnaires.

### 5. Removing Barriers

This school recognises the range of barriers and discrimination faced by people who have disabilities and also recognises that sometimes we may have to do that bit extra to tackle those barriers. We recognise also the need to keep including disabled pupils, parents, staff and visitors by asking them what they want on an ongoing basis. We will endeavour to:

- a. Remove physical barriers
- b. Widen access to the curriculum
- c. Improve access to information (communications)

### 6. Disability in the curriculum

When aspects of the curriculum are reviewed and developed the staff involved together with the senior staff and governors take all aspects of equality,

disability, race and gender into account in formulating the schemes of work, activities and the needs of pupils in terms of SEN, Gifted and Talented and other pupil needs to achieve their maximum potential.

**7. Eliminating bullying**

The school has adopted an Anti-Bullying policy which is reviewed on a regular basis with the other school policy cycle of review

**8. Making reasonable adjustments**

Through the use of our annual self-evaluation cycle reasonable adjustments are identified for the future and issues are included in the School Development Plan and our Long-term Plans

**9. Contractors and procurement**

The school has established routines and financial procedures for procurement which are reviewed annually by the governors.

Visitors and contractors on site are expected to follow our Health and Safety Policy which includes advice on disability issues and are advised about our work and supervised when on site.

**10. Information, performance and evidence**

A wide range of data is already collected related to special educational needs and some related to pupils with other disabilities.

Data is collected on entry to the school for all pupils from parents/ carers amended and up dated during the time a pupil is on the register of the school and as part of our individual pupil termly and annual tracking of progress helps us to provide a needs driven curriculum with Individual Education Programmes (IEP's ) with suitable targets as appropriate to the pupil

**12. Impact assessments**

At each annual self evaluation the school will identify from the data collected and that provided by the Local Authority, any issues to be included in its School Development Plan cycle.

### **3. GENDER EQUALITY STATEMENT AND POLICY**

#### **1. The Equality Act 2006**

The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act to place a statutory duty on Governors and the school to have due regard to the need:

- to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

#### **2. School Context and Aims and Values**

This policy is written with the School aims and values as its starting point.

It sets out our commitment to promoting equality and eliminating sexual discrimination and harassment.

Each person at our school will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, sexuality, disability or special educational needs and ability.

We will continuously strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity working actively to promote equality and foster positive attitudes and commitment to an education for equality.

We will do this by:

- Treating all those within the school community (eg pupils, staff, governors, parents, visitors and the community) as individuals with their own particular abilities, beliefs, challenges, attitudes, background and experience.
- Creating and maintaining a school ethos which promotes equality, develops understanding and challenges myths stereotypes misconceptions and prejudices through our leadership, teaching and the wider curriculum.
- Encouraging everyone in our school community to gain a positive self image and high self esteem.
- Having high expectations of everyone involved with the whole school community
- Promoting mutual respect and valuing each other's similarities and differences and facing equality issues openly and honestly within our policies and rules.
- Identifying, challenging and removing all practices, procedures and customs which are discriminatory and replacing them with practices that are fair to all.
- Monitoring evaluating and reviewing all the above to secure continuous improvement in all that we do.

#### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

- The promotion of gender equality and raising the achievement of all pupils is the responsibility of the whole school staff and governors.
  - The roles and responsibilities of everyone involved and connected with the school is set out through clear current job descriptions and in a variety of other documents that convey the leadership, management and governance structure and organisation in the school. The gender equality policy links to other specific policies and action plans that the school produces including the process of School Self-evaluation and the School Development Plan.
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- Introduction to this gender equality policy will be included in induction arrangements for all staff and governors new to the school. Pupils new to the school will also have



these issues and expectations explained to them. School procedures will highlight duties implied by this policy in the same way as child protection, health and safety and behaviour policies form part of the induction process.

**a. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team** - Will demonstrate through their personal leadership the importance of this Policy, ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy and understand their role and responsibilities in relation to it. The Head teacher will assess and monitor the impact of the policy and will report outcomes to the governing body annually. Where additional funding is available for raising the achievement of specific groups of pupils, the Head teacher will ensure that the additional resources are recommended, used appropriately and targeted on the basis of identified need in the School Development Plan following the approval of governors.

**b. Governors** - The governing body has adopted this Policy and will assess and monitor the impact annually. Where possible, a member of the Governing Body will be elected as the link, designated governor for equality.

**c. Staff** – By means of the Staff Handbook all staff will be expected to know what their responsibilities are in ensuring that the policy is implemented. They will be aware of the implications of it for their planning, teaching and learning strategies, management of activities, as well as for behavioural issues. Staff will also be aware that examination and annual test or teacher assessments and pupil achievements will be scrutinised and analysed with this policy in mind, as well as other established monitoring procedures.

**d. Pupils** - Pupils will be made aware of how the gender equality policy applies to them at induction and as part of the school aims, values and in the curriculum. They will learn to treat each other with respect and have the confidence to report incidents of harassment to adults.

**e. Parents/Carers** - Parents and carers will share in the development of the gender equality policy and be encouraged to participate fully in implementing it in partnership with the school –They will be invited to comment on the scheme and will be regularly informed about developments.

#### **f. Training**

All staff and Governors will receive training on the gender equality policy as well as the outcomes of self evaluation reviews, as appropriate.

#### **4. Monitoring, Assessing and Reviewing the Policy**

The school will monitor the impact of this policy on pupils, parents and staff. In particular, we will monitor the impact of our policies on the attainment levels of our pupils. School and Governor monitoring will include reports on:-

- Curriculum, teaching and learning (including language and cultural needs) and provision for pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils
  - Analysis of pupil data of standards and attainment
  - Rewards and sanctions, including exclusions
  - Parental involvement and the raising of concerns or complaints
  - Working with the community
  - Records of specific support advice and guidance
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- Monitoring information will help us to see what progress we are making in:

- Difference between pupils, specific groups, gender differences
- Ask why these differences exist and test explanations given
- Review the effectiveness of current targets and objectives
- Decide what further action will be necessary to meet particular needs and to improve the performance of pupils (which might include positive action)
- Talking to parents, pupils and staff to find out their needs and opinions
- Carrying out surveys or special research
- Rethink and set targets in relevant strategic plans (e.g. SDP)

## **5. Assessing the Impact of Policies**

We will continue to assess the effectiveness of our policies through existing arrangements for developing and reviewing other school policies.– giving special attention to:-

- Helping all our pupils to achieve as much as they can, and get the most from the curriculum opportunities on offer, based on their individual needs?
- Which groups of pupils are not achieving as much as they can and why not?
- How do we explain any differences? Are the explanations justified?
- Does each relevant policy include aims to deal with pupil attainment differences between male and female pupils?
- What are we doing to raise standards and promote equality of opportunity for pupils who seem to be underachieving and who may need extra support?
- Can any outcomes be traced back to individual policy aims, related targets and strategies?

## **6. The Local Authority Perspective**

The Local Authority continues to focus on raising the attainment levels of all pupils, and the Local Public Service Agreement includes four education priorities, with a particular focus on reducing the gap between the performance of boys and girls.

## **7. Making the Scheme Available**

The Gender Equality Policy will be available both within the school community and in the wider community so that all Governors staff, pupils and parents are aware of it and its contents through the policy itself, the staff handbook, poster displays in the school, newsletters, other statements and reports.

## **8. Breach of the Policy**

All Governors, staff, pupils and parents will be expected to abide by the policies and principles set out and related policies. All persons covered by the policy are aware of their responsibility to report any action which constitutes or could be deemed to constitute a breach of the policy in line with the school whistle blowing statement and policy– in the first instance to the Head teacher and/or senior staff. It will be for the Head teacher in consultation with other relevant staff/Chair of Governors to decide on appropriate response to any breach of the scheme depending on circumstances and seriousness. This may include amongst other actions:

- Use of the school complaints or disciplinary policies
- Use of the school behaviour code of conduct and harassment policies
- Formal or informal warnings
- Involvement of other Governors
- Fixed term or permanent exclusion

## 4. Race Equality Policy

### 1. Aims and Values

This school is a friendly and inclusive school that welcomes people from all ethnic backgrounds. We recognise the benefits of multiculturalism and celebrate the diverse community. We view ethnic and cultural diversity as enriching the school community and wider society. School governors and staff strive to promote this view. The school welcomes its duty of care towards pupils and staff so they may develop their abilities and feel comfortable in themselves and respected by others within the school community.

The school actively opposes all forms of racism. Anti-racism is not confined to a series of events but it is recognised as a long term process of change that requires the full commitment of the school community and involves consultation, reviewing, strategic planning and evaluation. Staff at this school are aware of racism and are expected to challenge it whenever it occurs.

### 2. Race Equality – some definitions

- 2.1 **Racism** is a viewpoint denying the equal worth and right to dignity of people from differing racial backgrounds. Racism promotes the false view that some racial groups are inherently superior to others and supports discriminatory behaviours based on this premise.
- 2.2 **Race equality** is a moral and social goal of equal value and equal opportunities for people of all ethnic backgrounds. It ensures that people of all ethnic backgrounds have equal access to rights, services and opportunities. Race equality helps to build inclusiveness. The school recognises the need to recognise ethnic and cultural differences in order to remove the disadvantages that affect some people because of their ethnicity.
- 2.3 An **ethnic/racial group** is a group of people defined by reference to their colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.
- 2.4 Direct **racial discrimination** occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of their ethnic/racial background.
- 2.5 Indirect **racial discrimination** occurs when a condition or requirement applies equally to people of all racial groups, but many fewer people of a particular group are able to comply with it.
- 2.6 **Racial harassment** is a general term covering a wide range of unacceptable, and often unlawful, behaviour which includes, threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour. It may constitute persistent racial abuse and further aggravating behaviour but there are other subtler forms of harassment that can be equally distressing and that create an intimidating and unpleasant atmosphere in the school including,
  - racist 'jokes', banter, insults, taunts, abusive jibes, literature (paper and electronic) and graffiti;
  - excluding people from conversations or shunning people because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic background;
  - making racist insinuations;
  - being condescending or deprecating about the way people dress or speak
  - picking on people
- 2.7 **Racial stereotyping** means generalising about a racial group in ways that deny the individuality of members of the racial group and lead to a simplistic and distorted understanding and image of members of that race. This is a form of racism in that it discredits the racial group by reducing it to a limited number of, often exaggerated, characteristics.

### **3. Our objectives – race equality and good relations**

- 3.1** This school will work with all stakeholders, pupils, parents, staff, the local community, the local authority, contractors and service providers to promote race equality and good race relations.
- 3.2** We will work to ensure that pupils and staff understand the importance of promoting race equality for the dignity of people and the well-being of the school and the whole community.

### **4. Race Equality Strategy**

#### **a. Pupil attainment and progress**

In response to national and local data indicating disparity between the relative performance of different racial groups this school will seek to minimise and eradicate this by:

- monitoring, if possible, the progress of ethnic minority pupils against their previous attainment in SATs and other internal tests, and comparing this with the progress of other pupils in the same and other ethnic groups
- investigating the reasons for any disparities in the attainment of different racial groups in school and tackling them
- working with pupils and parents/carers to set challenging attainment targets
- making sure that teachers have access to performance data so that they can form appropriate expectations and targets for under achieving pupils
- identifying any areas of work or stages where pupils are not doing well, and setting targets for improvement
- providing guidance or mentoring for ethnic minority pupils at risk of underachieving, working in partnership with outside agencies when appropriate
- using displays, assemblies and other opportunities to provide good role models from different racial groups
- tackling stereotyping that links ethnic groups with particular occupations or lifestyles where they could undermine the desire to attain highly

#### **b. Curriculum content**

We believe pupil's attainment is highest if the curriculum is relevant, accessible and interesting. This means that the school will:

- endeavour to ensure that lessons and other activities draw on the backgrounds and experiences of all pupils and that they address ethnic minority issues and interests throughout the curriculum
- ensure that curriculum content informs pupils about world cultures and history and encourages understanding and respect for people of all races and cultures
- challenge prejudice and racism through curriculum content
- not use curriculum materials uncritically that include racial stereotypes or undermine respect and understanding between people from diverse backgrounds
- promote positive images of ethnic minority people and celebrate their contribution to the United Kingdom
- ensure that option choices and careers guidance encourages ethnic minority pupils to consider the widest range of opportunities including the full range of post-sixteen options and avoid stereotyping pupils career choices on the basis of their ethnic background
- take steps to ensure that ethnic minority pupils do not suffer racism or discrimination during their work experience and make sure that placements are given without bias

- ensure that pupils are equipped to identify, challenge and deal with racism, bias, prejudice and racial stereotyping
- work consistently to ensure that pupils have the understanding of and skills required to deal with this behaviour

### **c. Learning and teaching**

Staff will seek to adopt teaching styles and methods to the needs of all pupils, including those from ethnic minority groups. They will therefore:

- where appropriate, adapt teaching styles to suit pupils' learning styles
- ensure that all staff know how to help pupils whose first language is not English to improve their communication skills in English
- make sure that all pupils have equal access to classroom and other school resources
- encourage pupils from different ethnic groups to work together, and take positive action to engender mutual respect and trust.

### **d. Pastoral care and school ethos**

This school values the contribution made to the community by all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds and wants them all to feel safe, valued, included and at peace in the school environment. The school will, therefore:

- foster cultural awareness and mutual understanding and respect between pupils and from different ethnic backgrounds
- expect all pupils to play their part in creating and sustaining a positive atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds
- ensure that all staff have an understanding of the culture and needs of ethnic minority pupils, their families and their communities
- expect all staff to help foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among pupils from all ethnic groups
- train all staff on how to implement this policy, including how to challenge racism, discrimination and racial stereotyping effectively
- gather feedback from ethnic minority pupils, parents, and staff to identify any obstacles that prevent them from making the most of the opportunities provided by the school and take the actions necessary to remove them
- take into account pupils' dietary needs in the provision of canteen foods and in the planning of offsite educational activities
- ensure that the school dress policy takes account of the religious and cultural needs of all groups of pupils
- make sure, wherever possible, that displays of work and assemblies reflect the ethnic make up of the school community, promote cultural diversity and support increased understanding of the wider world
- consider pupils' cultural and religious backgrounds and experiences to improve the inclusiveness of extra-curricular activities and use extra-curricular activities to promote multicultural awareness and understanding
- where appropriate, use older ethnic minority pupils as role models for younger pupils
- remove racist graffiti at the earliest opportunity and take appropriate action against perpetrators if known
- ensure all staff are aware of, and use local authority guidance for reporting and recording racist incidents and complaints

- monitor staff effectiveness in dealing with racist incidents, racial harassment, prejudice and stereotyping
- provide full support for victims of racist incidents, harassment and bullying ensuring responses to all reported incidents involve senior staff and staff with specialist knowledge in the area of race equality

#### **e. Pupil attendance, behaviour discipline and exclusion**

This school endeavours to make sure that pupils from all ethnic backgrounds attend regularly and conduct themselves responsibly. Where they do not the school aims to ensure that its disciplinary procedures are applied fairly and consistently, with understanding and sensitivity to pupils from all ethnic backgrounds. The school will, therefore:

- monitor attendance and absence rates by ethnic group
- investigate any disparity in such rates for different ethnic groups and address them in partnership with parents, specialist professionals and, where appropriate, ethnic minority community representatives
- take action to address any issues that affect, adversely, individual pupils or groups of pupils
- respect the right of pupils to be absent from school for the observance of religious festivals and follow local and national guidance with regard to the length and frequency of such absences
- ensure staff are trained in understanding the cultural differences in behaviour and be aware of them when interpreting disruptive behaviour
- take proactive steps to prevent exclusion, including early targeting of those perceived to be at risk of exclusion and giving them the appropriate support to try to avoid potential serious indiscipline that may lead to exclusion

### **5. Measures designed to eradicate racism and racial harassment**

All complaints of racist incidents, racial discrimination and racial harassment will be dealt with fairly, firmly and consistently

- all staff are expected to deal with incidents involving racism, (including prejudice and stereotyping), racial harassment and racist name-calling whenever they occur.. Staff must be alert in order to recognise a 'race dimension' on issues.
- endeavours will be made to ensure that from the earliest opportunity pupils are taught how to recognise racism, racial discrimination and racial harassment and that they are expected to report all such incidents to a member of staff who will instigate the agreed procedure to ensure that the matter is dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner and that adequate support is given to victims
- all racist incidents and complaints about racial discrimination and harassment against staff or pupils will be formally recorded, as will their resolution. Governors will be informed through the headteacher's reports and the local authority through the agreed process
- the effectiveness of actions to address racist incidents will be monitored and assessed
- information given to parents will state explicitly how the school deals with racist incidents

### **6. Staff recruitment and career development**

This school ensures its recruitment and selection procedures are lawful, in line with national and local authority guidelines and follow best practice. We believe the following measures will enhance this policy:

- Governors and staff involved in recruitment will be mindful of the benefits of pupils' ethnic backgrounds being reflected in the ethnicities of staff, so that, if possible, pupils have positive role models in school.
- The headteacher and governors of the school will ensure that job advertisements and information about the school do not discourage applications from ethnic minority people because of the way in which posts at the school are described.
- Staff with responsibility for training and professional development will monitor that ethnic minority staff have equal access and involvement in training and development opportunities.

## **7. Communications**

The school will endeavour to communicate this policy to the local community and in particular to those already involved with the school. It is expected that this policy will become part of the school's ethos and that anyone who feels that they are suffering or witnessing racism, racial harassment or racial discrimination will gain courage and confidence to raise the matter with school staff. To reinforce this:

- The school's procedures for dealing with racism, racial harassment and abuse will be conveyed clearly in staff training, briefings and the staff handbook.
- Pupils will be informed of the procedure at least annually in assemblies and through the pastoral support system.
- The school's stance on race equality will be stated explicitly in the school prospectus, information for job applicants and other publications as appropriate.
- This policy will be made available to anyone who requests it.
- Staff at this school will help ethnic minority parents/carers and parents/carers of ethnic minority children play an active part in helping to raise their child's performance.
- The school will endeavour to make sure that parents/carers who are not fluent in the English language have access to parental information sent out by the school.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

Promoting race equality and challenging racism is a collective responsibility that cannot be left to a small number of concerned staff. As more staff show and encourage multicultural and inter-racial understanding and appreciation and as more staff are prepared always to intervene when racist remarks, discrimination or harassment occur, race equality will become more embedded in the school ethos. This will have benefits for everyone, but especially for all our pupils who are growing up to take their place in a multicultural, multi-ethnic society.

## **9. Policy breaches**

- 9.1** This policy expects all pupils and staff to play their part in creating a positive atmosphere of mutual respect understanding and cooperation between people from different ethnic groups. This is because everyone has a right to dignity within school and freedom from discrimination, abuse, harassment prejudice or stereotyping.
- 9.2** Racist behaviour makes people feel distressed and uncomfortable in themselves. It is important to note that it is not the victim alone who might judge an action or remark to be racist. If witnesses believe, with good cause, that a racist action or remark has occurred, they have an equal right to report the incident as they should not have to work or learn in an environment where racism is not tackled.
- 9.3** Where pupils are perpetrators, they will be subject to the schools disciplinary procedures. Their parents are likely to be informed and invited to the school to discuss the incident. Pupils who are victims will be kept fully informed about the investigation process and supported through the school's pastoral support system.

- 9.4 Staff have a legal right to protection from racism, racial discrimination, harassment, prejudice, stereotyping or racist remarks at work. If a member of staff is accused of being the perpetrator the school's disciplinary procedures will come into operation. If a member of staff is the victim, the pupil perpetrator will be dealt with as described. Where governors, parents or visitors to the school are perpetrators, they will be asked to stop the racist behaviour immediately and the school's stance will be explained. If they do not they will be asked to leave the premises and police support will be summoned if necessary.
- 9.5 In all cases racist behaviour should lead to an assurance that the behaviour will not be repeated, and reconciliation.
- 10. Policy monitoring, reporting and review**  
The policy will be reviewed annually by responsible staff. This will require scrutiny of pupil data, audits, and discussions with pupils, staff and parents/carers. Issues identified will become part of the School Development Plan process.



## **5. ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Policy on Equal Opportunities**

#### **1 Introduction**

Our school's mission statement talks of valuing the individuality of all of our children. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy is intended to help to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all children, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

This policy accords with legislation:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2002;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
- Other Legislation that supersedes the above Acts

#### **2 Aims and objectives**

2.1 We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff or pupil or parent, on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

2.2 We promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some pupils differently.

2.3 We seek to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.

2.4 We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups.

2.5 We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.

2.6 We challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.

2.7 We value each pupil's worth, we celebrate the individuality and cultural diversity of the community centred on our school, and we show respect for all minority groups.

2.8 We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are caused by poor self-image and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes, and respect for all.

#### **3 Disability non-discrimination**

3.1 Some children in our school have disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of these children, as we are to meeting the needs of all within the school. The school fully meets the requirements of the amended Disability Discrimination Act that came into effect in September 2002. and the Act of 2005. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with other children.

3.2 The school is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled children full access to all areas of learning.

3.3 Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, or modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities where children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

#### **4. Gender equality**

4.1 We recognise that nationally, the achievement of boys is falling behind that of girls. We are committed to seeing all individuals and groups of pupils making the best progress possible in our school.

4.2 We have put in place a number of measures to raise the achievement of the boys. These include:

- dealing with negative aspects of boys' behaviour, including bullying and name-calling;
- removing gender bias from our resources;
- making sure that our displays reflect boys and men as effective learners and achievers;
- encouraging boys to read fiction.

4.3 To make our teaching more accessible to boys, we:

- begin a lesson by stating the learning outcomes, and giving the 'big picture';
- employ a variety of activities, and include a kinaesthetic element;
- deliver work in bite-sized chunks, with 'brain breaks' and new starts;
- provide challenge, competition and short-term goals;
- give regular positive feedback and rewards;
- set writing tasks that are cross-curricular, that have been modelled first, and for which there are frames and scaffolds available.

4.4 We realise that although gender is one of the key factors affecting educational performance, it affects different sub-groups of boys and girls in different ways. Social class, ethnic origin and local context are all strongly linked to performance. We also seek to ensure that policies designed to improve the boys' attainment do not do so at the expense of achievement by the girls.

#### **5. Racial equality**

5.1 In our school, we will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups.

5.2 It is the right of all pupils to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will deal with it in accordance with school procedures (see policies for Racial Equality and for Behaviour and Discipline).

5.3 We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. Thus, for example, we will immediately remove any offensive graffiti that we may find in school. We promote an understanding of diverse cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

5.4 Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So, for example, in the curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children learn the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

## **6 The role of governors**

6.1 In this policy statement, the governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

6.2 The governing body collects, analyses and evaluates a range of school data. We check that all pupils are making the best possible progress, and that no group of pupils is underachieving. To do this, we monitor:

- admissions;
- attainment;
- exclusions;
- rewards and sanctions;
- parents' and pupils' questionnaires.

6.3 The governing body seeks to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities.

6.4 The governing body will, in its annual report, make reference to arrangements for disabled pupils.

6.5 The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or disability a child may have.

6.6 The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their sex, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion has a bearing on school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively, and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

## **7 The role of the headteacher**

7.1 It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's policy on equal opportunities, and s/he is supported by the governing body in so doing.

7.2 It is the headteacher's role to make sure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

7.3 The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against.

7.4 The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and in providing opportunities for training.

7.5 The headteacher promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in the assembly, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the school.

7.6 The headteacher views all incidents of unfair treatment, and any racist incidents, with due concern.

## **8 The role of the class teacher**

8.1 Class teachers recognise their own prejudices, but do their best to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. We do not knowingly discriminate against any child.

8.2 When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups.

8.3 We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics include examples of the significant contributions women have made in this country's history. In geography, the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia, and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.

8.4 All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any incidents in the school log book, and draw them to the attention of the headteacher.

## **9 Monitoring and review**

9.1 It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The governors will therefore:

- monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it with the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process, so that no one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- require the headteacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents, staff or pupils regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the school's behaviour policy, and the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if it is considered necessary .

## **6. ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **POLICY FOR PROMOTING COMMUNITY COHESION**

#### **Overview**

The school Governors have a duty to Promote Community Cohesion under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007

There are three main areas under which this school makes its main contribution to Community Cohesion:

- a. Teaching, learning and the curriculum – using opportunities across the curriculum to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values
- b. Equity and excellence – ensuring equity and high standards for all and tackling underperformance by any particular group
- c. Engagement and extended services – engaging with other schools, parents and the community, as well as local authorities and other partners in developing extended services.

Community cohesion is about working towards a society in which:

- a. there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities
- b. the diversity of people's backgrounds is appreciated and valued
- c. similar life opportunities are available to all
- d. strong and positive relationships exist and are developed in the workplace, schools and wider community

The above concepts were developed by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion in its report 'Our Shared Future' which stated that community cohesion is promoted by individuals developing a 'sense of belonging' and this is defined by:

Understanding their rights and responsibilities in relation to the place where they live  
Trusting that local institutions act fairly in arbitrating between different interests.

'Community' has a number of dimensions

- a. the school community – the pupils it serves, their families, the school's staff and governing body, and community use of the school's facilities and services
- b. the community within which the school is located, including the city and local authority area
- c. the UK community – all schools are by definition part of this community
- d. the global community – formed by EU and international links

## **Our Principles**

In this school we build mutual respect through our school ethos, aims and values, We take positive steps to counter the effects of intolerance and harassment, and are continually working towards the central importance of making fair treatment visible and known to all communities. When we tackle inequalities we are aware of the need to present this as leading to fairer outcomes for all.

We are all aware of some significant barriers to building community cohesion such as mistrust, perceptions, lack of spaces for meaningful interaction and the time required to allow dialogue with positive outcomes.

## **The roles**

The school, through its governors and staff, is responsible for equipping the pupils to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds. We need to ensure that we:

- a. provide opportunities for interaction between pupils from different backgrounds
- b. consider how aspects of our work already supports integration and community harmony
- c. take stock of what has worked so far, for us and other schools and consider the scope for a more explicit focus on the impact of our activities on community cohesion
- d. consider how the duty to promote community cohesion can also contribute to our duty to promote children's well-being through our delivery of the 5 outcomes in the Every Child Matters agenda.

## **Main areas for action in promoting community cohesion**

The school sets its ethos, aims and values at the centre of its main purpose, it works on fostering excellent and valued relationships between staff and governors, parents and their children and all agencies, community and local groups with whom it works.

### **1. Teaching, learning and the curriculum**

Teaching pupils to understand others, promoting common values, valuing diversity, promoting awareness of human rights and developing skills of participation and responsible action. Attending to disagreements and conflict situations with equity and fairness, with positive feedback to the parties involved and their parents.

- These aspects will be promoted by all staff, throughout all subjects of the curriculum but especially through Religious Education, Collective Worship and assemblies, Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship, regular review of the policies, routines and systems for behaviour, conduct, rewards and sanctions.
- Training for staff and governors in raising awareness and development of these aspects on community cohesion will become an integral part of our school INSET programmes.

## **2. Equity and excellence**

Providing equal opportunities for all to succeed, removing barriers to access and participation in learning activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.

The school will address these aspects by dealing with bullying and harassment and also by monitoring exclusion systems and behaviour policies to ensure that they do not discriminate against any groups.

By the systematic tracking of pupil's progress in academic subjects and emotional, social and behavioural development, we shall be able to monitor individuals and significant groups. Careful analysis of data and comparisons with other similar data nationwide will enhance and inform our understanding of aspects of success and areas for development for our school in the overall field of Community Cohesion. We will ensure that admissions to schools codes, recruitment of staff and other staffing policies promote community cohesion and social equity.

## **3. Engagement and extended services**

Providing the means for children, young people and their families to promote interaction with people from different backgrounds, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally.

The school will meet these aspects through the planning of our curriculum, bringing community representatives and visitors into our school, making visits to other communities, developing systems for listening to our 'pupil voice', working closely with parents in learning partnerships and with other agencies.

All of which can enhance the understanding for our pupils about diversity and the society in which we live now, thus developing the necessary skills in young people in order for them to become valued and valuable members of the future community in which they will live.

We shall continue to develop and review our extended schools services alongside other local schools and groups but within the constraints of our main purpose of education and standards, the age and aptitudes of our pupils, our financial, staffing, specific facilities and other resources available.

### **Self-evaluation for Promoting Community Cohesion**

The governors, through the headteacher and senior staff, will monitor the impact of the activities outlined in the three main aspects above,

An annual report, as part of our cycle of self-evaluation, will be presented to governors and commented upon. Issues that are identified as requiring review or development will be included in our next School Development Plan.

## **7. EQUALITY ACT 2010 – GUIDANCE NOTE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

**Throughout this Note the term ‘Catholic school’ also applies to Catholic academies in England.**

This Note provides an overview with a particular emphasis on matters relevant to Catholic schools. The DfE has produced useful and more extensive guidance – *Equality Act 2010: Advice for School Leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities* which is referenced throughout this Note and can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.education.gov.uk/f00215460/equality-act-2010-departmental-advice>

### **Background**

The **Equality Act 2010** (“the Act”) was harmonising legislation which replaced existing legislation and introduced some further protections. In England and Wales the Act applies to all maintained schools, independent schools, including academies, and maintained and non-maintained special schools. In relation to schools most of the provisions remained unchanged but there were some changes of significance.

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against, harass or victimise **a pupil or potential pupil** (subject to certain exceptions including those applying to schools with a religious character):

- In relation to admissions;
- In the way it provides education for pupils;
- In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service; or
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

### **Protected characteristics**

It is unlawful to discriminate against **a pupil or prospective pupil** by treating them less favourably on the basis of the following protected characteristics:

- Sex;
- Race;
- Disability;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation;
- Gender reassignment- this protection was introduced by the Act;
- Pregnancy or maternity – the Act extended this protection to pupils.

It is also unlawful to discriminate on the basis of association or perception i.e. because a person with whom the pupil or prospective pupil is associated has a protected characteristic, or if you think a person has a protected characteristic even if this is mistaken.

Although age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment and to the provision of goods and services (except for children) this does not apply to pupils in schools. This allows schools to differentiate on the basis of age so that schools can continue to organise children in age groups and treat them age appropriately etc. This applies even where the pupil is over the age of 18.

**Schools remain free to admit and organise children in age groups and to treat them in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development.**

In relation to disability, the Act provide protection for disabled people but not those who are not disabled so schools can treat disabled pupils more favourably. The Act imposes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and prospective disabled pupils. The Act also contained a new duty for employers to provide an auxiliary aid if without it the



disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage. The duty was extended to auxiliary 'services'.

From September 2012 schools and local authorities have a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments to pupils, where they are not being supplied through special educational needs statements or through other sources.

### **Unlawful behaviour**

- **Direct discrimination** – occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic, than they treat, or would treat, other people;

- **Indirect discrimination** – occurs where a “provision, criteria or practice” is applied which has the effect of putting people who have a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic;

- **Harassment** – “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

In schools this applies only to harassment because of sex, race, disability and pregnancy and maternity. It does not apply to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. This does not of course mean that such behaviour would be permissible; it would remain unlawful discrimination notwithstanding that this legal definition does not apply;

- **Victimisation** – is where a person is treated less favourably because of something done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act e.g. because the person has brought a claim under the Act.

### **School Exceptions: General**

#### **· Single sex schools**

Single sex schools are able to refuse to admit pupils of the opposite sex. They are not prevented from admitting a small number of pupils of the opposite sex on an exceptional basis or in relation to particular courses or classes only. Other forms of sex discrimination against those opposite-sex pupils would be unlawful e.g. not allowing them access to school facilities.

#### **· Religion or Belief**

The Act provides an exception from the prohibition on religion and belief discrimination in the provision of services in schools. For all schools the areas covered by the exception are the curriculum, collective worship, school transport and the establishment, alteration and closure of schools. For schools with a religious character the exceptions also apply to anything done in connection with admissions or in relation to the responsible body of such schools i.e. for Catholic schools the school’s governing body.

#### **· Curriculum**

The **content** of the curriculum has never been caught by discrimination law and the Act states that it is specifically excluded. The **delivery** of the curriculum is however explicitly included.

The DfE guidance highlights the relationship between protection because of sexual orientation and protection of religious freedom. It states that many people’s views on sexual orientation/sexual activity are grounded in religious belief. It refers to concerns of schools with a religious character that they may be prevented from teaching in line with their religious ethos. It also refers to teachers having expressed concerns that they may be subject to legal action if they do not voice positive views on same sex relationships, whether or not this view accords with their faith. The guidance also refers to concerns that such schools may teach and act in ways unacceptable to lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils and parents when same sex

relationships are discussed because there are no express provisions to prevent this occurring.

**The guidance makes clear that, like all schools, schools with a religious character have a responsibility to the welfare of children in their care and to adhere to curriculum guidance. It goes on to say that, provided their beliefs are explained in an appropriate way in an educational context that takes into account existing guidance on the delivery of Sex and Relationship education (SRE) and Religious Education, then schools should not be acting unlawfully. Further that it would not be unlawful for a teacher in any school to express personal views on sexual orientation provided that it is done in an appropriate manner and context. The guidance however provides a note of caution about the influential role of a teacher and that their actions and responsibilities extend beyond the requirements of the equality legislation and that expressing personal views should not extend to allowing unlawful discrimination.**

#### **· Acts of worship**

The Act contains a general exception to the religion or belief provisions which allows all schools to have acts of worship or other forms of collective religious observance. The daily act of collective worship is not covered by the religion or belief provisions, which means that schools will not be acting unlawfully if they do not provide an equivalent act of worship for other faiths.

- For maintained schools a daily act of collective worship remains a mandatory requirement. It continues to be the case that in any maintained school collective worship is to be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' except where a determination otherwise has been successfully obtained.
- A school must of course comply with any request by a parent for a pupil to be wholly or partly excused from attending RE. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship and sixth form pupils have the right to withdraw themselves.
- The character and content of collective worship in a voluntary aided school continues to be determined by the governing body and for a VA school with a religious character will be in accordance with the school's trust deed or in accordance with the beliefs of the religion or denomination specified for the school. For Catholic schools this will be in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Schools are also free to celebrate religious festivals and would not be discriminating
- against children of other faiths e.g. putting on a nativity play.

#### **· Uniforms**

The Act does not deal specifically with school uniform or appearance but the general requirement not to discriminate would apply. Governing bodies must also have regard to their obligations under the **Human Rights Act 1998**.

It is for the governing body to decide matters relating to uniform and appearance. The DfE guidance on school uniform policy advises that schools should be sensitive to the needs of different cultures, races and religions and that the Department would expect schools, where possible, to act reasonably in accommodating these needs, within a general uniform policy, without compromising important school policies, such as school safety or discipline.

#### **Exceptions for Schools with a Religious Character**

##### **· Admissions**

Priority may be given on the basis of faith criteria in cases of where schools are oversubscribed in accordance with admissions law and the provisions of the School Admissions Code. Schools designated as having a religious character **must** have regard to any guidance from the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination when constructing faith-based oversubscription criteria and must also

consult that body or person when deciding how membership or practice of the faith is to be demonstrated.<sup>1</sup>

Catholic schools must therefore have regard to diocesan guidance and consult with their diocese. This applies to **all** Catholic schools, including schools which are under the trusteeship of a religious order.

#### **· Benefits, facilities and services**

Exceptions are provided for schools with a religious character in relation to how education is provided and access to aspects of school life.

1 DfE School Admissions Code 1st February 2012 paragraph 1.38

Catholic schools will still be able to mark or celebrate events specific to their religion and ethos. Parents, guardians or carers will not be able to claim that their children have been discriminated against simply because an equivalent celebration of events of significance to their particular religion is not arranged. Schools will also still be able to organise trips to a local church and will not have to organise visits to accommodate children of other faiths within the school. The DfE guidance also states as an example that a child of a different faith could not claim that they were being treated less favourably because objects symbolic of a school's faith, such as the Bible, were given a special status on the school.

#### **· Employment**

The Act provides that for schools with a religious character it will not be unlawful discrimination to do certain things permitted by the **School Standards and Framework Act 1998** ("the SSFA").

This means that for Catholic schools, in common with other voluntary aided schools, reference may be given in connection with the appointment, remuneration or promotion of teachers, to those whose religious beliefs or religious practice is in accordance with the tenets of the school's religion or religious denomination or who give or are willing to give religious education in accordance with the tenets of the faith. Conduct that is incompatible with the precepts of the Church, or which fails to uphold its tenets, may be taken into consideration in determining whether the teacher's employment should be terminated.<sup>2</sup>

Independent schools with a religious character may also take into account religious considerations. Academies, although publicly funded, are independent schools. The Act contains equivalent provisions for Catholic independent schools as apply to Catholic voluntary aided schools.<sup>3</sup> **The exceptions which apply to Catholic academies following conversion will therefore remain unchanged.**

The exceptions were extended in England (not Wales) to remove the provision that no person shall be disqualified by reason of his religious opinions, or of his attending or omitting to attend religious worship, from being employed or engaged for the purposes of a school otherwise than as a teacher.<sup>4</sup> This meant that preference could be given to practising Catholics in non-teaching posts where there was a genuine occupational requirement, which would previously not have been permissible.

2 Section 60(5) School Standards and Framework Act 1998

3 Section 124A School Standards and Framework Act 1998

4 Section 37 education and Inspections Act 2006

The Act provides for occupational requirements<sup>5</sup>. Of particular relevance are the provisions<sup>6</sup> which provide that where an employer has an ethos based on religion or belief they do not contravene the Act by applying a requirement to be of a particular religion or belief if, having regard to the nature of the work, it is an occupational requirement and is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The importance of the role of the teaching staff is acknowledged by the Bishops collectively. The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales has set out its requirement to its schools as follows:

*"The preservation and development of the quality and distinctive nature of Catholic schools depends on the faith, practice and commitment of the teachers in the*

*schools, working with their governing bodies”7*

**The Bishops’ Memorandum:**

<http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/index.php/schools/recruitment/item/1000002-memorandum-on-appointment-of-teachers-to-catholic-schools>

refers to the employment of Catholic teachers as a high priority, whilst at the same time recognising the contribution of teachers of other Christian Churches, other faiths and other teachers.

**The Memorandum also requires that for the most senior roles i.e. the posts of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head or Co-ordinator of Religious Education the post must be filled by a baptised and practising Catholic. For other leadership posts that directly affect the Catholic Mission of the school they should, wherever possible, be staffed by skilled practitioners who are committed Catholics.**

**The Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Act introduced an Equality Duty which applies to all public bodies, which includes maintained schools and Academies and which extends to all protected characteristics. In carrying out their functions public bodies are required to “have due regard to” the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;

5 Schedule 9 Equality Act 2010

6 Schedule 9(3) Equality Act 2010

7 Memorandum on Appointment of Teachers to Catholic Schools

- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

For schools age is relevant in relation to employees but not pupils.

The CES has produced separate guidance in relation to the application of the Public Sector Equality Duty for schools in England and Wales which can be accessed on the CES website via the following link:

<http://catholiceducation.org.uk/index.php/schools/item/1000069-equality>

*October 2012*

These Policies were updated in November 2012 and adopted by the Governing Body of the School on:

- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- Race Equality Policy
- School Equal Opportunity policy
- Policy on Promoting Community Cohesion

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date of Meeting)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Chair)