

ST VINCENT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



EQUALITY POLICY and EQUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2024-25

Policy Date: January 2024
Review Date: January 2025

Mission Statement

Caritas Christi Urget Nos

The love of Christ urges us to care for each other and strive for excellence in everything we do.

At St Vincent's, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At St Vincent's, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

St Vincent's is working towards becoming a Gold Standard Rights Respecting School.

We are committed to the Equality Act 2010 which is about ensuring inclusion and equality for all, so that no policies or practices result in unfair or less favourable treatment of pupils or adults on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics in the Equality Act that apply to everyone are;

Sex

Sexual orientation

Race

Disability including learning difficulties

Pregnancy and maternity

Religion or belief including having no belief

Gender reassignment

There are two further characteristics which apply to adults: age and marital or civil partnership status.

We also include other areas of equality, such as, social and economic circumstances and speakers of languages other than English. Our school is an inclusive school situated in a culturally diverse area, where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe every possible effort must be made to ensure that individuals within this school are valued and have the opportunity to develop their full potential within a context of mutual respect, justice and fairness. We have high expectations of all our staff and learners and ensure that they achieve their best, whatever their abilities, disabilities, gifts or talents. All individuals within the school are entitled to learn, teach and work within a non-threatening and supportive environment in which the development of self-esteem and confidence is enhanced. We want everyone in the school community to be proud of who and what they are and of their school community.

Purpose of this policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

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

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** or “general duty”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

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

Additionally, there are two “specific duties”. They require all public organisations, including the school to:

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

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

Equality Objectives

- To monitor and analyse pupil achievement by race, gender and disability and act on any trends or patterns in the data that require additional support for pupils.
- To ensure that the curriculum promotes role models and heroes that young people positively identify with, which reflects the school's diversity in terms of race, gender and disability.
- To celebrate cultural events throughout the year to increase pupil awareness and understanding of different communities.
- To introduce initiative to encourage girls to take up sport outside the curriculum requirements to make participation rates more reflective of the school population.
- To ensure lessons are responsive to pupil diversity regarding race, gender, disability.
- To ensure that displays in classrooms and corridors promote diversity in terms of race, gender and disability.
- To ensure that all staff have high expectations of all pupils.
- To ensure that staff understand how to provide alternative experiences in PE for pupils with SEND.
- To provide ICT for pupils with varying SEND.
- To ensure pathways of travel around the site are safe and well signed.
- To make all signage around the school user friendly for all able and disabled people.
- Access into school and reception to be fully compliant.
- Improvements to help the visually and hearing impaired.
- To be able to provide all school written information in an alternative way to cater for all needs.

Information about the school's compliance with the Equalities Act

As a Silver Rights Respecting School we are committed to creating an inclusive school which promotes diversity and equality and fundamental British Values. Teaching at St Vincent's ensures that all children develop respect for others and for difference and tolerance and understanding of all aspects of diversity. We want all children to understand and feel accepted in the society they are growing up in and for every child in Barnet to thrive in modern Britain.

We take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions are designed to meet the school's Equality Objectives.

Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- We take account of equality issues in the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.
- We track trends in any incidents relating to protected characteristics and respond appropriately e.g. through assemblies and PSHE lessons.

- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups

We offer a curriculum which embraces the diversity in our society and recognises the contributions, both historical and current, made by people who have disabilities, are from different ethnic groups and different genders

We provide opportunities to discuss issues around gender, sexual identity, race/ethnicity, disability, religion, language. Staff understand the importance of promoting awareness of the contributions to knowledge made by people from different groups and we recognise that positive images of people will work to counteract stereotyping.

We ensure equality of access for all learners to a broad and balanced curriculum relevant to their diverse individual needs, removing barriers to participation.

The school actively promotes equality of opportunity between boys and girls, men and women, as an employer, provider of education and provider of services to the community.

We ensure that our school environment is accessible to all; we provide appropriate aids, equipment and resources as necessary to enable learners to gain full access to the curriculum and we organise classrooms for ease of access for learners and adults with disabilities (see Accessibility Plan).

Learners are encouraged to participate in all areas of school life. We ensure that learners with difficulties that affect their learning, behaviour and social and emotional development are appropriately supported so that they have access to all the learning and social opportunities that the school offers.

In planning work and activities, staff assess the possible impact of what is planned for different individuals and groups and make any appropriate adjustments to ensure access, participation and learning for all learners where possible.

For outings or school journeys, staff carry out risk assessments and make reasonable adjustments to ensure optimum participation for all learners.

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we deal with them. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents.

Through our Cultural Working Party, we carefully consider representation across the curriculum, as well as within the staff and governor groups. We explicitly teach anti-racist lessons and have trained with the Anna Freud resources to increase racial literacy and challenge prejudice and unconscious bias within our

school.

We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions meetings and work with our SENDCO.

Data is gathered regularly on all aspects of learner achievement and attainment. It is analysed in terms of difference e.g. gender, ethnicity, free school meals, type of SEND disability, and if any groups of learners are seen to be making slower progress or doing less well than we expect, then action is taken to investigate the cause and make improvements.

Monitoring for equality is carried out through the school's regular systems e.g. through data analysis, consultation, regular observations of lessons and other curricular activities, surveys of parent/carer and learner views. We involve a wide range of staff, governors and outside agencies in this. Regular reports are made to the Governing Body.

We recognise that the school is a socially and economically diverse society and that our families and staff come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. As far as possible, we ensure that, in relation to school, no learner or family is disadvantaged by their socioeconomic status and that all are treated fairly and equitably. When we are aware that learners or families are in need of financial support, our staff ensure that appropriate information is given to parents/carers and they are put in touch with appropriate services and voluntary organisations.

Fostering good relations

St Vincent's Is a rights respecting community which promotes active, global citizenship. We have energetic and enthusiastic Rights Respecting Ambassadors who champion the rights of learners and we strive to provide an inclusive learning climate in the school. We value children's rights and specifically Article 2 of the UNCRC which states that:

"Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status."

We prepare our learners for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that address international issues and promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our learners.

We use assemblies and opportunities within the curriculum, as appropriate to teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. We discuss equality issues, promote understanding and good relations and encourage learners to value and respect others and to challenge inappropriate attitudes and behaviours. We encourage all our children to have a voice, however where our children are unable to voice their own views, adults will advocate for them. We provide opportunities for learners to empathise with different experiences.

We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, challenging stereotyping. All learners have the right to see non-stereotyped and positive role models and images of men and women from diverse groups. We ensure that our resources include the contribution of different cultures throughout the world. We take all opportunities to celebrate the achievements of our learners and people with disabilities outside the school and in public life.

We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour. We provide opportunities for all learners to appreciate their own cultures and celebrate the diversity of other cultures. We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, invited visitors, whole school events e.g. Black History Month, Racial Justice Sunday, Christmas Around the World.

Other ways we address equality issues

We review relevant feedback from parent questionnaires, parents' meetings, and/or focus meetings.

We analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings, training events and staff exit interviews.

We review team feedback and responses from the learners, their families and carers including from the Rights Respecting Ambassadors and Mini Vinnies and whole school surveys on learners' attitudes to self and school.

We invite responses and feedback at Governing Body meetings and from the Governing Body's working groups.

We have Cultural, STEM and Wellbeing Working Parties which include representatives from the school staff and community who examine the language, practices and curriculum within the school with regard to issues of equality.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying

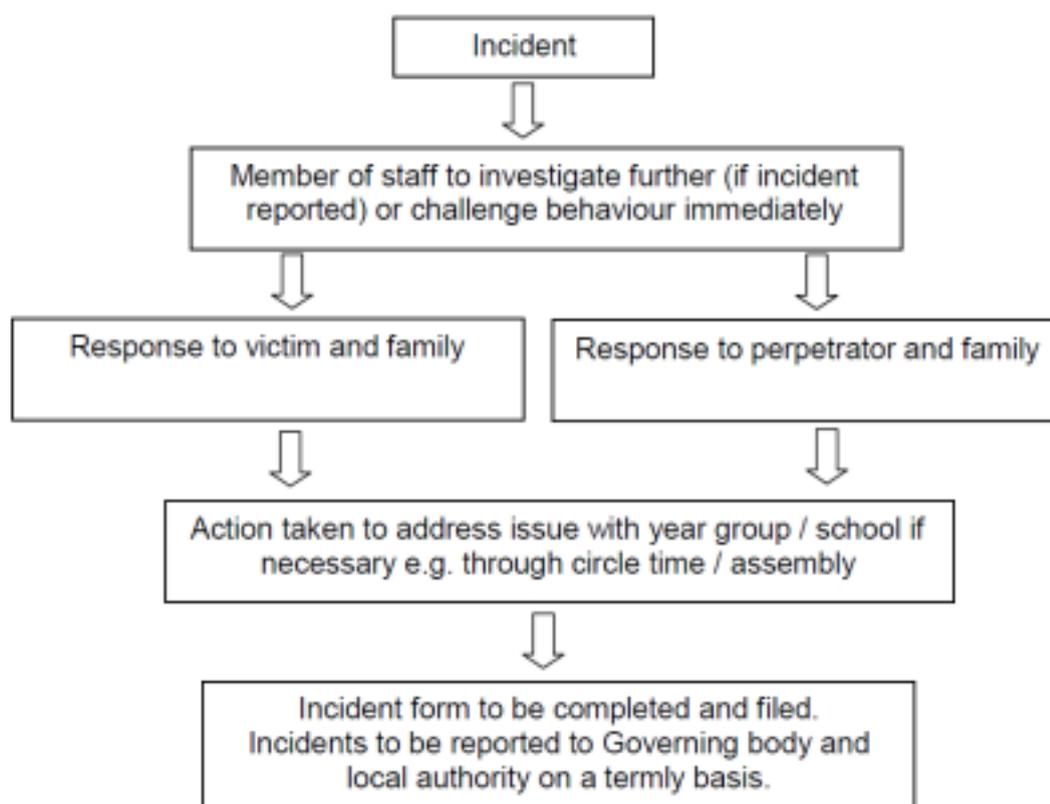
The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- Prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- Prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-semitism and Islamophobia, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- Prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors on the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents where appropriate.

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents (see diagram below). All staff view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the

whole school.



Training

St Vincent's is committed to equalities and this is reflected in our policies for staff, including our policies for staff conduct, discipline and grievance.

We provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of each school year.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act.

- Governing body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the governing body has been assigned to be the governor responsible for detailed monitoring of this policy and equalities as a whole.

- Headteacher and Leadership team

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training

and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

• Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will take account of this policy as part of their general duties.

They will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on Equality Duties for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year.

• Parents, carers and other visitors

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

Monitoring and Evaluation of this policy

We review and update our equality objectives every year and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, pupils, governors and parents and carers.

The Main Governing Body will, in consultation with the Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy. It will be reviewed every year to ensure it reflects current practice.

Member of staff with Lead Responsibility for this policy:	Liz Wolfenden
Date of Policy:	January 2024
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