

"As unique individuals, we do our best at work and play for the love of God and others."



St Benedict's Catholic Primary School

Equality policy and guidance

Written by One Education: December 2015 (reviewed 2016)

Adopted by St Benedict's Catholic Primary School: 2018

Reviewed: April 2020, 2022 and 2024, 2026

To be reviewed April 2029

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Schools and academies are required to publish information to show how they are complying with their Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") and to prepare and publish equality objectives under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. This policy and guidance document details the school's approach and commitment to equality and provides information on how the school is complying with its general and specific equality duties. As part of its commitment to equality, this policy also provides guidance on the types of behaviour which are unlawful under the Act and on the protected characteristics referred to in the Act.
- 1.2 This policy takes into account the provisions of the Department for Education's non statutory advice for schools on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Employment Statutory Code of Practice on the Equality Act 2010 produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). This policy also takes into account the provisions relating to equality in the Ofsted inspection framework 2025. The framework places a strong focus on actively promoting equality and diversity, tackling bullying and discrimination, narrowing any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners and actively promoting British values. It also makes clear that schools will be assessed in relation to compliance with their duties under the Act and the Human Rights Act 1998 and on the extent to which they promote equality of opportunity and take positive steps to prevent any form of discrimination, either direct or indirect, against those with protected characteristics.
- 1.3 This policy will inform the School Development Plan and will enable the school to demonstrate how promoting equality and eliminating discrimination can help to raise standards, ensure that equality and diversity are part of the school's core business both as a school and an employer and ensure that the school's commitment to ensuring its position as a provider of the highest quality education supports the school's equality objectives.
- 1.4 This policy is the key school document for information about equality. It brings together all the school's previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members of school staff (not just employees), to pupils and to school governors. It provides guidance and information for parents, carers, school visitors and other members of the wider school community and sets out the school's expectations and required standards of behaviour with regard to equality issues.

3. Key Principles

- 3.1 In fulfilling its obligations under the Act and when carrying out its duties as detailed in this policy, the school will be guided by the following Key Principles. The school will be guided by the Key Principles in the application and implementation of all its policies, procedures and practices.

Principle 1 - All members of the school community are of equal value and should be treated with dignity and respect. Every member of the school community is of equal value whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation. All individuals are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and should treat others in the same way.

Principle 2 - The school recognises respects and values difference and diversity. Treating people equally does not necessarily mean treating them all in the same way. The school will take account of differences and the kind of barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to protected characteristics. The school will make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices in relation to disability including the provision of any necessary auxiliary aids and services. The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances should be appreciated and valued. Diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit the school.

Principle 3 – The school will actively promote British values. The school will ensure that equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity is promoted and that pupils respect others and are well prepared to contribute to wider society and life in modern Britain. The fundamental British values are democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

Principle 4 - The school fosters positive attitudes and relationships. The school intends that its policies, procedures and activities should actively promote positive attitudes, good relations and mutual respect between all groups of individuals who are different from each other. The school will take action to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language including language that is derogatory about disabled people and homophobic and racist language.

Principle 5 - The school observes good equalities practice for all members of staff. The school will ensure equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment including in recruitment, promotion and continuing professional development. The school's policies and procedures for employees and potential employees will take into account equality considerations including any relevant exemptions or exclusions.

Principle 6 - The school aims to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers which may already exist. In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts in its policies and practices, the school will take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers which may already exist in relation to certain groups with protected characteristics.

Principle 7 - The school will consult and involve widely in relation to equality issues. When tackling equality issues, the school will consult and engage with those affected by its decisions and where possible, with those people who have special knowledge who can inform the school's approach. The school will take into account the views of the Equality Working party in the implementation and the review of this policy and in particular in relation to the school's equality objectives.

Principle 8 - The school will address bullying, discrimination and prejudice-related incidents.

The school takes all forms of bullying, discrimination, harassment and prejudice-related behaviour seriously. Incidents will be identified, recorded, monitored and responded to appropriately in accordance with the school's relevant policies and procedures. Staff will be supported to recognise, challenge and respond effectively to discriminatory language, behaviour and prejudice relating to any protected characteristic.

Principle 9. - The school fosters a shared sense of cohesion and belonging and intends that its policies and procedures should benefit society as a whole. The school will strive to ensure that all pupils, members of staff and school governors feel a sense of belonging within the school and within the wider school community and that they feel respected and are able to participate fully in school and in public life. The school intends that its policies and procedures should benefit society as a whole both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and by promoting greater participation in public life of all individuals from all groups including those with protected characteristics.

- 3.2 The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that pupils, members of staff, governors and members of the wider school community are aware of and conduct themselves in accordance with the Key Principles.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ensuring that the school complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- having due regard to equality considerations when making strategic decisions;
- ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within the school's strategic direction;
- ensuring that the school publishes information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty at least annually;
- agreeing, publishing and reviewing the school's equality objectives at least every four years;
- monitoring progress towards the school's equality objectives;
- ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to prevent and respond to discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
- holding the Headteacher to account for the effective implementation of this policy.

4.2 The Headteacher (with support from the Senior Leadership Team) has responsibility for:-

4.2 The Headteacher, supported by the Senior Leadership Team, is responsible for:

- implementing this policy and promoting a culture of equality, inclusion and respect throughout the school;
- ensuring that the school's equality objectives are actively pursued and that progress towards them is monitored;
- ensuring that equality considerations are taken into account in school policies, practices and decision-making;

- ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors where required;
- ensuring that the school's Accessibility Plan is implemented and reviewed;
- ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and receive appropriate information, support and training;
- ensuring that discrimination, harassment, victimisation, prejudice-related incidents and discriminatory bullying are appropriately challenged, recorded and addressed; and
- reporting to the Governing Body on equality matters as appropriate.

4.3 All members of staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality, inclusion, dignity and respect through their professional conduct and day-to-day practice;
- complying with this policy and relevant equality legislation;
- recognising, challenging and responding appropriately to discrimination, prejudice, bias, stereotyping and discriminatory language or behaviour;
- fostering positive relationships between pupils from different backgrounds and groups;
- promoting an inclusive environment in which all pupils can participate and achieve;
- identifying and raising any equality-related concerns;
- attending relevant training and keeping their knowledge and practice up to date; and
- modelling the school's commitment to equality through their words and actions.

4.4 Pupils will be encouraged and supported to:

- treat others with dignity, kindness and respect;
- value difference and diversity;
- challenge, where it is safe and appropriate to do so, discriminatory or prejudicial language and behaviour;
- understand how to report bullying, discrimination or harassment;
- respect people of different backgrounds, cultures, faiths and beliefs; and
- contribute positively to an inclusive school community.

4.5 Parents, carers, visitors and contractors are expected to support the school's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and to refrain from discriminatory, harassing or otherwise unlawful behaviour while on school premises or participating in school activities.

5. The Equality Act 2010

- 5.1 The Act provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, replacing all the previous UK anti-discrimination laws. The Act defines types of **unlawful behaviour** in relation to persons with **protected characteristics**. The Act applies to all schools and academies including maintained and non-maintained special schools.
- 5.2 The school is committed to meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Further information about the protected characteristics and the forms of conduct prohibited by the Act, including direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation, is provided in Appendix A.

6. The Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.1 The Equality Act 2010 places a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on schools. In exercising its functions, the school will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and

- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

6.2 The school will integrate consideration of equality into its day-to-day activities, decision-making, policies and practices. Equality considerations will be taken into account before and during decision-making and will not be treated as a retrospective or 'tick-box' exercise.

6.3 The school will publish information demonstrating how it complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty and will publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives. Equality information will be reviewed and updated at least annually and equality objectives will be reviewed and published at least every four years.

6.4 The school will give appropriate consideration to the equality implications of significant decisions and of new or revised policies, procedures and practices. This will support the school in identifying and addressing potential disadvantage, removing barriers and promoting equality of opportunity..

6.5 Where appropriate, the school will retain evidence of how equality considerations have informed significant decisions, policies and actions

6.6 The school's equality objectives will be informed by relevant evidence and data and will reflect the equality priorities identified by the school. Objectives will be specific and measurable, agreed by the Governing Body and reviewed regularly to monitor progress.

6.7 The school will publish appropriate equality information and its current equality objectives on the school website in accordance with its statutory duties.

7. Recruitment and training

7.1 All members of school staff who are involved in recruitment will receive appropriate training on equality issues. Decisions concerning staff recruitment will be based on merit apart from in necessary or exceptional circumstances and where exceptions under the Act apply.

7.2 In accordance with provisions in the Act, the school will not enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until after a job offer has been made (unless the questions are related to an intrinsic function of the work for the job). Any necessary health questions will be asked after a job offer has been made and in all cases, any health related questions will be targeted, necessary and relevant to the job applied for.

7.3 The school is committed to ensuring that all members of staff and the school's Governing Body undergo training and development in relation to their duties under the Act and in relation to this policy.

8. Monitoring and review

8.1 The school will review this policy every 2 years

9. Availability of equality information

9.1 The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the whole school community knows about the school's commitment to equality and is aware of the school's equality objectives. This will be done via school communications including the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings, school council meetings and via the school's website.

9. Publication and availability of equality information

9.1 The school will publish information demonstrating how it complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty and will update this information at least annually.

9.2 The school's current equality objectives will be published on the school website and reviewed at least every four years.

9.3 This policy will be available on the school website and a paper copy will be made available on request.

9.4 The school will take reasonable steps to make equality information accessible to members of the school community who may require it in an alternative format.

10. Dealing with breaches

10.1 The school takes allegations of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other breaches of this policy seriously.

10.2 Concerns or complaints will be considered promptly and appropriately in accordance with the school's relevant policies and procedures.

10.3 Where a concern relates to the conduct of a member of staff, it will be addressed in accordance with the appropriate Trust employment procedures. Where it relates to a pupil, it will be addressed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and other relevant policies.

10.4 Serious incidents may also be referred to external agencies where appropriate.

Appendix A – The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from unlawful discrimination in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

Not all protected characteristics apply to pupils in the same way. Age and marriage and civil partnership do not apply to pupils in relation to the provision of education.

The Equality Act prohibits unlawful conduct including direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Additional protections apply in relation to disability, including discrimination arising from disability and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where required to ensure that disabled pupils, staff and other members of the school community are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

The school will have regard to current statutory requirements and relevant Department for Education and Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance when applying the Equality Act 2010.

(f) Faith Schools

As a Catholic school, St Benedict's Catholic Primary School operates in accordance with its Catholic character and ethos and any relevant provisions of equality, education and employment legislation relating to schools with a religious character.