

# ST MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



*“Growing together in Faith and Love”*

## **Equality Policy and Plan**

Reviewed September 2025

## Introduction

All schools should have a document that sets out how they comply with equality legislation. Schools are required to publish information showing how they are meeting the Equality duty and publish their equality objectives. In this way, they are encouraged to *make transparent* their actions and plans in relation to equality.

## Background and legislative drivers

Equality legislation exists to protect people but also to try and advance equality. Inequality still persists in the UK despite more than 40 years of equality legislation. In Milton Keynes we know that some groups of children do less well than their peers in terms of progress, achievement and later life chances. This picture is reflected nationally. The recognition of diversity and promotion of inclusive and equality practices will help to overcome this disparity.

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and streamlined legislation that came before it. The Act refers to protected characteristics:

- Age (for staff only)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools.

This combined **Equality Duty** came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, schools are required to **have due regard to the need to:**

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Having *due regard* means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as outlined above ie.:

- Decision makers at schools are aware of the duty to have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action which may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- We consider equality before and at the time that we develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and we keep it under review on a continuing basis.
- The equality duty is integrated into the carrying out of our functions, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes.

Having due regard to the need to **advance equality of opportunity** involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

**Fostering good relations** involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

## Specific Duties

The Act also introduced specific duties, which are designed to help schools to meet their obligations under the Public sector Equality Duty (PSED).

The Specific Duties **require schools** to:

- Publish information **annually** to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish equality objectives **every four years**

We look at what information we are already publishing and consider whether this gives an accurate picture of progress on equality issues affecting your staff and pupils/students. Looking at our data and knowing our school community helps us set specific and measurable objectives.

## Section 2

### St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022

## Equality Policy

### Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for St Mary Magdalene Catholic Primary School is a single policy for all protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to developing cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's outcomes, both educational and wellbeing, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations between groups.

It explains how we will listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

### Our school within the wider context

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, race and ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and social deprivation.

### Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, sexual orientation, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life, the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes<sup>1</sup>.

The themes are reflected in our Equality Objectives.

## **Our approach**

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcomes for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

## **Our vision statement about Equality**

St Mary Magdalene seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

In relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, are required to consider how we will support pupils and students with regard to the protected characteristics.

We will take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils with certain protected characteristics in order to meet their specific need.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

## **Our duties**

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process of developing this policy in order to ensure better outcomes for all<sup>2</sup>. We have due regard to the need to ensure that persons with a protected characteristic are not disproportionately, negatively impacted as a result of our decision or policy making. We positively foster good relations between and within different groups of pupils/students and the wider school community.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

<sup>2</sup> See *Appendix A* for further information about legislation

We are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>3</sup> as well as recognising and accepting our duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (The Prevent Duty 2015) and promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life

**These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.**

- preparation for entry to the school and transition
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the provision of school meals
- interaction with peers
- behaviour management approaches and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- curriculum enrichment
- school sports
- staff welfare
- the involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- school policies

### **The roles and responsibilities within our school community**

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy – Mr Donoghue
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the school improvement plan when appropriate
- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 4 years

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/Childrens-rights/>

- Check that the policy is implemented fully within school.

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors/contractors are engaged in the development of and review of the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy including communicating with staff parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors/contractors about the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- ensure that students are fully supported where needs are identified.
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

### **How we developed our Policy - Using information**

We have used data and other information about our school.

In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this.

We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying.

Ofsted inspectors visit us regularly and report on how we are actively promoting equality and diversity, tackling bullying and discrimination and narrowing any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners, as well as how we are promoting British values and preventing radicalisation and extremism, preparing pupils/students to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain.

We have established good links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

### **Our Staff**

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made<sup>4</sup> or require job applicants to complete a generic ‘all encompassing’ health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

### **Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying**

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, sexism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or people who practise a religion or follow a faith. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

### **Implementation, monitoring and reviewing**

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<sup>4</sup> Unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties.

This policy was published on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 and subsequently reviewed and updated in September 2023. It will be actively promoted and disseminated.

We will report annually on the policy and our equality data. We will analyse whether the policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

### **Equality Objectives**

Using the views of pupils/students, parents, staff and community and analysis of the information as outlined above we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These will be reviewed and published every 4 years.

## EQUALITY OBJECTIVES: 2024 - 2028

Link to Public Sector Equality Duty	Protected characteristic	Aim:	Objective:	Target group(s): e.g. whole school, girls, boys, SEN, staff etc	Action:	Who's responsible?	Dates from and to:	Milestone/ progress:
All aims of duty	All protected characteristics	To increase pupil, staff and governors awareness of legal and human rights and the responsibilities that underpin society	For pupils to understand they have rights, how they can exercise their rights and understand how rights link to responsibilities	All pupils and staff	To register school and progress towards the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Award <sup>5</sup> which will involve staff training	Senior Leadership Team and Governors	Sept 2022 – July 2025	
All aims of duty	All protected characteristics	To increase the participation of pupils/students from minority, marginalised or vulnerable backgrounds in school life, including SEND pupils/students	Increase the diversity of pupils/students involved in the decision-making processes of the school, including SEND pupils/students.	Minority, marginalised and vulnerable pupils/students, including SEND pupils/students	Identify which groups are under-represented in the School Council and/or pupil voice processes within the school  Actively encourage and facilitate vulnerable groups participation, e.g. making use of communication tools that might help some students' voice to be heard e.g. SEND.	SLT, teacher with responsibility of school council	Sept 2022 – July 2025	

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/>

<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</p> <p>Equality of opportunity</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>To ensure that policy and practice relating to the recruitment, retention and training is inclusive of the diverse needs of applicants and staff and volunteers</p>	<p>Identification of equalities training needs in relation to protected characteristics</p> <p>Improved data collection and analysis on staffing issues</p> <p>Staff reporting improved sense of inclusion</p>	<p>Applicants and all school staff including volunteers</p>	<p>Ensure alignment with local authority guidance</p> <p>Improved data collection and monitoring of equality information relating to staff and volunteers</p> <p>Analysis of staff and volunteer training completed in relation to equality</p>	<p>SLT</p>	<p>March - July 2021</p>	<p>Meeting held with Personnel and inset session for all staff on importance of equality monitoring booked</p>
<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</p>	<p>Sexual Orientation/Race/sex/gender/identity/Disability/Religion or belief</p>	<p>To prevent and respond to all hate incidents and prejudiced based bullying</p>	<p>Students feel safer as reported in safer schools survey as feel incidents will be dealt with.</p> <p>Increased staff confidence</p> <p>Improve incident reporting</p>	<p>Whole school and specifically BME /SEND pupils/students</p>	<p>To review and update existing policies and practice relating to bullying.</p> <p>Look at LA guidance.</p> <p>Access staff training.</p> <p>Ensure continuing professional development for staff to develop skills in identifying and challenging homophobia</p> <p>Promotion of hate incident recording to students during antibullying week</p>	<p>SLT</p> <p>Anti-bullying lead</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>LA guidance made available for all staff.</p> <p>Staff Attended Antibullying training</p>

Advance equality of opportunity	Disability/ All	To increase social and emotional skills for pupils/students with social, emotional and mental health needs within our school community	Improved ability by pupils/students to handle difficult situations and a reduction in classroom disruption	Pupils/students with social, emotional and mental health needs.	Train staff to deliver small group work sessions to support targeted pupils/students in developing social and emotional skills Socially speaking Listening groups Turn taking parents more accessible and less wordy.  Gather and record information relating to disabled parents.	SENCo	Sept 22 – July 23	
Advance equality of opportunity	Sex	To promote opportunities for boys and girls to learn more about career opportunities which challenge gender stereotyping	Positive changes in options around work experience and diplomas	Year 6 Worktree volunteers	Provide activities that allow pupils/students to explore gender stereotyping in careers  To ensure that diplomas meet the needs of boys and girls	Head of Careers Education	Jan 2023 – Jan 2024	Reviewed gender pack resource
Fostering good relations	Age	To improve understanding and to challenge stereotyping between young and older people	Increased positive attitudes towards each other	Year 5 and Year 6	Set up a creative arts project on the local environment between older people (via University of the Third Age) and year 5 pupils  Set up a buddying system of Year 4 pupils and older people (working with Age Concern)	Class teachers	Sept 2023 – Mar 2024	

Fostering good relations	All	To promote good relations between people from different backgrounds	Improved understanding of Milton Keynes community and the diversity within it  Increased positive attitudes towards disabled people	All	Invite in representatives from protected equality groups to meet with children	SLT PSHE Coordinator	Sept 2024 - ongoing	Received copy of disability images pack and had staff training session
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