



St Ursula's Convent School

A Humanities College and Teaching School

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

St Ursula's Convent School's recognises its statutory duties to promote equality through the **Equality Act 2010** and emphasises that the school opposes all forms of discrimination in relation to gender (sex and reassignment), age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The **Equality Act 2010** replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.

The contents are intended to outline the policies and procedures which are in place in this school in order to ensure compliance with the Act along with further information on the evidence that will be made public.

2010 Single Equality Act

The overriding principle of all equality legislation is generally one of equal treatment for all peoples, regardless of race, sex, age or disability.

The 2010 Single Equality Act replaces and supercedes all existing equality legislation including the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law.

The purpose of implementing the single equality scheme is:

- To articulate the school's commitment to equality which permeates all school policies and practices
- To ensure that everyone who belongs to, or comes into contact with, our school community is valued and respected
- To promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- To comply with statutory duties under equalities legislation in one document

The Public Sector Equality Duty extends schools' equality duties to all protected characteristics, previously known as equality strands

- Race
- Disability
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Age
- Religion or belief
- Sex and Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment

Race - includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. The Equality Act replaces the *Race Equality Duty*.

Disability – the disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the general definition of disability is less restrictive. Failure to make reasonable adjustments can no longer be defended as justified. Schools are under a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not supplied through Special Educational Needs statements. The Act replaces the *Disability Equality Duty*. Schools generally must try to ensure that disabled pupils and employees play as full a part as possible in school life. The

reasonable adjustment duties on schools are intended to complement the accessibility planning duties and the existing SEN statement provisions which are part of education legislation. Schools are required to carry out accessibility planning for all disabled stakeholders and must implement these accessibility plans.

Sex – pupils and employees of one sex must not be singled out for different or less favourable treatment. Gender equality must still be promoted but this Act replaces the *Gender Equality Duty*. The Act makes an exception to single sex sporting activities, when a judgement should be made as to the physical disadvantages of particular groups of pupils.

Religion or belief – is defined by the Act as being any religion or belief including philosophical belief. The lack of religion or belief is also a protected characteristic. Religions include all major faith groups and denominations or sects. Belief includes non-religious worldviews such as humanism but not political beliefs such as communism.

Sexual orientation – refers not only to the pupils' and employee's sexual orientation but also to the children and partners of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual partners. It is recognised that many people's views on sexual orientation and sexual activity are grounded in their religious beliefs but this is not accepted as an excuse for allowing discrimination to continue.

Gender reassignment – this is a new provision for pupils. It is acknowledged that it is relatively rare for pupils to be in a programme for gender reassignment, but if a pupil has chosen to go along this route, it is acknowledged that a number of issues may arise which would need to be sensitively handled.

The Equality Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour –

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation

The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil –

- In relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for its pupils
- In the way it provides pupils with access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

New positive action provisions allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantage experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics. The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in that it protects disabled people and allows schools to treat disabled pupils and employees more favourably than non-disabled pupils and employees. The reasonable adjustment duty will be extended to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils and employees.

The Government has also introduced new specific duties, intended to help public bodies to meet their obligations under the PSED. The PSED is set out on the face of the Act, while the specific duties are set out in secondary legislation – the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.

The emphasis is on transparency – making information available so that the school's local community can see how the school is advancing equality in line with the PSED and what objectives it is using to make this happen.

A large amount of data is already collected by schools in RAISE online, which presents performance data for schools broken down by a number of relevant characteristics and which includes comparative analysis with national statistics.

We monitor and analyse pupil performance by ethnicity, disability and special educational needs. Any disparities which are identified will be addressed through targeted curriculum planning, teaching and support.

Curriculum

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.

The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- Pupils learning English as an additional language
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups
- Pupils who are gifted and talented
- Pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils with a disability
- Pupils who are in public care
- Pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion
- Lesbian, gay or questioning young people

The following areas are key elements of the school's assessment and tracking programme:

- Pupils' attainment – analysis of end of key stage results for pupils of particular groups, e.g. SEN, FSM, ethnicity
- The quality of particular groups of pupils' learning and the progress they make throughout the school
- The extent to which different groups of pupils feel safe (e.g. Incidents of prejudiced based bullying recorded)
- The extent to which pupils from particular groups adopt healthy lifestyles
- The extent to which pupils from particular groups contribute to the school and the wider community/extended school activities, participation on school trips for particular groups of pupils)
- Attendance data for all pupils and for particular groups (e.g. extended leave/mobility issues for particular groups)
- The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents/carers of particular groups of pupils (e.g. attendance at parents' meetings, involvement in planning provision, consultation with, results of parental feedback)

Equality Aim

The Governing Body will seek to ensure that discrimination does not take place against anyone, either staff or pupil, on the grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins.

As a school:

- We believe that all pupils have the right to the best education we can provide, with access to the full range of educational activities.
- We believe that all staff, teaching and support, have the right to equal opportunities of employment and will not be discriminated against as a result of gender, sexual orientation, race religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins.
- We do not tolerate any form of racism or discriminatory behaviour and will act immediately to deal with and prevent any further incidents.
- We promote a culture of fairness and justice to all.
- We aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.
- We are committed to equality, justice and recognition of the unique value of every member of the school community.
- We strive to develop pupils who are confident, strong and self-affirming and who are generous towards other identities and cultures.

- We will not permit anyone, either staff or pupil, to subject another to harassment or to create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- We will not allow behaviour which violates another's dignity.
- We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all members of our community.

The Governing Body:

- The Governing Body will ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school and will seek to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form a barrier to learning. They are committed to preparing the pupils of the school for life in a multicultural society and are totally opposed to racism and all other forms of oppressive behaviour.
- The Governing Body will ensure that the curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for all individuals and cultural groups. We will encourage the pupils to explore fully the origins and differences of all religions, nationalities and ethnicities in order to develop their better understanding of the world wide community.
- The Governing Body will ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide equal opportunities for everyone to achieve their potential regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality.
- The Governing Body will ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the school environment gives equal access to people with disabilities.
- The Governors recognise that it is vital that all staff, teaching and non-teaching, understand the need for the promotion of equality in education. They will seek to ensure that suitable training and support is given to members of the school staff to fulfil their professional duties in line with school policy.
- The Governing Body will be sensitive to support all cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds of the school staff.
- The school records any incidents of racist behaviour and will report the number and nature of any incidents to the Governing Body.

The Head Teacher:

- will ensure that this Equality Policy is adhered to throughout the management, curriculum and ethos of the school community.
- will ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy and that all staff apply the guidelines fairly in all situations.
- will ensure that the school curriculum promotes respect for other cultures, religions and nationalities and will ensure that all classrooms resources and materials reflect the diverse nature of the school community and have respect for the sensitivities of all members of the class.
- will ensure that all appointments made to the school will have given due regard to the policy and that no-one is discriminated against on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic or national origins.
- will have strategies in place to deal with any incident and recognises that these may take many forms including verbal or physical acts, rejection, unwelcome and negative comments.
- will treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist or discriminatory incidents with due seriousness.
- will present a termly report to the Governing Body on the nature and number of any such incidents.

School Staff will:

- accept that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy and procedures
- make known any queries or training requirements
- know how to deal with incidents of concern, and how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping

- be aware of the procedures for reporting incidents of racism, harassment or other forms of discrimination
- ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity
- keep themselves up to date with relevant legislation and attend training and information events organised by the school
- ensure that pupils from all groups are included in all activities and have full access to the curriculum
- promote equality and diversity through teaching and through relations with pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

Pupils will:

- be made aware of any relevant part of the policy, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with any relevant part of the scheme
- experience a curriculum and environment which is respectful of diversity and difference and prepares them well for life in a diverse society
- understand the importance of reporting prejudiced based bullying/ incidents
- ensure the peer support programme within the school promotes understanding and supports pupils who are experiencing discrimination.

Monitoring and review:

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the Equality Policy and for ensuring its effectiveness in the daily life of the school community. The monitoring process will include:

- Reviewing all school appointments to ensure the policy has been fairly applied
- Requiring the Headteacher to present a termly report to the Governors on any incidents covered by the Policy
- Monitoring the progress of pupils of protected characteristics
- Taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunities from parents/carers, staff or pupils and the wider school community
- Monitoring all school policies to ensure that they are fairly applied to all staff, pupils and the wider school community

When necessary the Governing Body will initiate an investigation into any reported incidents. All such actions of the Governing Body will be recorded appropriately.

Equality Objective 2018-2019

The 2010 Equalities Act requires Public bodies to publish at least one equality objective. For most schools, including ourselves, the requirement is in respect of students. An objective would be required relating to staff if we had more than 150 FTE employees. Following discussion at senior level and the whole staff, we have set the following objective:

‘To deliver LGBTQ training to staff and raise awareness of the issues within LGBTQ and pupils who may be experiencing gender identity’

Notes:

Equality Legislation

This equality scheme responds to the current equalities legislation.

- The 2010 Single Equality Act is the overarching legislation for all equality duties.

The act serves two main purposes:

- a) To harmonise discrimination law;
- b) To strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

The act supersedes or strengthens the following acts and regulations:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Employment Equality (Religion & Belief and Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act 2006 Part 2
- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

Overview of previous equalities legislation which has been harmonised and strengthened by

Equality Act 2010:

- Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976/2000

Statutory positive duty to promote racial equality, promote good race relations and eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;

- Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 (and Regulations 1999), Gender Equality Duty 2007

Statutory positive duty to promote gender equality and eliminate unlawful gender discrimination;

a) Employment Equality (religion or belief) (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003 extended to education, Equality Act (Part 2) 2007 The Act sets out that is

b) unlawful for schools to discriminate against a person;

a) In the terms on which it offers to admit him/her as a pupil:

b) by refusing to accept an application to admit him/her as a pupil, or

c) where he/she is a pupil of the establishment:

c) in the way in which it affords him/her access to any benefit, facility or service,

ii) by refusing him/her access to a benefit, facility or service,

iii) by excluding him/her from the establishment,

iv) by subjecting him/her to any other detriment.

- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995/2005

Statutory positive duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: pupils, staff, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to, and eliminate unlawful discrimination;

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, duty to promote community cohesion

Previous policy reviewed and objective updated.