



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Achieving Ambitions

EQUALITIES POLICY

We guide our pupils on to the path to achieving their ambitions.

On their journey, they **Love** one another, **Learn** to achieve excellence, **Laugh** through enriching experiences and **Live** life to the full.

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Approved by Governors	October 2022
Reviewed	September 2022
Next Reviewed	September 2024

Publication of Equality Information and Objectives (Public Sector Equality Duty)

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1 Introduction and context

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is an average sized school. It is situated in an urban area on the outskirts of Brighton.

The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs at school action is in line with the national average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. These pupils' needs mainly relate to speech, language, literacy and numeracy difficulties, and also to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is similar to the national average.

The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average, whilst the proportion speaking English as an additional language is well above the national average.

1.1 Why we have developed this Equality Policy

1.1.1 This Equality Policy for St Mary's Catholic Primary School brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes **all the protected characteristics** covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational, health and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1.1.2 Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

1.1.3 The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- foster good relations between groups and to promote community cohesion
- advance equality of opportunity and
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;

1.1.4 It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

1.2 Our school within the wider context

1.2.1 As a school we are committed to having knowledge of our school community and frequently analyse data which provide evidence of the backgrounds of the members of our school community, and the attainment and wellbeing of our pupils and groups of pupils. We use this data to plan improvements that will benefit our school community.

1.2.2 Contextual data is recorded in our school Self-Evaluation document and in our School Improvement and Development Plan. We use relevant data sources such as the school census, attendance records, attainment, Raiseonline, audits carried out, records of racist and/or bullying incidents.

1.3 Our vision statement about equality

1.3.1 *Our vision statement, "Achieving Ambitions - We guide our pupils on to the path to achieving their ambitions. On their journey, they Love one another, Learn to achieve excellence, Laugh through enriching experiences and Live life to the full."* We aim to enable every child to fulfil their learning potential, with education that meets the needs of each child, and helps every child develop the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed for life and work.

1.3.2 St Mary's Catholic Primary School seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequalities, resolve conflicts peacefully, and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

1.3.3 We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning, and create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same. We believe we all have equal rights, but may have different needs.

1.4 Overall aims of our Equality Policy

1.4.1 We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities. We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and will seek to involve the whole school community in order to ensure better outcomes for all. We aim:

- to promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.
- to promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

1.4.2 We recognise that it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil, prospective pupil or a member of staff by treating them less favourably if they have protected characteristics:

- age (staff only),
- sex,
- race,
- disability,
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment,
- pregnancy or maternity

1.4.3 As a primary school we are aware that some of our pupils will have lesbian/gay parents and carers and some will grow up to be lesbian or gay. In some cases even very young children will have an awareness of their emerging sexual orientation. Therefore we want to ensure homophobic bullying and name-calling is challenged, family diversity acknowledged, and that children are not picked on if they do not conform to a gender stereotype.

1.4.4 We have produced an access plan which addresses our statutory duties to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Our access plan takes into account all members of the school community and is available from the school office.

2 Our approach

2.1 Introduction

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life. We actively seek out opportunities, within and outside the curriculum, to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

2.2 Teaching and learning

We aim to provide **all** our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by the protected characteristics (where possible) and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of the protected characteristics, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own identity and culture and celebrate the diversity within our school community, the local context and wider;
- Seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils?

2.3 Support for pupils / students

2.3.1 Auxiliary Aids

The school endeavours to make reasonable adjustments to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils.

2.3.2 Pastoral Support

Our Special Educational Needs Policy and Behaviour Policy outline support that is available in and outside of school for particular groups of pupils. Some after-school clubs are free to ensure equality of access for all pupils. School outings, Breakfast Club, residential trips and additional activities are subsidised by the School and the PTA to ensure no child is unable to participate due to financial barriers.

2.4 Admissions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on any of the protected characteristics. The Local Authority is our admission authority and the school follows their admissions criteria. The criteria are available on the school's learning platform and contained in the prospectus.

2.5 Exclusions

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

2.6 Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. .

We constantly strive to use opportunities to develop the pupils' awareness and understanding of different religious beliefs and practices through our curriculum, assemblies, special events e.g. Other Faith Week, Christmas Traditions form around the world, school meal menus, after school clubs and educational visits.

2.7 Hiring out our premises

Our lettings policy clearly states that groups contravening the school values and equalities policy would not be eligible to hire rooms or use our grounds.

3 Our Staff

3.1 We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

3.2 This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant (unless specific requirements are intrinsic to the role) until a job offer has been made or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

3.3 We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

3.3.1 We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment. (e.g. Staff with stress related conditions are sign posted to the B&H Counselling scheme. New, appropriate furniture has been provided for members of staff with physical conditions.)

3.3.2 From Brighton and Hove LA we have access to advice and guidance on equalities matters relating to staff through the intranet, bulletins and advice given by HR professionals. Relevant policies are listed below:

Safer Recruitment Toolkit (includes equalities in employment issues in schools)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HR/Pages/SaferRecruitmentToolkitISAVBSInformation.aspx>

Schools Absence Management Procedure & Guidance (includes Fact sheets on Absence & Disability and Access to work; Q&As for Managers on Mental Health; Reasonable Adjustment Guidance for Headteachers)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HR/Pages/AbsenceManagementandOccupationalHealth.aspx>

Whistleblowing Policy (and other key employment policies)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HR/Pages/HRSignpostingforHeadteachers.aspx>

Wellbeing Framework (includes guidance on Work-Life Balance, Dignity & Respect at Work and Violence at Work/Incidence reporting)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HealthSafety/Pages/WellbeingatWork.aspx>

Access to general information on impact on staff of the Equalities Act (including the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Disabled Applicants)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/HR/ManagingTeams/Recruitmentandinduction/Pages/Equalitiesanddiversity.aspx>

Access to main council equalities advice through the Wave Intranet –

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/Equalities/Pages/default.aspx>

3.3.3 Our staff team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community. We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development. The Executive Headteacher reports to Governors on staff training on a termly basis.

4 The roles and responsibilities within our school community

All who work in the school have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

4.1 Our Executive Headteacher and/or Head of School will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it
- Take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination
- In partnership with governors deal with breaches of this policy

4.2 Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP).
- support the Executive Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate the policy annually and review the objectives every 4 years

4.3 Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy
- with the Executive Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIDP

4.4 Our pupils/students will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

4.5 Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child

4.6 Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- model good practice by recognising and challenging prejudice and stereotyping
- promote equality and avoid discrimination against anyone for reasons of ethnic or national origins, language, culture, religion or belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or social class.
- respond to and report any equalities related bullying and incidents in line with school policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

4.7 Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy

5 Responding to harassment, victimisation and bullying

5.1 Definitions

5.1.1 We recognise that hate incidents and prejudice-based bullying behaviour are driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, transphobia, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

5.1.2 We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

5.1.3 Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore and understand the complexities of equalities issues. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

5.1.4 Our Anti-Bullying Policy defines bullying in the following way:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via social media or the internet). It can involve verbal taunts, name calling, physical injury, and damage to property, rumour spreading, shunning or ridicule and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation or disability, or because a child is in care, has caring responsibilities or mental health issues. It might be motivated by actual differences, perceived differences or as a result of association with someone else.

Adapted from; Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, DfE, 2011

5.1.5 We define 'Prejudice related / hate incidents' in the following way:

This is a one-off incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's race or perceived race, gender disability, religion and / or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity. These can also include indirect prejudice driven behaviour that is not targeted at one individual. The impact of this expression of prejudice against an equality group can be damaging and must therefore be responded to as a prejudice related or hate incident.

5.1.6 Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender or gender identity;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;

- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability gender identity or sexual orientation.

5.2 Reporting, recording and responding to prejudiced based bullying and incidents

5.2.1 We will record hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities. In the case of serious incidents we will support the victim and their family to complete the Brighton & Hove Hate Incident Form and if a crime has been committed inform and involve the police.

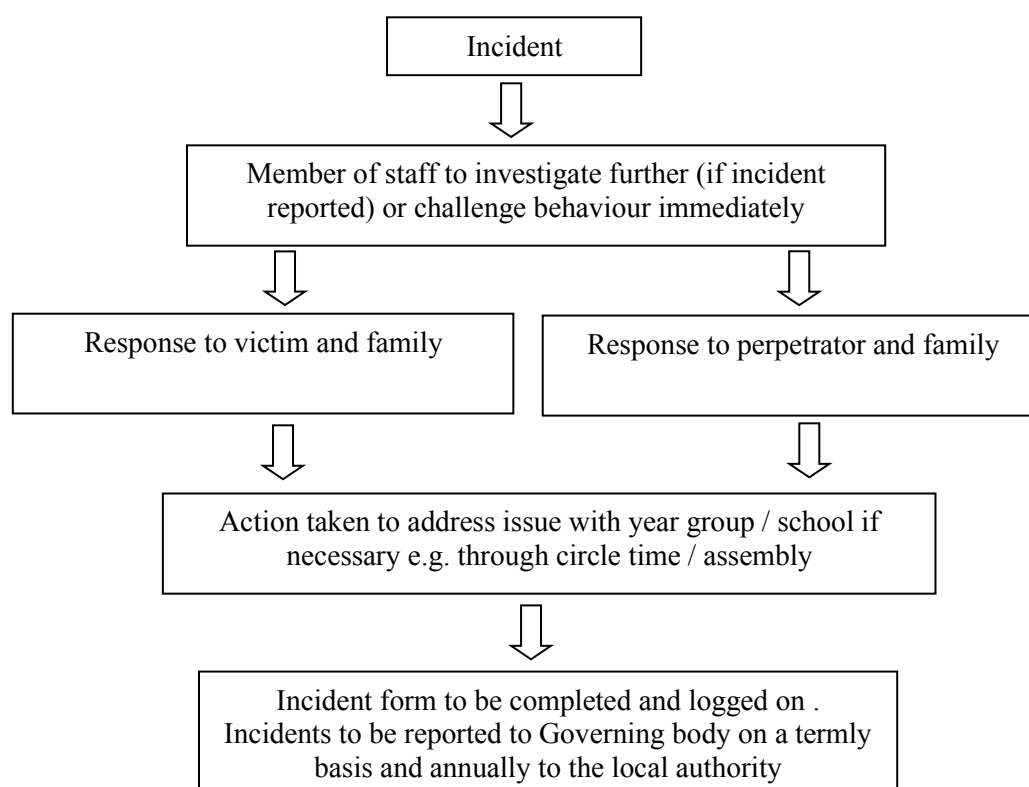
The Hate Incident Form is available online at:

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/report-anti-social-behaviour-or-hate-incident-your-neighbourhood>

Further guidance is located here: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/equality/racist-and-religiously-motivated-incidents>

5.2.2 Incidents are reported, recorded and responded to in line with our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.

The procedure is summarised by the flow chart below:



6 Commissioned services (buying in services)

6.1 Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We work closely with the local authority on procurement – buying in services - to ensure that equality issues are given full regard. When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

6.2 We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

7 Involving the school community in the development of our Equalities practice

The development of this policy and of our equalities objectives involves the whole school community. We endeavour to involve and listen to a wide range of individuals and groups.

7.1 Our pupils

We access our pupils' views through the School Council, pupil questionnaires, the 'Safe and Well at School' survey, our PSHE/Citizenship curriculum and formal and informal pupil interviews (individually and in groups).

7.2 Our staff

All staff members have the opportunity to share their views at regular team meetings with their line managers and a confidential annual questionnaire.

7.3 Our school governors

The school governors routinely scrutinise school policies and practice in regards to equality for all members of the school community. They set up working parties to address issues raised as appropriate.

7.4 Parents/carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute their views for the improvement and development of the school through annual parent questionnaires, response forms, open evenings and events, our open-door policy, one-to-one interaction with key workers such as Learning Mentors and conversations on the learning platform.

7.4 Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups

We are constantly aware of minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups and their participation and contributions are identified at all levels of planning and provision.

7.5 Our partners in the community

Every opportunity is taken to engage and work with other partners in our community.

7.6 Ongoing:

Ensuring the ongoing dialogue that will engage our whole community in our review and monitoring processes will be included in our School Improvement and Development Plan.

8 How we identify our equalities objectives

In line with our statutory duties we publish annually equalities information and publish and report on equalities objectives on our learning platform. We have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty.

8.1 Our equality objective-setting process has involved gathering evidence as follows:

- i. from equality impact assessments (or other process for reviewing the potential impact on decisions made in schools)
- ii. from the following data – RAISEonline, incident report logs, Safe and Well at School Survey, surveys and questionnaires.
- iii. and from involving relevant people (including disabled people) as described in section 7.

8.2 In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this. OfSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, faith, disability and gender.

8.3 In Brighton & Hove there are a range of services which support the equality agenda and help us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action. For example, Traveller Education, Ethnic Minority Achievement Service, Healthy Schools Team, Allsorts, AMAZE, Mosaic, Black and Minority Ethnic Young People's Service, Participation Team etc.

8.4 We have established good links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

9 Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

9.1 It will be actively promoted and disseminated via the school's website, the school newsletter, the PTA and school council.

9.2 Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

9.3 We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.