



# St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Policy: Equality Policy

Review date: July 2025

Next review: July 2028

## INTRODUCTION

*St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School* is guided by a clear set of objectives and values, one of which is equality. We are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between different groups within the local community. We are determined to do everything we can to make sure that people are treated fairly and that everyone has access to good quality services. All our school policies are underpinned by the Equalities Act 2010.

Unlawful discrimination, which results in unfairness in any aspect of schools employment policies and practices, curriculum or service delivery, will not be acceptable under any circumstances. In accordance with our *Mission Statement and school values* we pledge to respect the equal human rights of our pupils, staff and other members of the school community, and to educate them about equality, diversity and cohesion.

## LEGISLATION AND DUTIES

The following list identifies the equality legislation that affects the school.

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education Act 2002 (Section 78)
- Education and Inspectors Act 2006 (Section 38 (1))
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011
- Children and Families Act 2014

### Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 makes it unlawful for schools to behave in a way that is not compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights. Any action taken by a school that interferes with an individual's Human Rights must only be considered if it is a justified and proportionate means of achieving a legitimate end.

### Education Act 2002 (Section 78)

Section 78 requires governing bodies for all maintained schools to provide a curriculum that "promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life".

### Education And Inspections Act 2006 (Section 38 (1))

Section 38 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that:

"The governing body of a maintained school, shall, in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school:

- Promote the wellbeing of pupils at the school, and
- Promote community cohesion.

### The Children and Families Act 2014

Sets out how the School will support children and young people with Special Educational Needs, Social Care Needs and Health Needs. The School will

- Contribute appropriately to the 'local offer' detailing relevant services available for children with disabilities and / or Special Educational Needs.
- Contribute appropriately to a pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan.

### Equality Act 2010

The General Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires schools, in the exercise of their functions and decisions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School will take the following action as reasonable steps to demonstrate due regard to the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010:

- Produce a written equality policy identifying action to be taken to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups across school activity.
- Ensure hate incidents and hate crime reporting is integrated within the School's Anti Bullying Policy
- Audit the curriculum, and teaching and learning methods, to ensure they are accessible, inclusive in the language and representation used, promote inclusion and physical activity for disabled pupils, and challenge stereotypes to promote community cohesion and a positive image of a diverse community.
- Make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled staff, pupils and parents are not disadvantaged in employment or the provision of education, and have equality of access to information, facilities and other services at the School.

Equality Act 2010 (Section 10) requires schools to prepare and maintain an accessibility plan in order to

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum
- improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school, and
- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled

In order to meet Section 10 of the Equality Act 2010 St Thomas of Canterbury will publish the outcome of our Equality, Accessibility and Cohesion Audit and Action Plan on the school's website. In addition, the School takes into account the widening definition of disability within its decisions and functions, and gives due regard to the "Social Model" of disability. This model recognises the barriers caused by the environment and people's attitudes to disability.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duty) Regulations 2011 requires schools to set measurable equality objectives and to publish information about their performance on equality, so that the public can hold them to account.

In order to meet the Specific Duty, [St Thomas of Canterbury](#) will

- Publish sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty across its functions annually.
- Prepare and publish equality objectives to demonstrate how the general equality duty will be met

## **PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 identifies a list of nine characteristics that are subject to its general duty. They are: Age, Disability, Gender, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion, Sexual orientation. (However, age, and being married or in a civil partnership do not apply to education provisions.)

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Governors are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that the School meets the duty of the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensuring that they understand the equality implications of all key decisions on policy and practice before they are made.
- Requesting an annual report from the Head Teacher on progress against the school's equality policy, equality objectives and action plan. This report must include a summary of the results of any consultation, equality monitoring and equality impact assessments

### **The Head Teacher is responsible for:**

- Producing, implementing and maintaining the school's
  - Equality Policy
  - Publishing the School's contribution to the "local offer"
- Ensuring all staff know their responsibilities under the Equality Policy, and receive training and support in carrying these out
- Ensuring that hate incidents and hate crime reporting is integrated within the School's Complaint Process and Anti Bullying Policy
- Ensuring tools are in place to show how the school has shown due regard to all protected groups, such as;
  - Equality impact assessment of policies
  - Equality monitoring of policies e.g. employment, admissions, pupil attainment, exclusion, hate incidents
  - Curriculum Equality Audit
- Completing of the equality, accessibility and cohesion audit and action plan
- Publishing the School's Equality Policy and the outcome of the equality, accessibility and cohesion audit and action plan, on the school website, to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty across its functions; updating this annually
- Using information from the equality, accessibility and cohesion audit to develop equality objectives for the school
- Publishing the equality objectives on the school website; reviewing them annually.
- Reviewing and revising the School's Equality Policy every three years
- Reporting to Governors annually progress against the School's Equality Policy, Equality Objectives and Action Plan. This report must include a summary of the results of any consultation, equality monitoring and equality impact assessments.
- Ensuring the School's Equality Policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils, and their parents/carers and guardians know about it
- Ensuring the School's Equality Policy is followed consistently by all staff and pupils
- Ensuring appropriate and consistent action is taken in cases of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, hate incidents and hate crimes

### **All staff are responsible for:**

- Ensuring they follow the equality policy and procedures, and take up equality training and learning opportunities provided by the school
- Behaving in a dignified manner towards others, and respecting individuals regardless of protected characteristic
- A consistent challenge to unwanted behaviour, including inappropriate use of language.
- Consistent application of all school policies

Staff with responsibility for areas of the curriculum, are responsible for completing Curriculum Equality Audits for each area, and making appropriate changes to teaching and learning methods to (i) improve accessibility, (ii) advance equality of opportunity, (iii) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and (iv) foster good community relations. (See Appendix 2)

*Mrs L Rawlinson* is responsible overall for dealing with reports of hate-incidents

*Miss A Hitchen* is responsible overall for Children with Special Educational Needs

**Pupils, parents, visitors and contractors are responsible for:**

- Ensuring they follow the equality policy and procedures
- Behaving in a dignified manner towards others, and respecting individuals regardless of protected characteristic
- A consistent challenge to unwanted behaviour, including inappropriate use of language

**DEFINITIONS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION**

Under the law, there are different categories of discrimination, with differences in the legal framework surrounding them. These are:

Direct Discrimination, which occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another on grounds of a personal characteristic.

Discrimination by Association occurs when a pupil is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy and maternity). This might occur when you treat a pupil less favourably because their sibling, parent, carer or friend has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination arising from perception takes place where education provider behaves as if the person has the characteristic and treats them worse than others as a result. This applies whether the perception is true or not, even if the education provider knows that the person does not have the protected characteristic.

Discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity occurs when women (including a female pupil of any age) are treated less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger.

Indirect Discrimination, which occurs when a rule or condition which is applied equally to everyone:

- Can be met by considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular group
- Is to the disadvantage of that group
- Cannot be justified by the aims and importance of the rule condition

Discrimination arising from a disability, which occurs when an education provider treats the disabled person unfavourably, this treatment is because of something which has come about as a result of the disabled person's disability ('something arising in consequence of the person's disability'), and the education provider cannot show that this treatment is justified as a balanced way of achieving something for a good reason (in legal language 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim').

Discrimination arising from disability is different from direct discrimination. Direct discrimination refers to less favourable treatment and requires a comparison to show that a person without the protected characteristic would be treated differently. Discrimination arising from disability refers to unfavourable treatment and does not require a comparison to a non-disabled person.

Harassment, occurs when unwanted conduct has the purpose or the effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, on grounds of disability, race or gender. Although the harassment provisions do not explicitly apply to the protected characteristics of gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief; or pregnancy and maternity, in

relation to schools, unwanted conduct related to any of these protected characteristics that results in a pupil, governor, staff or visitor being disadvantaged would constitute direct discrimination.

Victimisation: occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have taken action in respect of discrimination, e.g. by bringing a complaint or giving evidence for a colleague.

## **DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION WITH REGARD TO PUPILS**

We will not discriminate, harass or victimise any child seeking admission, nor with regard to any pupils, or their parents or carers on grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity. This includes discrimination, harassment or victimisation in provision of teaching or allocating the pupil to certain classes, applying different standards of behaviour, dress and appearance, excluding pupils or subjecting them to any other detriment, and conferring benefits, facilities or services.

*There are some limited exceptions to this.*

- *Single sex schools may discriminate on grounds of gender with regard to admissions*
- *Schools with a religious character may give priority in admissions to applicants who are of their faith*
- *School curriculum and collective worship are not covered by the requirements on schools not to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief*
- *Schools with a religious character may be allowed to discriminate regarding sexual orientation, in certain circumstances.*
- *With regard to disability, the school will make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent disabled pupils being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled, even if it means treating them more favourably*

## **EMPLOYMENT**

We are committed to a fair and equal pay policy and a free from bias pay structure.

We will not discriminate, harass or victimise in employment unlawfully on grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. This includes discrimination, harassment or victimisation in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices such as dress codes and disciplinary procedures.

With regard to disability, we will 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.

The school will monitor the information as set out below disaggregated by disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation and different racial group.

- The number of staff in post, and
- The number of applicants for employment, training and promotion

Where agreed, the school will ensure that it sends employment equality monitoring data to the Council's Human Resources Section, in a format specified by the Council.

### ***Exceptions to the Policy***

*Schools with a religious character may discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion, in some cases, in terms of employment of staff. These exemptions only apply where there is genuine religious reason, e.g. the appointment of a Head Teacher.*

## **MONITORING AND ANALYSIS**

We will monitor the following policies to ensure that we are meeting equality duties.



- Pupil Admission
- Pupil Exclusion
- Pupil Attainment
- The progress of pupils identified as having special educational needs
- Complaints
- Hate Incidents
- Satisfaction Surveys

Where appropriate we will use the equality monitoring categories for race, gender, religion and disability used by St.Helens Council's Children and Young Peoples Department. This will ensure consistency of data and enable us to set targets that are comparable with other agencies.

We will disaggregate the results of monitoring by the equality profile (race, gender, religion and disability) to identify if there were any issues or outcomes particular to one specific group. Where relevant, actions will be taken to improve any adverse outcomes for any group. The results of equality monitoring will be reported to the school governors annually. Any identified improvements will be included in the School's Improvement Plan. The results of such monitoring and analysis will be published, to enable viewing by any interested party.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)**

The school's Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on all of our key policies at least once every three years. We will ensure that the Equality Impact Assessment process is updated in line with new legislation.

The Equality Impact Assessment template is based upon the relevant equality duties. For each of the school's functions the Equality Impact Assessment process will cover the following areas:

- The advancement of equality of opportunity
- The elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- To foster good relations between different groups of our community
- The promotion of positive attitudes to disability
- The participation by disabled people in public life
- The meeting the need of disabled people, even when that means treating them more favourably than non-disabled people.
- Improving health and wellbeing

The outcome of equality impact assessments will be reported to the school governors. Any identified improvements will be included in the School's Improvement Plan ([see Appendix 1 for template EIA](#)).

*The local Authority will ensure all template policies in relation to education provision and employment have been informed by an equality impact assessment*

## **CURRICULUM EQUALITY AUDIT**

The School's curriculum equality audit tool ensures that each member of teaching staff with responsibility for a curriculum area (i) will promote inclusive and positive images of a diverse community and examples that demonstrate "due regard" to the duty to promote good community relations; (ii) will increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum, (iii) will challenge gender, racial, religious,

disablist, ageist and homophobic stereotypes, e.g. prejudices about what people from particular groups should/shouldn't or can/can't do ([see Appendix 2 for template](#)).

*Schools with a religious character will be exempt from challenging the curriculum with regards to religion and sexual orientation.*

## **REPORTING PROGRESS**

School Governors will monitor the School's Equality Policy and Action Plan. The Head Teacher will produce an annual report for the School Governors on progress against the Equality Policy, Equality Objectives and Action Plan. This report will include the results of consultation, equality monitoring and equality impact assessments.

The annual report on progress against the Equality Policy and Action Plan will be produced by

The Equality Policy and Action Plan will be reviewed at least once in the next four years.