

SAINT CHRISTINA'S SCHOOL: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES (SINGLE EQUALITIES) POLICY

Review Initiated by	Headteacher
Last Review	Summer 2024
Next Review	Summer 2025

This Policy applies to the whole school including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is publicly available on the School website and on request a copy may be obtained from the School Office.

Legal Status:

Prepared with regard to the Equality Act 2010 (inclusive of Schedule 10), the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, Sex Discrimination Act 1986, Children's Act 1989 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Education (independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 in force from 5th January 2015

In our School the term 'staff', in the context of safeguarding, is inclusive of all staff and is also inclusive of children on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietor.

1. Aims

- 1.1. The policy exists in order to ensure that all the provisions of relevant equality laws, and the recommendations of associated codes of practice, are fully observed throughout all areas of Saint Christina's School. Our duties under the Equality Act 2010 include dealing with issues related to pupils with special educational needs/disabilities, and making reasonable adjustments for these pupils. This has implications for the School's Admission Policy. We aim to create and protect a learning environment free from any forms of discrimination, victimisation or harassment. Saint Christina's School celebrates every individual, supporting them to meet their full potential, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, social or ethnic background, nationality, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation.

2. Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- 2.1. Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Governors of Saint Christina's School to have an Accessibility Plan, in writing, which is kept over a prescribed period (currently Autumn Term 2015 to Autumn Term 2020). Which covers:
 - increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum,
 - improving 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
 - improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled. The delivery must be within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.
- 2.2. The Accessibility Plan must be implemented by the Governors, who must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementing the plan. The plan must be kept under review during the period, and, if necessary, revise it.

3. **Definition of Disability:** "A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities."

4. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

- 4.1. Saint Christina's School SEND Policy includes:

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- an explanation of how the individual needs of all children will be met (including how children who are disabled or have special educational needs (SEN) will be included, valued and supported, and how reasonable adjustments will be made for them);
- the name of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO);
- arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices that promote and value diversity and difference.

5. Guiding Principles

5.1. Saint Christina's School is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in respect of all its members. To this end, we take steps to ensure that pupils appreciate racial and cultural diversity, and avoid and resist racism. Fundamental to its life as a school community is the belief that all individuals, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation are of equal value. In order to ensure that our school community is one in which these values flourish, Saint Christina's School is guided by the following principles in relation to Equality. Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHEE), including Social, Moral, Spiritual, Cultural (SMSC) Education, instructs all aspects of school life.

5.2. Principle 1: All learners are valued, and their contributions recognised.

a) Learners are supported and encouraged to maximise their potential and to contribute fully in all areas of school life. Contributions are regularly recognised: on a small scale, through regular verbal and written feedback by teaching staff; on a larger scale, through weekly awards which include academic, creative, dramatic, scientific, musical and sporting achievement, as well as dedication to the weekly school qualities of School Spirit Awards. Children enter national competitions and gain prizes at the annual prizegiving. We aim to give every pupil a sense of achievement and fulfilment regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, national origin, national status, sex, gender, religious or non-religious affiliation, sexual orientation or gender identity. Mindful of our tradition within the Christian community of the British Isles, we are also fully committed to the fundamental ethical principles of:

- Consideration for others
- Awareness of the importance and celebration of each and every individual within the School community
- The need to respond generously to the needs of those less economically fortunate than ourselves.

b) School assemblies which can, at times, be taken by visiting speakers will cover themes of shared concern and are not biased in respect of any religion, denomination or gender. Just as cultural and religious diversity within the School community is to be valued, so it is important that the life and direction of individual religious groups should be supported within the context of Saint Christina's School.

5.3. Principle 2: Diversity is recognised and respected.

a) Treating people with respect and consideration, in accordance with Principle 1, does not necessarily mean that everyone should be treated identically. We aim to treat members of our school community with the utmost consideration and respect, and in doing so will approach their life situations, experiences and problems with a personalised and differentiated response in accordance with their particular needs. We will also recognise and respond to problems that people may face, and will recognise and work to eliminate discrimination, in relation to:

- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Sex
- Gender
- Religion, belief or faith background

- Sexual Orientation
 - Gender identity
- b) And as relevant:
- Pregnancy/maternity
- c) And in relation to employment:
- Age
 - Marriage/civil partnership
- d) The Trustees/Governors will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.
- e) Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.
- f) Saint Christina's School fully acknowledges its moral duty (as related to the United Kingdom's Race Relations Act, 1976, Section 1) to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between members of different racial groups and it positively welcomes any communal or educational opportunities afforded by the school's cultural and religious diversity. All members of the School (whether of the student body, teaching or support staff) deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and with a sensitive understanding of their religious, cultural and racial differences and of the consequences thereof. Racially abusive language by children or staff will not be tolerated. If racial, religious or cultural elements are discovered to be present in incidents of bullying, these must be acknowledged and challenged. Racially abusive language by staff or children will be a matter for disciplinary action.
- g) Special leave for religious reasons will not be unreasonably refused by the School. Applications for such leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher giving at least a month's notice. Any special leave granted will be treated as unpaid leave; part-time employees may be given the option of making up lost time if this would benefit the School. School lists are organised chronologically or alphabetically, rather than by gender (unless this is required by an outside agency for a particular purpose). Equal opportunities will be considered when grouping children for activities. This may involve specific grouping to ensure that every child participates fully (e.g. by attainment). Each child will be given opportunities to exercise responsibility within the classroom or the school, with care taken regarding stereotyping of roles. We see boys and girls as both carers and leaders. When lining up, boys and girls are mixed (within their own class). A quiet area in the Library and Playground is provided for those who prefer less boisterous activities at break times.

5.4. Principle 3: Everyone is welcomed and made to feel comfortable within our school community

- a) Our policies and practices should work to ensure that relations between different individuals and identity groups within school are positive, cordial and tolerant. This includes the promotion of:
- Positive attitudes, knowledge and understanding towards disability.
 - Positive attitudes, knowledge and understanding of different ethnicities, cultures, religions, races and nationalities.
 - Positive attitudes and mutual respect between boys and girls; women and men; and an intolerance of any sexual, homophobic or gender-based prejudice.
- b) We welcome all applicants to join the school, whatever the background or physical disability of a child. We also seek to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. We take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people

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with disabilities. 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 affects the school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively and with respect for the child's cultural traditions. We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups. We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

5.5. Principle 4: Saint Christina's School follows best practice in staff recruitment, retention, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and cessation of employment.

- a) All policies and practices adopted by Saint Christina's School should be of benefit to employees and potential employees, in all areas of recruitment, promotion, retention, CPD, discipline, dismissal and redundancy. Employees and potential employees should receive equal opportunities in these areas, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation. As relevant, employees and potential employees should be given equal opportunities regardless of pregnancy, maternity, marriage/civil partnerships. Being a committed equal opportunities employer, Saint Christina's School will take every possible step to ensure that employees are treated equally and fairly in respect of these matters, be they staff or pupil, and Saint Christina's School challenges stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs. Equally, employees are expected to act professionally, discreetly and respectfully, keeping matters confidential, that pertain to their specific roles. (Reference Staff Code of Conduct.)
- b) All pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school, and we are always striving to remove all forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning. All policies and practices will conform to the principle of equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career development, discipline and dismissal, and redundancy.

5.6. Principle 5: We will recognise and address inequalities and barriers that already exist. Saint Christina's School aims to foster an environment in which inequalities in any form are not manifest in our community. We will, however, commit to recognising any forms of inequality that do arise, and will work to combat these in the most effective manner possible.

Anti-Racism:

- a) 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 act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident. We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of different cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.
- b) Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. Should anyone at our school be a victim of racism, we will do all we can to support that person in overcoming any difficulties they may have.
- c) The following are some ideas on how racism can be combatted:
 - Pupils' names should be pronounced correctly and nicknames should be the prerogative of the nicknamed.
 - Attention should be paid to spelling names correctly at all times.
 - Literature in school should include names from a wide variety of cultures.
 - Racist language must be categorically rejected.
 - Racial stereotypes should never be used or allowed. Those in classical literature must be made explicit to pupils and contextualised.
 - Bi-lingual pupils and parents must be allowed to nominate an interpreter when necessary.

- Lack of fluency in the English language should not be used as an indication of academic potential.

Sex:

- No pupil should be excluded from receiving the curriculum on the basis of their sex.
- No privileges must be reserved for pupils on the basis of their sex.

Background:

- Assumptions should not be made about pupils' home circumstances or potential based on their social background.
- Pupils must be allowed to talk in their natural dialect as and when they need to.
- Direct speech in children's work may reflect dialect, particularly in the lower part of the school, before punctuation differentiates speech in written work.

5.7. Principle 6: The wider community and society should benefit from our policies and practices.

- We intend that our policies and practices contribute to the creation and maintenance of a diverse, tolerant and socially cohesive community. We view Saint Christina's School as playing a part in the creation of such communities at a school, local, regional and national level. We aim to encourage the active participation of all individuals and groups in society and in public life, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation. We intend to promote a society in which discrimination, victimisation and harassment on the basis of any perceived 'difference' is not tolerated.

5.8. Principle 7: On-going review and appraisal.

- Saint Christina's School is committed to regular review of its equalities policy, which will be evaluated and edited in the light of public research; individual comments and/or complaints; quantitative and qualitative information gathered by the school. Saint Christina's School is open to feedback and response on all matters related to its equalities policy from all stakeholders, including pupils, staff, parents, and Trustees/Governors.

5.9. Procedures for addressing discriminatory behaviour

5.9.1 Definitions

- Discrimination:** treating one person less favourably than another on the grounds of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability, marital status or sexual orientation.
- Harassment:** any unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It can be persistent or isolated and includes behaviour which induces anger, stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the person being harassed. It can be physical, verbal, direct or indirect and can include gestures, intimidation, unwelcome remarks, suggestions, propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and 'banter'. In addition, non-verbal harassment can include offensive literature, pictures, graffiti, isolation, non-cooperation or unwelcome physical conduct. The school will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying: such behaviour is totally unacceptable and the School looks to support any employee who is suffering from harassment. The School strives to provide a neutral working environment in which no-one feels threatened or intimidated.

- c) **Victimisation:** treating one person less favourably than another on the grounds that that he or she has brought discrimination proceedings, given evidence or information regarding discrimination proceedings or alleged discrimination or because he or she intends to do any of these acts.
- d) **Unwanted Behaviour:** If you feel that you have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised in breach of the principle of equal opportunities set out above, you are entitled to complain using the procedures set out below.

5.9.2 Informal Resolution

- a) **Stage 1:** You should speak or write to the individual concerned informing him or her that their behaviour is unwelcome.
- b) **Stage 2:** If the unwanted behaviour continues, you should ask the Headteacher to speak to the person concerned.
- c) **Stage 3:** If the unwanted behaviour continues, you should keep a record of any relevant incidents and consider taking formal action as set out below.:

5.9.3 Formal Procedure

- a) **Formal notification:** If you feel that the informal procedure has not stopped the unwanted behaviour or that the behaviour is too serious to be resolved by using that procedure, you should follow the formal parts of the School's Grievance Procedure. You will be entitled to an appeal against any decision in accordance with the Grievance Procedure. Under the Grievance Procedure, any grievance will be investigated thoroughly by an impartial member of management. Where possible, the member of staff complaining of harassment or discrimination will be kept anonymous. Any mischievous, vexatious or malicious claims of harassment of any nature will be regarded as gross misconduct.
- b) **Roles and Responsibilities:** All staff and stakeholders should recognise that they have a specific role and responsibility in their day-to-day work to:
 - promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
 - challenge inappropriate language and behaviour;
 - tackle bias and stereotyping;
 - respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and report these;
 - highlight to the senior leadership team any staff training or development that they require to carry out the above role and responsibilities;
 - promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
 - work to promote anti-bullying strategies;
 - respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and understand the action needed to report these.
- c) **Your Responsibilities**
 - Every employee is required to assist Trustees/Governors and the whole school to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.
 - Employees should be aware that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.
 - Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or parents and their families are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.
- d) **The Role of the Headteacher**

- It is the Headteacher's role to implement the school's equal opportunities and anti-racist policy.
- It is the Headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The Headteacher ensures that all recruitment and selection processes give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The Headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays shown around the school.
- The Headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness.

e) **The Role of the Class Teacher**

- The class teacher ensures that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child. When selecting classroom material, the class teacher should pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.
- When designing schemes of work, we use this policy to guide us, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues. So, for example, History topics in our school include examples of the significant contributions women have made to developments in this country's history. In Geography topics the teacher attempts to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.
- All our teachers challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any serious incidents in the school Serious Misbehaviour Book, and draw them to the attention of the Headteacher.

5.10. **Equality of Opportunity: Employment Code of Practice:** Saint Christina's School is an equal opportunities employer, and aims to implement best practice in this area.

- a) **Recruitment:** All newly created posts will normally be advertised externally as appropriate to the position in question. Our aim in doing this is to encourage suitable applicants from a broad range of backgrounds. In observing equal opportunities practice, Saint Christina's School will also make clear in employment advertisements and application packs our exemption under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act as part of our Child Protection commitments.
- b) **Selection of Candidates:** We will clearly define requirements for selection in the job descriptions sent to candidates as part of the employment application process. Selection criteria for employment will be objective, job-specific and carefully assessed as necessary to the fulfilment of the position. Applications are made on a standard form allowing all applicants to submit information in a standardised format. Interviewing and short-listing will be carried out in a consistent and fair manner across all positions and departments within the school, in order to ensure an equitable and non-discriminatory practice. Selection methods for interviewing and short-listing will be objective and directly relevant to the nature of the vacant position. Interviewing must only be carried out by suitably qualified and prepared panels of staff.
- c) **Existing Workforce:** The school will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.
- d) **Job Applicants Equality Profile:** Saint Christina's School will regularly monitor the ethnic / gender / age / disability profile of job applicants applying to the school throughout the main stages of recruitment

(application, short-listing, and interview) using the information voluntarily provided by applicants in the personal information section of the job application form. This is the responsibility of the Bursar.

- e) **Employee Training and Development:** Saint Christina's School is committed to equality of opportunity in terms of access to CPD and training to increase employees' knowledge, skills and professional awareness in order that they are more readily able to fulfil their full professional potential.

- f) **Grievances Following Termination of Your Employment:** An employee who wishes to raise a grievance following the termination of their employment will use the School's existing Grievance Procedure.

Related Documents:

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Curriculum Policy and Special Educational Needs
- Employment Manual
- E Safety
- First Aid and medication
- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and Procedures
- Inclusion Policy
- Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHEE)
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Risk Assessment
- Safeguarding Children - Child protection
- Safer Recruitment
- Staff Handbook and Procedures Manual
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy

APPENDIX 1

Strategies used in School to help equal opportunities practice

- Planning activities of a non-stereotypical nature
- Giving children time to talk in class discussions to give everyone opportunity to voice opinion and discuss how they are feeling.
- Encouraging the sharing of experiences.
- Reviewing and updating resources so that appropriate messages are presented to the children.
- Planning role play experiences to include addressing age, disability, race and gender.
- Providing a differentiated curriculum by using classroom approaches that cater for individual differences but which do not make distinctions that have negative effects on children, their learning and development.
- Displays around the School promoting positive equality issues.
- Children encouraged to think about the exclusion of others and the negative effect it can have.
- Using assembly time and collective worship themes to reinforce equal opportunity issues.
- Using targets and rewards for children to reinforce good behaviour and attitudes.
- Subject leaders to address equality issues within their subject.
- Giving children a voice e.g. through the School Council.
- Sharing various religious celebrations throughout the year.
- Holding culture celebration days and masses e.g. International Mass.
- Charitable fundraising events