

St Thomas More Catholic High School



Equality Policy

Policy Written:

February 2023

**Adopted By Local Governing
Committee**

15/02/2023

Next review due by:

July 2025

St Thomas More Catholic High School

Mission Statement

St. Thomas More Roman Catholic High School is a Catholic school, and as such we strive to follow the example of Jesus Christ in our work, worship and relationships.

Our aims are:

- To be a community based on Christian values, notably Love, Justice, Peace, Truth and Tolerance, and to encourage individuals in their commitment to these ideals.
- To provide a secure, welcoming and ordered environment in which individuals learn to value and respect both themselves and others.
- To give individuals the opportunities to develop their full potential as human beings, and to encourage and challenge them to do so.
- To encourage everyone to strive to do their best and to strive for the highest standards in all areas of activity.
- To help children grow into confident, open, resourceful young people with a sense of responsibility and of service.

Consideration of equality is grounded in fundamental scriptural beliefs: equal dignity of all people, created in God's image; and Christ's redemption of all.

We fully accept and welcome that society consists of many diverse groups and individuals and this diversity is an asset to our community, we also recognise that certain groups and individuals are discriminated against or face environmental barriers and we are opposed to this. St Thomas More stands for zero tolerance of any form of prejudice and discrimination. This includes any prejudice or discrimination based on appearance, ability, ethnicity, class, gender, gender presentation, sexual orientation, nationality or religion.

'Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than this.'

Mark 12:31

This Policy applies to our:

- Students
- Staff
- Governors
- Parents/Carers
- Visitors
- Members of the community who use or wish to use the school facilities

Rationale

We recognise that we have a moral and legal responsibility to promote equal opportunities and will pursue equality in all aspects of our work. St Thomas More Catholic High School is committed to meeting its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the 2010 Equality Act.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In addition our school is committed to taking action on wider equality strands, e.g., 'vulnerable' children such as those in public care, those with disrupted families, those who experience social or economic disadvantage and young carers.

In fulfilling the general and specific equalities duties St Thomas More Catholic High School will:

- Determine specific and measureable objectives for progressing equalities issues – these will be identified within the Single Equality Action Plan.
- Monitor equality issues through normal school improvement data review processes and in an annual assessment.
- Share key equalities information through parent newsletters and/ or via the school website.

What do we mean by Equality and Diversity?

Equality refers to making sure that all groups within our school community benefit equally from our activities - everyone can participate and is given the opportunity to achieve.

Equality is also about eliminating discrimination and promoting fair and equal treatment for all. This means that employment opportunities and educational inclusion should be free from barriers and accessible to all. Equality is about;

- Widening life chances, not restricting them
- Fostering talents, not suppressing them
- Ensuring no child is disadvantaged or discriminated against
- Creating a better and more efficient working environment

Diversity recognises that we can only achieve equality by taking into account the different needs of communities. It is about recognising and valuing differences between individuals, groups and communities to create a positive and inclusive culture for the benefit of the school. **Equality is impossible to achieve without recognising diversity.**

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is a type of negative treatment that affects a whole group of people or an individual because they belong to a group.

Direct discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic e.g. their race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, religion & belief, sexual orientation, age, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

Indirect discrimination is a provision, criterion or practice (PCP), which when applied to all, puts those having a particular protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and that PCP is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example it can occur when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a particular protected characteristic.

Aims

The policy aims to bring together equality strands in one harmonised document and sets out our school commitment to ensuring that there is no discrimination on the basis of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief (except that which is permissible due to the Catholic nature of the school), gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership and pregnancy & maternity. Our Equality Objectives will detail how we will be working to improve our provision and planning with regard to these issues. Our approach promotes fairness and equality of opportunity as well as celebrating diversity for all people.

1. Maintain and promote a positive ethos of mutual respect and trust amongst pupils, parents, staff and governors, in which all members of the school community feel valued and safe.
2. Respect the equal human rights of all members of our community and educate our pupils about equality through a curriculum which is accessible, broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils.

3. Promote positive attitudes to, and a valuing of, the diversity of all individuals with due regard for their differences in ability, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, lifestyle, religion, sexuality and socio-economic background through the curriculum and by example.
4. Strive to support all individuals and groups that have increased vulnerability or require something extra to meet their needs, whether these needs are social, academic, physical or emotional. This potentially includes 'children looked after', young carers, those with special education needs and disabilities, those experiencing bereavement or changing family circumstances, those with on-going health concerns, those who have bullied or been bullied and those who display challenging behaviour.
5. Respond promptly to any instances of hurtful or discriminatory behaviour, supporting offended individuals, educating those causing offence and taking steps to ensure that unacceptable behaviour or experience is eradicated in line with the school Behaviour Policy.
6. Provide positive role models for challenging stereotypes and any attitudes that may lead to self-limiting aspirations, especially with regard to gender, disability, ethnicity, culture and belief, and other aspects of experience that may increase the vulnerability of children.
7. Create an environment in which all pupils and staff are able to reach their full potential. Within the limits of the school buildings and its resources, welcome pupils, staff and visitors with disabilities, recognising the contribution to the school community.
8. Implement and monitor school policies, processes and plans with due regard to the promotion of community cohesion and equality. Ensure that the following are adhered to in statutory legislation and the Equality Policies of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, the Local Authority and Diocese.
 - Admissions of students
 - Making staff appointments
 - Awarding contracts
 - Financial management
9. Offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on Gospel values and working in harmony. Through this we aim to prepare young people for a life working with others in a wider community which is socially, culturally and religiously diverse.
10. Respond to the particular diversity needs of our school population with due attention to wider needs arising from our families' socio-economic and educational backgrounds, their home language and heritage.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors are responsible for:

- ensuring that the school complies with all equality legislation and that the published equality information is updated every year.
- approving and adopting the schools equality policy
- ensuring all recruitment, selection, promotion, training and development systems are fair and accessible to all.
- making recommendations for future actions from reports received to ensure the identified priorities are achieved
- having a named governor who will have responsibility for monitoring equality outcomes
- ensuring staff have equal access to personal and professional development courses.
- taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to disabled people.
- Reviewing the arrangements for SEND pupils on an annual basis

The Leadership Team of the school is responsible for:

- promoting the equality policy both inside and outside the school and with regards to other relevant policies.
- ensuring that all staff fulfil their role with regard to delivering equality.
- providing reports to the governing body and staff on how the policy is working.
- taking appropriate action where discrimination occurs.
- making the Local Governing Body aware of any serious incidents involving equality or diversity implications.
- ensuring all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school and that the taught curriculum reinforces the principle of equality.

Parents/Carers will:

- have access to the policy and be encouraged to support the policy
- have the opportunity to attend any relevant meetings/awareness raising sessions related to the policy
- have the right to be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child

Staff and pupils are responsible for:

- complying with and promoting the school ethos in relation to equality and diversity.
- adhering to all school policies and procedures in relation to equality and diversity.
- being aware of their behaviour and its impact on others
- engaging with the school in eliminating any discrimination – reporting suspected discriminatory actions and any suspicions of harassment taking place
- promoting a positive working environment
- showing a commitment to undertaking training and development within this area

Visitors to our school will be expected to respect and follow our equality policy. They are encouraged to report to senior staff if they witness, or themselves fall victim to, any form of prejudice or discrimination (or email safe@stmacademy.org.uk).

Monitoring and Reviewing

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body to ensure that it is effective in tackling discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

The school will monitor and review separately the progress, attainment, attendance and exclusions of pupils re gender, minority ethnic backgrounds, SEND, Pupil Premium etc. and the action taken where intervention is required.

The Governance and HR Manager will update the equality information we publish every year

The School Development Plan will ensure this policy forms an essential part of the school's action on equality. It includes targets determined by the governing body for promoting a cohesive community, inclusion and equality in the school, also with reference to the workforce. It also ensures other school policies address equality issues.

Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessments is used to inform future planning and decision-making.

The Headteacher/ Leadership team will provide monitoring reports for review by the Governing Body. These will include: school population, recruitment, retention, progression, key initiatives, progress against targets and future plans.

Equality Action Plan

The Action Plan (See Appendix 1) identifies our specific actions to enable the school to move forward in promoting the diversity agenda and achieve the equality objectives outlined in this policy.

Equality Action Plan/ Objectives 2022/3
(to be reviewed 2024/25)

Objective	Timescale	Resource Implication	Action by	Success criteria
Improve the quality and regularity of Equality monitoring	July 2025	Staff time	DW, MHD, LH, LJW, ABM, LJW,	<p>Regular (annual) analysis of recruitment data and trends with regards to race, gender and disability (incl. audit of post holders in staffing structure)</p> <p>Analyse destinations and NEET as per groups included in the policy.</p> <p>Monitor student participation in extra/co-curricular events (incl. trips and visits) inside and outside of school.</p>
<p>Establish Anti-Discrimination Staff Groups within school with a particular focus on promoting equality in relation to racism, sexism and LGBTQ+ issues</p> <p>Complete Anti- Discrimination audit and use it to write and implement a 3 year whole school strategy which incorporates, as part of its evidence base, outcomes from the extensive listening campaign/student voice</p>	July 2025	<p>Staff time</p> <p>External agency/charity support e.g. Tyne & Wear Citizens, CES, police.</p> <p>INSET time and budget to develop staff understanding and expertise (training costs)</p>	MHD, LH, PRO, LJW, ADM, RK,	<p>Enhanced support for all students vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination in any form (especially those most vulnerable to racism, sexism incl. sexual harassment and violence and HBT bullying)</p> <p>Better knowledge and understanding amongst all pupils and staff of equality, diversity and what constitutes as prejudice and discrimination incl. the impact such acts have on people's lives.</p> <p>A more confident and informed staff body which is better prepared to:</p>

		PSHE curriculum resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver high quality PSHE lessons, information and guidance for pupils • respond swiftly and effectively to any incidents witnessed or reports of discrimination in school.
Maintain and where necessary raise performance/ progress of all groups in school profile	August 2023-5	Staffing, materials, training, exam entries, targeted funding e.g. Pupil Premium/ SEND	DW, RK, ADM, LJW, MHD, KDI	Exam results and attendance data shows students in various groups achieve in line with or better than expectation.
Continue to improve the variety and quality of provision to promote diversity and tolerance	Ongoing	Staff time	DW,MHD,PF ADM, LH	Assembly themes promote diversity and tolerance. Chaplaincy Programme is inclusive. Full student participation in Diocesan Partnership events and LA opportunities.
<p>To create, with support from HODS, a fully inclusive curriculum.</p> <p>Work with HODs to complete curriculum audit (accessibility, cultural capital, gaps in knowledge, transition points, extracurricular opportunities) which in turn informs a PSHE curriculum/ Personal Development provision map which incorporates new DFE guidance re RSE</p>	July 24	<p>Staff time</p> <p>SLT link time to work with depts.</p> <p>PSHE resources and training</p>	LJW, RK, PF, MHD	To gain a full knowledge and understanding in relation to the protected characteristics of what issues are being covered – in which depts (incl PSHE), at which key stage etc. and ensure any potential 'gaps' are filled through the PSHE curriculum

To support EAL students in all aspects of school life – to acknowledge their efforts and support them in maintaining and celebrating their cultural differences.	Annually	Staff time	HBL	Action in response to findings of Northumbria University action research project and the work of Associate Professor Graham Hall in exploring the experience of EAL students - and alongside governor visits evaluate the performance and happiness/ experience of this group.
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Appendix 2 School Equality Data 2022/23

Pupil info by protected characteristic

Number of pupils on roll	1615	Number of Staff		169
RACE PROFILE	No of pupils	% of pupils	No of Staff	% of staff
Any other Asian background	57	3.53	1	0.59
Any other Black background	6	0.37		
Any other White background	58	3.59		
Any other ethnic group	14	0.87		
Any other mixed background	14	0.87		
Bangladeshi	5	0.31		
Black - African	24	1.49		
Black Caribbean	1	0.06		
Chinese	9	0.56		
Indian	30	1.86		
Information Not Yet Obtained	1	0.06		
Pakistani	9	0.56		
Refused	3	0.19		
White - British	1334	82.60	161	95.27
White - Irish	15	0.93	3	1.78
White and Asian	15	0.93	1	0.59
White and Black African	16	0.99		
White and Black Caribbean	4	0.25		
White, any other White Background	0	0	3	1.78
RELIGION / BELIEF PROFILE	No of pupils	% of pupils	No of Staff	% of staff
Baptist	4	0.25		
Buddhist	4	0.25		
Christian	302	18.70	28	16.6
Church of England	38	2.35	36	21.3
Hindu	5	0.31		
Islam	3	0.19		
Jewish	1	0.06		
Methodist	1	0.06		
Muslim	34	2.11		
No Religion	231	14.30	23	13.6
Other Religion	16	0.99	3	1.8
Refused	6	0.37		
Roman Catholic	963	59.63	79	46.7
Sikh	7	0.43		
SEX PROFILE	No of pupils	% of pupils	No of Staff	% of staff
Male	849	52.4	55	33
Female	770	47.6	114	67

Students eligible for FSM	303	18.76		
LAC Students	19	1.18		
EAL Students	174	10.77		