

Equalities Policy including Opportunity, Race, Gender, Disability and Religion

Introduction

St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School, as our Mission Statement says, is a nurturing community where each person is loved and valued. We believe that every individual is of equal value and the School is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for every person in the school community regardless of sex (including gender reassignment), disability, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity status, religion or belief and race. The school acknowledges the value of being a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual school. Every attempt will be made to ensure that equal opportunities are reflected in all aspects of school life.

St Bernard's School opposes all forms of discriminatory behaviour, such as on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. The School aims to develop a climate which promotes the self-esteem of all members of the community; it requires respect for others and equality of opportunity for all. As a School, we promote positive action to ensure that all members of our community are enabled to make the most of their abilities and qualities. Prejudice and discrimination in any form will be tackled and students, parents and staff must report any incident where they believe these are being exhibited. Students and parents must report any incident to the Form Tutor or Head of Year and staff to their line manager or a member of the senior leadership team.

Equal opportunity is not about treating everybody the same. It is about meeting people's individual needs and appreciating their individual strengths and gifts. We are all different and, as such, should be valued equally. Everything that follows in this statement is to help everyone involved make this establishment a real equal opportunities and inclusive school.

St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School is committed to providing:

- the highest possible quality of education for each individual
- an environment which stimulates and motivates students
- an education that realises the full potential of every individual student
- the necessary support for the development of each individual's spiritual, cultural and personal identity
- an atmosphere in which everyone flourishes, achieves and feels valued
- the required preparation for our students to participate fully in society
- a caring and well-disciplined school.

Within a friendly, caring and stimulating community, St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School will endeavour to educate and prepare its students from diverse backgrounds, cultures, faiths and communities for citizenship in a multiracial and multicultural society.

The values of St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School are grounded on respect for:

- oneself and each other as individuals created equally in the image of God
- working hard and to the best of one's ability and aptitude
- diversity of achievement in all areas of the school's life
- the community and the environment.

A full list of the school's aims can be found in the school prospectus and staff handbook, but those related to equal opportunities are given below:

- to promote equal opportunities for all
- to enable every student to develop his or her aesthetic, cultural, social and physical talents
- to help students consider carefully key moral, religious and spiritual aspects of life
- to help students become considerate and responsible citizens able to make well-informed choices about their future
- to respect the variety and diversity of the backgrounds, cultures and faiths represented in the school community while at the same time valuing the common culture and heritage of which all are part.

These aims form the core principles underpinning this equal opportunities policy. Equal opportunities is concerned with "enabling all individuals to develop their personal qualities and talents to the full, to learn to respond sensitively to ideas and beliefs that may not coincide with their own, and to respect views arrived at by reasoned thinking and argument. It requires that individuals accept the interdependence and common obligations of all human beings" (OFSTED). It is widely accepted that pupils should be prepared for "adult life in multi-cultural, multi-lingual Europe, interdependent with the rest of the world".

The school serves a multi-cultural community and has set itself the task of fostering tolerant, fair-minded attitudes and respect for others and to prepare individuals for citizenship as part of a British, European and world-wide community.

Equality Objectives

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). For schools, this means that it is unlawful to discriminate against students or treat them less favourably because of their age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex or sexual orientation.

Marriage and civil partnerships and age are also 'protected characteristics', but do not apply to our provision for students, though are referred to in staffing and recruitment policies.

Responsibility

The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team of St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School acknowledge their duty to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We strive to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

Objectives

Our Equality Objectives reflect the school's priorities and draw upon available data and other evidence. Careful analysis of this is undertaken in order to ensure that we are working to achieve improved outcomes for different groups.

Our Equality Objectives are:

- To promote cultural understanding and awareness of different religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our school community by ensuring that every class has participated in assembly or form time discussion. We will plan several weekly pastoral themes to further inform and promote understanding across a range of themes. This will be monitored by Heads of Year, Senior Leaders and through student feedback.
- To monitor and promote the involvement of all groups of students in the extracurricular life of the school, including leadership opportunities, especially students with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium. This will be overseen and strategically planned by school leaders and promoted among all groups of pupils.
- To close gaps in attainment between students and all groups of students; especially students eligible for the pupil premium, students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and students from different heritage groups. Data will be carefully analysed and distributed internally and externally (when applicable).
- Specific tasks relating to these objectives can be found within the School Development Plan.

General Policy

- The School condemns racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, extremist behaviour/attitudes, negative attitudes towards disability and discrimination of any kind.
- All students should be helped to develop self-esteem and should feel valued as individuals and children of God.
- Students will be given many opportunities to discuss and understand racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, extremism and other forms of prejudice. It is important that everyone understand the hurt and harm caused by discrimination and prejudice of any kind.
- Students will be able to contribute to the development of equal opportunities and other school policies through the school council.
- Dealing with discriminatory behaviour, abuse and intimidation is the responsibility of everyone - all students and staff can expect to be listened to and have their complaints investigated. If a student or a member of staff feels her or his complaint has not been properly dealt with s/he may take the matter to the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors.
- Students or staff who have suffered racist, sexist, disability, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or other forms of personal verbal or physical abuse or intimidation will be supported by the school and anyone who has committed such offences will be appropriately sanctioned, including possible exclusion, whether on an internal, fixed-term or permanent basis.
- Positive attitudes towards gender, cultural diversity and special needs of all kinds should be included in all curricular, pupil welfare and staff policy statements.
- Pupils should be encouraged to be open-minded and to challenge prejudice and extremism.
- Bullying and harassment of any kind will be dealt with swiftly and may lead to exclusion (students) or dismissal (staff) where any allegation is proven with no extenuating circumstance.

Monitoring

Evidence will be sought to confirm that the policy is promoted effectively to all stakeholders, ensuring that staff, students and parents understand and meet their responsibilities. The effectiveness of the policy will be confirmed by its impact upon the raising of all students' levels of attainment, together with an increased inclusive atmosphere for all stakeholders and towards particular goals such as maintaining the gender/disability/racial balance within the staffing establishment, including at senior level.

The revision of the policy will be ongoing, ensuring the involvement and commitment of the whole school community. The policy will be formally reviewed by the Governing Body biennially.

The school's performance in equalising opportunities will be monitored, including areas such as:

- the use of resources, examination entries and successes, and school leaver destinations.

To meet the Disability Equality Duty it is essential that aspects of school life are monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children and young people with disabilities. The following should be monitored:

- Achievement of students by disability.

Disabled Staff

- The Governing Body will monitor and keep under review its recruitment, appointments, promotions, staff training and other staff policies to ensure there is no overt or covert discrimination. However, the right is reserved, for specific appointments, to recruit either a male or female member of staff to comply with existing legislation (e.g. the supervision of students changing for PE), and to recruit members of the Catholic faith to the posts of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head of Religious Education.

Ethnic and Cultural Issues

- Students should be encouraged to contribute to their own education and to the education of others by bringing their cultural experience, values and perceptions to it.
- Choices of teaching materials should, so far as possible, take account of students' previous experience and knowledge and should recognise multi-cultural perspectives.
- Attention should be given to the integration of students from different ethnic groups in the classroom and throughout the life of the school.

Gender

- Both boys and girls should be encouraged to aim high and to utilise all the opportunities available to them in all areas of the curriculum and school life.
- Careers education should make both girls and boys aware of the full range of opportunities available to them in a modern society.

Background

- It is recognised that students come from a range of backgrounds and action will be taken to ensure that the school offers materially disadvantaged pupils opportunities and facilities to compete equally with their peers. The academic performance of those students in receipt of Pupil Premium is closely monitored to ensure that no gap exists in comparison to their more financially advantaged peers, and where this is not the case, timely and appropriate interventions are put in place to redress the imbalance. Details of how Pupil Premium money has been used to support the students in receipt can be found on the school's website.
- All parents should be made aware of financial help and concessions available in cases of hardship.

Disability

The School will always have due regard to the need to

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others
- Eliminate discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment and results in reasonable adjustments being made where needed
- Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage.

We will embrace all disabilities including those due to cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, multiple sclerosis, hearing or sight impairments, mobility difficulties, mental health or learning difficulties.

A decision will be made each year by the Headteacher, based on the actual number of students and staff who are disabled, as to the method of gathering the perceptions of disabled students and/or their parents and members of staff about the school's equal opportunity provision. The outcomes will be recorded, considered by leadership, reported to Governors and acted upon accordingly.

Physical Disability

- Every effort will be made to integrate students with disabilities into the normal life of the school and the classroom.
- Classroom strategies will be adopted to help students with disabilities.
- The school will continue to improve access for students with mobility disabilities.

Intellectual Ability/Disability

- Each student should be encouraged to fulfil his/her potential in all areas of the curriculum.
- Each student should experience different teaching and learning styles in order to maximise achievement.
- Policies, displays, notices, meals, uniform in the school will all reflect the entire student population in terms of ethnicity, language, race, gender, sexuality and disability. Positive images of students will be used to illustrate the commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities.

Racial Equality

Racist behaviour is differential treatment as a result of ethnic characteristics. The School is committed to eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and is determined to promote equality of opportunity, racial equality and good race relations across all areas of school activity.

Our students are growing up in a multicultural and multiracial society. As well as the benefits received from close interaction with such diversity, they can be subject to various attitudes towards minority groups, and also certain 'images' of these groups as portrayed by the media. Racial prejudice and hostility exist as much, or more, in the 'all-white' parts of Britain as in the multiracial areas.

We aim:

- to promote justice, equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all and thereby allow all members of our community, irrespective of their ethnic origin, to achieve the level of success and self-respect which they deserve, whilst retaining their cultural identity.
- to develop in students an awareness of racism and to establish an environment where school becomes effective in reducing prejudice and raising self-esteem.

- to prepare students for living in a complex multicultural society.
- to provide an environment where racist or extremist assumptions, attitudes and behaviour are continually challenged.
- to provide a curriculum which emphasises the positive aspects of all cultures and religions and to give students the confidence that racism can and must be eradicated.
- to share and understand the cultural and religious diversity and draw upon the school community as a resource to help understand the cultures that exist within and outside our school community.

The teachers will, by careful use of language and choice of resources, avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.

The policies of the school should reflect this commitment. Particular areas of importance include:

- Progress, attainment and assessment
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Student's personal development and pastoral care
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Admissions and attendance
- Curriculum provision
- Religious faith
- Staff recruitment and professional development
- Partnerships with parents and communities.

Action to be taken when racist or other discriminatory behaviour is suspected

If racism or other discriminatory behaviour is suspected we talk to the suspected victim, the person suspected of the behaviour and any witnesses. If a degree of discrimination is identified, appropriate action will be taken. Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to all those involved.

We support those involved in the following ways:

- by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher, or another teacher if they choose.
- by informing the victim's parents/guardians.
- by offering support when they feel they need it and, where necessary, by arranging for them to be escorted to and from the school.

We also discipline, and try to help, those displaying discriminatory behaviour in the following ways:

1. by talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved.
2. informing the parents/guardians of those displaying repeated discriminatory behaviour.
3. by continuing to work with those displaying discriminatory behaviour in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible.
4. the use of appropriate sanction, including all types of exclusion.

Action Plan Disability

1. To continue to track the progress and attainment of students with disabilities and special needs and monitor their public examination results.

Responsibility: RW
Date: Ongoing

2. To continue to ensure that all staff are fully trained to meet the needs of all students with disabilities and special needs.

Responsibility: GB
Date: Ongoing

3. To carry out a curriculum review to ensure that the needs of all students with disabilities and special needs are met.

Responsibility: RJ/DMS/RW
Date: Ongoing

4. To continue to ensure that students with disabilities and special needs are given appropriate access arrangements to and extra time in public examinations and the school's 11+ test.

Responsibility: HDT/Admissions Officer
Date: Ongoing

5. To establish regular meetings of whole school support staff to review the implementation of this policy and ensure that appropriate support is available to all students.

Responsibility: HDT
Date: Ongoing

6. To ensure that the School Council maintains and shares an awareness of the needs of all students with disabilities and special needs.

Responsibility: School Council Coordinator
Date: Ongoing

7. To ensure that capital planning identifies areas where disability access can be improved in a cost-effective manner.

Responsibility: GB
Date: Ongoing

8. To consult parents about the school's provision for students with disabilities and special needs.

Responsibility: HDT
Date: Ongoing

9. To ensure that Governors receive regular training to enable them to carry out their statutory duties in the above areas.

Responsibility: GB
Date: Ongoing

Action Plan Race and Gender

1. To track the progress and attainment of students by ethnic group and gender and monitor their performance.

Responsibility: RW
Date: Ongoing

2. All departments and faculties to review their curriculum provision to foster cultural awareness and to ensure that there is no disadvantage to students in terms of race and gender.

Responsibility: DMS/RW
Date: Ongoing

3. To ensure that the School Council is fully aware of and shares discussions on race and gender issues.

Responsibility: School Council Coordinator
Date: Ongoing

4. To continue to have staff in-service training to increase awareness of race and gender issues.

Responsibility: DMS/HDT
Date: Ongoing

5. To ensure that Governors undertake training in order that they are fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to race and gender issues.

Responsibility: GB
Date: Ongoing

Equal Opportunities

A positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect between students and staff should be fostered, in which all members of the community feel fully acknowledged, safe and valued.

- Staff in the classroom should show awareness of each individual's needs rather than their demands.
- Play and leisure areas should encourage and promote positive and co-operative behaviour among students.
- Every opportunity should be taken to ensure balanced groupings in extra-curricular activities and in the general organisation of students; positive discrimination or intervention by staff may be necessary to bring this in to effect.
- In the classroom, staff should ensure groupings are flexible, varied, mixed and frequently altered.
- All students should have an opportunity to take the lead in group activities.

Opportunities should be made for the spiritual and cultural diversity of each member of the community to be acknowledged, celebrated and valued in public.

- Resources should challenge stereotypes and encourage positive awareness of achievements and abilities of all races, genders and cultures.
- The pastoral system should provide opportunities for teaching and learning about equality and diversity.
- Communication with parents and arrangements for welcoming parents and visitors should be appropriate and accessible to all.

At every level, decisions which affect the running of the school should take into account the equal opportunities policy.

- All staff, students, parents and Governors should be aware of policies and procedures for safeguarding the rights of each individual and for dealing with incidents which violate or threaten those rights.
- Staff development policy, appraisal structures and provision of INSET should work towards ensuring the above.
- Where possible, positive role models should be presented to all students.

Concluding Statement

St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School aims to be a fully inclusive school that meets the individual needs of all our students. This inclusion and this Equalities Policy is the framework within which all our policies are developed. It makes explicit the values of the school and seeks to ensure that all stakeholders are committed to upholding these values. Everyone in the school is of equal value and should have equal opportunities in school and in life. The Governing Body, the Headteacher and the staff recognise their responsibility for making this happen. This means being both flexible and adaptable and we recognise that there is the possibility that the school may have to change in order to meet the needs of individual students or of its staff.

Reference:

The Equality Act (2010)

The Equality Act 2010: Advice for School Leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities (DFE May 2014)

Approved by the Leadership Committee 3rd June 2020

Next Review: Summer 2020