



# Equality information and objectives policy

St Ursula's Convent School

<b>Approved by:</b>	The Governing Body	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Ownership:</b>	Ursula Norbert	<b>Headteacher</b>
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## Contents

1. Aims .....	3
2. Legislation and guidance .....	3
3. Equality Statement .....	3
4. Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 .....	4
5. Roles and Responsibilities .....	5
6. How and when this policy applies .....	5
7. Eliminating discrimination .....	6
8. Advancing equality of opportunity .....	7
9. Staff Training .....	8
10. Breaches of this Policy .....	8
11. Fostering good relations .....	8
12. Equality considerations in decision-making .....	9
13. Equality objectives .....	10
14. Monitoring arrangements .....	11
15. Links with other policies .....	11

## 1. Aims

St Ursula's Convent School aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Our school aims to promote respect for difference and diversity in accordance with our values. We oppose all forms of discrimination in relation to gender 6 and reassignment age disability religion or belief and sexual orientation. Our mission is to create a caring Catholic community, allowing everyone to develop and share in the love of Christ, serving the world of today and tomorrow through the relationships we make and the service we provide to others.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

## 3. Equality Statement

The principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010 and Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011) will inform all of our decisions and policy making. This Equality Statement and Action Plan combine the school's approach to promoting equality in our policies and procedures and, most importantly, in our day-to-day practices and interactions within the whole school community.

Our Equality Statement sets out how the school integrates our statutory duties in relation to those with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act (2010) which covers:

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Under the Equality Act, schools designated with a religious character are exempt from the requirement not to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief, in relation to admissions, in the provision of education

and in access to any benefit, facility or service. This means that schools with a religious character do not have to make special provision for pupils of a different faith or incorporate aspects of their faith into the curriculum.

Our Equality Statement and Action Plan also set out the action we will take to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

We will continue to meet our statutory duties by setting new Equality Objectives at least every four years and by reporting annually on the progress of the Equality Statement.

## 4. Compliance with the Equality Act 2010

- The school will provide training and updates to all staff to outline the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the school's Public Sector Equality Duties
- The school has an equality statement that is included in all vacancy advertisements
- The school monitors students' performance to assess whether or not they are achieving their full potential and to target support where it is needed
- Tracking of individual students' progress at least at two points in the year
- Monitoring of vulnerable students through the weekly Pastoral Team Meetings
- In conjunction with the Accessibility Policy, information on disability is collected for new students joining the school and suitable adjustments are made to improve the provision of services.
- Students with SEND have a review meeting at least annually. At this meeting, the students and their parents discuss ways in which the school can help them further. The information from these meetings is reviewed by the SENCO and the member of SLT with responsibility for Inclusion so that action can be taken to address any needs.
- Students with protected characteristics take part in school trips equally as their peers without protected characteristics
- Students with protected characteristics also participate in extracurricular activities, including school drama performances, talent shows and sporting activities, equally as their peers without protected characteristics
- In addition, there are various lunchtime and after-school activities, including musical, drama and sporting activities attended by all students
- Citizenship lessons include topics about equality, including discrimination or bullying based on disability or sexuality.
- The school's policies are reviewed to make sure that they comply with the Equality Act 2010
- Staff have been provided with advice and guidance on Dyslexia, Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder), managing medical needs, Hearing and Vision Impairment, ASD
- Training has also taken place on specific medical conditions which can fall under the definitions of the Equality Act (e.g., epilepsy, diabetes, asthma, sickle cell anaemia)
- Detailed Individual Education Plans have been drawn up for those students with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Some of these students may have a disability
- SEN information for individual students is accessible to all staff. Regular SEN training is given to staff. This includes detailed briefings about students who are new to the school.
- Work within classes is differentiated if required so that students with SEN or disabilities can access the curriculum.
- Small group interventions are provided by the SENCo and Teaching Assistants, where appropriate
- School staff have been provided with safeguarding training and clear policies and procedures are in place.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Headteacher
- Ensure senior leaders are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Ensure senior leaders report back to the full governing body if there are any issues
- Monitor the extent to which the objectives are being met over the 4 year period and ensure these are updated every 4 years
- Review the equality statement with the Headteacher on an annual basis and make recommendations, as necessary.
- The headteacher will:
  - Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils
  - Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors.
- The designated member of staff for equality will:
  - Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils
  - Support the Headteacher in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary.

All employees and anyone working in partnership with our staff and students are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to this policy and promote St Ursula's Convent School's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Employees should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst on St Ursula's Convent School's related business.

## 6. How and when this policy applies

This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and outside of the workplace that is related to the employee's work or that may impact St Ursula's Convent School's reputation. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

### 6.1 Recruitment and Selection

Selection for employment and promotion will be on the basis of aptitude, experience and potential only, as set out in St Ursula's Convent School's Recruitment and Selection Policy. Steps are being taken, as in the guaranteed interview scheme for internal applicants who are applying for a role for which they meet the essential criteria, to remove obstacles that some employees may face during their career. Further steps will be taken, as and when necessary, to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to development and promotion.

St Ursula's Convent School will capture applicants' diversity demographics as part of its recruitment processes to promote the elimination of unlawful discrimination.

## 6.2 Terms and conditions of employment

Benefits, terms and conditions of employment and facilities available to employees will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

St Ursula's Convent School monitors the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training and promotion opportunities. We will also ensure that requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under our Flexible Working Policy.

St Ursula's Convent School also monitors its use of fixed-term employees, casual and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. The pay and basic working and employment conditions of agency workers will be reviewed against those of permanent employees in comparable roles, in line with the Agency Worker Regulations (AWR) 2011.

## 6.3 Employment relations

St Ursula's Convent School will ensure that disciplinary procedures and sanctions are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action. St Ursula's Convent School will also ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

## 6.4 Learning and Development

All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential, as well as to take advantage of training, development, and progression opportunities.

# 7. Eliminating discrimination

St Ursula's Convent School will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination committed against an employee, contractor, job applicant or visitor because of a protected characteristic. Unjustified discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is a barrier to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights.

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act – for example, during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every September.

The school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, and an equality link governor. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and governors aware of these as appropriate.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. **Direct discrimination** occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the nine protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

**Associative discrimination** is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, when an employee is discriminated against because their son is disabled.

**Perceptive discrimination** is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. For example, when co-workers believe the individual is gay.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when an unjustifiable requirement, condition or practice is applied, which appears to be the same for all, but which has a disproportionate, adverse effect on one group of people. This is discrimination, even though there was no intention to discriminate. For example, a requirement to work full-time adversely affects women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will be considered discriminatory unless it is objectively justified.

**Disability discrimination.** Any employee who has or develops a disability or health condition during their employment with St Ursula's Convent School is encouraged to talk to their line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The line manager may wish to consult with the employee and their medical adviser or Occupational Health about possible adjustments. St Ursula's Convent School will consider the advice carefully and try to accommodate the employee's needs. If a particular adjustment is not considered to be reasonable, St Ursula's Convent School will explain its reasons and try to find an alternative solution wherever possible.

St Ursula's Convent School will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place current or potential employees with disabilities at a substantial disadvantage compared to other employees. Where reasonable, St Ursula's Convent School will take steps to improve access for disabled staff.

**Stereotypes**, which are negative assumptions applied to whole groups of people, have real potential to lead to unjustified discrimination and should be very carefully examined and, if necessary, challenged. Stereotypical and potentially offensive language and terminology should be avoided and challenged if identified.

**Positive discrimination and positive action.** Whilst positive discrimination (which means favourable treatment based on an equality characteristic) remains generally unlawful in the UK, positive action aims to promote equality by improving outcomes for groups who are under-represented or disadvantaged. For example, by specific encouragement to certain groups to take up employment opportunities, or by providing training and development for groups that have traditionally been under-represented to give them better chances of success in the recruitment process to achieve a promotion.

## 8. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies).

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils.

## 9. Staff Training

All employees are expected to complete an equality and diversity training module as part of their induction and to undertake refresher and additional role-specific training as required. Adequate time to do this will be made available within the working day. Along with other policies, this policy is available from the school office.

Senior Leaders will ensure that all employees, contractors and agency staff, including supply teachers, have read and understood this policy and their responsibilities in contributing to equality, diversity and inclusion at St Ursula's Convent School.

Training needs will be identified through regular appraisals, and all employees will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation.

## 10. Breaches of this Policy

Complaints regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Employees who make such allegations in good faith must not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result.

However, false allegations, which are found to have been made in bad faith following an investigation, may be dealt with under St Ursula's Convent School's Disciplinary Policy and procedure.

## 11. Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local community. This includes organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures.



## 12. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- The school keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

## 13. Equality objectives

<b>AIM 1: ELIMINATE UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION</b>			
	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>	<b>Relevant Protected Characteristics</b>
1	Increase staff understanding of 'equality' and implications for all on a daily basis, through Continuing Professional Development.	All staff understand their role with respect to the 'Equality Act' and the implications for their practice.	All Protected Characteristics
2	Make all reasonable adjustments so that all pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors have access to school and all activities.	A clear policy is in place to ensure fair access to opportunities for enrichment, leadership and personal growth and development.	Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment
3	To record and monitor instances of discriminatory bullying or use of discriminatory language in our school and take action to tackle these.	The number of incidents is reducing over time. All such incidents are dealt with swiftly and thoroughly.	All Protected Characteristics
<b>AIM 2: ADVANCE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL</b>			
4	Ensure fair access to the curriculum offer for those with different abilities, including access to appropriate pathways through promoting inclusive practices in teaching and the use of adapted resources and specialist equipment.	A varied curriculum is in place. Achievement gaps between groups are minimal and reducing over time.	Disability, Gender
5	Undertake an analysis of recruitment data and trends with regard to race, gender and disability by July, and report on this to the school's governing body.	The staff population is diverse and representative of the wider community.  BME applications are improving, and we are proactively using images of diverse staff on our website, prospectus and in our recruitment campaigns. Numbers of BME staff increase by 30% by 2025.	Race
6	To continue to improve accessibility across the school site for students, staff and visitors with disabilities.	Increased access points identified; signage for disabled pupils and visitors more visible around the school.	Disability
<b>AIM 3: FOSTER GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE</b>			
7	Ensure opportunities exist in our school curriculum to learn about and celebrate British values including respect for all (irrespective of their culture, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation or gender reassignment).	Assemblies, curriculum topics, enrichment activities visits and visitors reflect the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of our community	All Protected Characteristics
8	Strengthen links between the school and the local community including businesses, charitable organisations and other schools.	Extensive range of external opportunities and involvement for all pupils.	Disability, Sex [i.e. Gender and including issues of pregnancy and maternity], Gender Reassignment; Race, Religion and Sexual Orientation

## **14. Monitoring arrangements**

The Headteacher will update the equality information we publish at least every year.

The objectives will be reviewed by the Governing Body and Headteacher at least every 4 years.

This document will be evaluated by the Governing Body annually.

## **15. Links with other policies**

This document links to the following school policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Accessibility Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy