

Larmenier & Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Equality Policy

Date: May 2017

Next Review: May 2018

Responsibility: Parents, Pupils & Community Committee

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Jesus taught his disciples the greatest commandment by word and example:
'Love one another; just as I have loved you'. (John 13: 34)

The values imparted to the pupils at Larmenier & Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School are based on this '*Gospel of Love*'. The school is an inclusive school where all members of the community are valued equally. The school demonstrates its commitment to this by prioritising the faith, well-being and progress of every child and by striving to ensure that all members of the community are treated with fairness and equality.

The school believes that the Equality Act provides a framework to support its commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that the school continues to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups represented in the school.

The approach to equality at Larmenier & Sacred Heart is based on the following 7 key principles:

1. The school respects that all learners are unique, created in God's image and of equal value; whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation. The school is committed to treat every person with equality of esteem and respect and dignity due to a child of God.
2. The school recognises people of different identities and understands that diversity is a strength which should be valued, respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit the school. It takes account of differences and strives to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation.
3. The school fosters positive Catholic attitudes and relationships. It actively promotes positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. The school fosters a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. It wants all members of the school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life. The school recognises that it is important to help pupils understand their own ethnic identity and cultural heritage as well as helping them to understand that of others, irrespective of whether the school serves or is located in an ethnically diverse community.

5. The school observes good equalities practice for the staff. It ensures that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.

6. The school has the highest expectations of pupils. It expects that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential. The school aims to prepare pupils to serve as witnesses to these moral and spiritual values in the wider world.

7. The school works to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable. It believes that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises aspirations and standards across the whole school.

2.0 PURPOSE OF POLICY

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as ‘protected characteristics’). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils, staff, parents and carers or treat them less favourably because of their gender, race, disability, age, religion or belief, gender reassignment or sexual orientation. Pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership are also ‘protected characteristics’, which are covered by this policy, but not as part of the school provisions related to pupils.

This policy and related procedures are based on the guidance of the Catholic Education Service (CES).

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties:

a) **The Public Sector Equality Duty or ‘general duty’** requires all public organisations, including schools to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
3. Foster good relations between different groups.

b) **The two ‘specific duties’** that are required by all public organisations, including schools to do are:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about the school’s approach to promoting equality.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICY

When developing the policy, the school took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 (DfE, May 2014) and also the latest OFSTED inspection framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards. The school understands OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs (SEND).

4.0 LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION

Although this policy is the key document for information about the school's approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the school ensures that information about responsibilities under the Equality Act are also met in the School Development Plan priorities, and self-evaluation review. These are communicated to relevant members of the school community through staff meetings, letters to parents and other communications.

The school's responsibilities under the Equality Act also inform policy and practice with regards to the school's key policies such as; teaching and learning, behaviour and discipline, admissions, SEND and anti-bullying. The Equality Act also informs the role of the Governing Board, the whole staff, the Senior Leadership Team and School Council.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers and the school's recruitment procedures comply with the responsibilities placed on the school.

5.0 GENERAL DUTY

1. Eliminating Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

The school takes account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions, the way it provides education for the pupils and the way it provides access for pupils to facilities and services.

The school is aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils, which is designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled pupils being placed at a disadvantage compared to their nondisabled peers.

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors (personnel link) ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

The school takes seriously the need to consider the equality implications when it develops, adapts and reviews any policy or procedure and whenever it makes significant decisions about the day to day life of the school.

The school actively promotes equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which encourages respect for all.

Under the terms of the Equality Act of 2010, schools with a religious character have certain exceptions to the religion or belief provision. As a Catholic School priority is given in admissions to Baptised, practising Catholics in line with the Admissions Code, this priority is only applied as part of the school's oversubscription criteria.

The admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and the school does not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their gender, race, or disability. In principle, this also includes sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, however in regards to pupils of primary school age, these will rarely apply.

Wherever these protected characteristics do apply either in regards to new pupils or their parents / carers, the school will not treat their applications for a place in the school less favourably.

The school policies on behaviour and exclusions take full account of the new duties under the Equality Act.

In line with the SEN Code of Practice 2014 the school makes reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. It closely monitors data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and takes action promptly to address concerns.

The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling its commitment to inclusion and equality:

- There is guidance for all staff on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. The school treats all bullying incidents equally seriously.
- It keeps a record of different prejudice-related incidents and when appropriate provides a report to the Governing Board about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at the school and how it dealt with them.

2. Advancing Equality of Opportunity between Different Groups

The school knows the needs of its pupils very well and collects and analyses data in order to inform the planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.

The school works in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals, to identify children who have a disability through its admissions for new starters. The “All about Me” form requests key information on pupils needs (medical, SEND).

The school collects data and monitors progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and uses this data to support school improvement. It takes action to close any gaps, for example, for those pupils making slow progress in reaching age related expectations in English and maths.

Teachers use a range of teaching strategies that ensure they meet the needs of all learners and targeted support is provided to support pupils at risk of underachieving. The school avoids the use of language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils’ achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as ‘less able’.

The school ensures equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

The school also collects, analyses and uses data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups and works with the local authority Early Help Service to reduce persistent unauthorised absences.

The school website provides a link to the Department for Education (DfE) website which provides data on the school population by gender, the percentage of pupils identified as having English as an Additional Language (EAL), SEND or classified as disadvantaged.

The Governing Board reviews the Schools Accessibility Plan every 3 years, in line with DfE guidance and makes reasonable adjustments to increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum, to improve the physical environment and to improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils and other users of the school premises.

3. Fostering Good Relations

The school prepares pupils for life in a diverse society and ensures that there are activities across the curriculum that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils by:

- Teaching about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through the PSHE programme and across the curriculum.
- Using materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- Promoting a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- Promoting opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- Acknowledging the contribution of different cultures to world history.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.
- Promoting positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors and whole school events, e.g. Black History Month.

The school also addresses equality issues by:

- Maintaining records of any training relating to the equalities agenda
- Maintaining records of minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed
- Having a rolling programme for reviewing all school policies and assessing their impact on achieving equality for all the school community
- Reviewing relevant feedback from parent questionnaires and consultations, parents-teacher meetings and other formal / informal feedback from parents and carers
- Analysing responses from staff feedback, staff meetings and training events
- Reviewing feedback and responses from the School Council, PSHE lessons and whole school surveys on pupils' attitudes
- Responding to issues raised in Annual Reviews, Individual Education Plans and pupil progress meetings as well as issues raised by teachers and support staff
- Gathering feedback members of the Governing Board and from the Governing Board's committees
- Giving due regard to equality issues when deciding objectives for the School Development Plan.

Our 'specific duties'

1. Publishing information to show compliance with the Equality Duty

The school meets this duty by publishing this document on the school website and by providing links to DfE sites where school statistics and attainment data is available.

2. Publishing Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable

The objectives identified represent the school's priorities and are the outcome of a review of and analysis of data and other evidence. These objectives may be part of the School Development Plan or may be additional to it. The school's Equality objectives are published on the school website.

6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with current equalities legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

Every Governing Board committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors review the Equality Policy annually.

Headteacher & Leadership Team

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes.

Teaching & Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Plan and deliver lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that promote positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- Maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils, support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may find aspects of academic learning difficult
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work
- Receive training and guidance in school on equalities as part of the induction procedure for all new staff. Senior Leaders will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year. Attendance at training will be recorded and all new and existing staff members will receive copies of the school's Equality Duty policy.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support the commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF

The school is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability, and in compliance with the law.

As an employer the school strives to ensure that it eliminates discrimination and harassment in the employment practice and actively promotes equality across all groups within its workforce. The school respects the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and complies with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. The school ensures that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development in line with the school's improvement priorities and Appraisal Policy.

8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY

The school reviews the information about equalities in this policy annually and makes adjustments as appropriate.

9.0 SHARING THE POLICY

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives is available on the school website. Reference to the policy is made in the Staff Handbook, as part of the induction for new staff and when appropriate to parents via school communications.

The school ensures that the whole school community knows about the policy, objectives and data through the school website and by providing a hard copy of the policy on request.