

St. Paul & St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School's



Love - Learn - Believe - Achieve

Equal Opportunities Policy

Current Leader: J. Starkey

Review Schedule: Annual



St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School
Mission Statement

Love, Learn, Believe, Achieve

At St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School we celebrate the individual differences and gifts that God has blessed each and every one of us with.

Education "is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full." The Catholic ethos, "needs to inform every aspect of school life." (Pope Benedict XVI)

We believe each new day brings the opportunity to express our love for God and one another. We provide a supportive, yet challenging, learning environment where each individual is able to develop their abilities and gifts. Our school is a place where children and adults can express their belief in God; develop belief in themselves and others. We believe everyone in our school community can achieve, whatever their ability. Each achievement is as unique as each individual and all are celebrated. We aspire to equip all in our school community to proclaim the Good News and "live life to the full".



St. Paul & St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School

A Policy for

Equal Opportunities

Equal Opportunities Statement of Commitment

St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School and its Governing Body are committed to a policy of equality and aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, pupil or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief.

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. We aim to provide equal access to high quality educational opportunities and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to provide a safe and happy environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

We aim to empower our pupils to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the school's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the policy.

All members of the school community are responsible for promoting the school's equal opportunities policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

We strive to offer equality of opportunity to all who enter our school community.

We have to remember that the children in our care are very young and naturally inquisitive. We therefore have to be realistic in our approach; some comments may be made due to the immaturity and innocence of an enquiring mind. It is up to us as adults in a caring and loving environment to be sensitive to the needs of all concerned and to address any issues with guidance and support.

What is Equal Opportunity?

At St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School we believe that everyone in our school community, children and adults, are entitled to equal treatment and opportunity. Children must all have equal access to the curriculum; this may need to be tailored to their needs. No child should feel discriminated against because of their race, colour, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation or cultural heritage. All children and adults in our community have a voice and everyone has the right to be heard. This may be through school council, staff meetings, parents'/carers' evenings or informal meetings. Parents/carers are reminded throughout the year that they sometimes need to be 'the voice' for their child and if something is troubling them they must come in to speak to the class teacher or the Head Teacher. Children are also encouraged to tell someone if they are sad or unhappy about something or someone. (This relates to one of our school promises)

We value all of our pupils and staff and their experiences. We will strongly oppose any discriminatory or unkind behaviour involving children, staff or school community.

Aims and objectives

St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School and its Governing Body, through its adopted Equal Opportunities Policy, aims to:

- carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation (including The Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Employment Equality Regulations);
- reinforce the school's position as a provider of high quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities;
- ensure that equality remains high on our strategic agenda;
- establish good people management practice and to set out a proactive agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response;
- achieve a staffing composition that reflects the composition of the wider community;
- ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every pupil;
- ensure that pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals;
- develop self-respect and self-esteem for all individuals in our school;
- encourage respect, tolerance and co-operation among all members of our school;
- provide access to the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage Curriculum, and related diagnostic assessments for all children in our school;
- ensure equal access to the curriculum by adapting it to meet the needs of the individual child;
- to provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve a high standard of performance;
- identify and combat any unfair treatment of children within our school;
- encourage the children to identify and resist such unfair treatment;
- ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with this equal opportunities policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated either under the disciplinary or grievance procedure as appropriate). All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.

Strategies to Encourage Positive Attitudes:

- The Governing Body will operate a fair selection procedure when recruiting new staff;
- To raise the awareness of children, staff, parents, carers and governors through assemblies, meetings and INSET, but most of all by example;
- Through the ethos and organisation of our school;
- Staff must be willing to ask for external professional help for any specific needs that they or any pupils may have.

Strategies to Combat Discriminatory Behaviour:

- Staff must be vigilant and must respond to any discriminatory behaviour e.g. name-calling, graffiti, material brought into school from home;
- Any such incidents must be reported to the Head Teacher who will investigate and involve children, staff, parents/carers, governors, professional associations and the LA if necessary;

- Discriminatory behaviour is discussed with children and parents/carers in order to positively influence attitudes;
- There will be no ambiguity –

DISCRIMINATORY AND UNFAIR BEHAVIOUR IS UNACCEPTABLE AND WILL BE CHALLENGED

School curriculum:

- The whole curriculum must be open and accessible to all pupils;
- Equality and diversity are explored through PSHEE, SEAL, Philosophy for Children, PE etc.

The Hidden Curriculum:

- Every opportunity is used to explore and discuss equality and diversity. Playtimes, lunchtimes and extra-curricular activities may also give rise to these opportunities.
- Staff have equally high expectations of ALL pupils.

Implementation and Communication of the Policy:

- This policy on equality is clearly communicated to all staff
- The policy is clearly stated to children, parents/carers and governors through the prospectus, meetings, assemblies, presentations etc.
- The policy is reviewed in line with the School Development Plan.

A Code of Practice to Deal with Discriminatory Behaviour:

- Pupils and parents/carers must feel confident that they can report any discriminatory incident to a member of staff;
- If a member of staff witnesses an incident or has an incident reported to them, they must in turn report it to the Head Teacher;
- A discussion then takes place between the Head Teacher and the member of staff. A course of action should be decided at this meeting;
- A discussion with the children involved should then take place to establish the circumstances and root cause;
- It must be made clear that this sort of behaviour is totally unacceptable in our school;
- If the incident is repeated, involving one or both parties, then all parents/carers should be brought into school for discussion.

Policy and planning

Equal opportunities implications, including race equality, will be considered and recorded whenever school policies are developed or reviewed. All policies will be regularly reviewed to provide a comprehensive and consistent process of monitoring and evaluation.

Employment matters

Appointments: in all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria.

Family-friendly policies: the governing body/school is a family-friendly employer and will do its best to respond to the changing needs of all staff by publicising existing schemes designed to support employees in combining work and other responsibilities (parental leave arrangements, job share opportunities, flexitime where appropriate, carers' leave provision).

HIV/AIDS: the governing body/school recognises that people with HIV/AIDS suffer not only from the purely medical effects of the infection but may also experience prejudice and misunderstanding leading to unfair discrimination and victimisation. The governors/school therefore will ensure that people with HIV/AIDS do not experience unfair treatment in relation to employment, as pupils or as other members of the school community. The school and governing body will follow the detailed guidelines regarding staff recruitment and pupil admissions set out in Appendix B.

Transsexual employees and gender reassignment: The Sex Discrimination Act now expressly covers discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment.

[Governors/school will consult the local authority's gender reassignment code of practice. This provides clear guidelines in respect of recruitment and selection and arrangements for existing staff in cases of gender reassignment.]

Training and development

The success of the Equal Opportunities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training. Governors will be encouraged to take up all relevant opportunities provided by the Local Authority's Governors Training Programme.

St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School will endeavour to:

- enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status;
- provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all staff, including part time, on the basis of their assessed training needs;
- promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution which staff, governors, parents/guardians and pupils can make;
- equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions, discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote anti-discriminatory behaviour generally.

Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation. We place great importance on the relationship between all staff and will ensure that they are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of our performance management system.

Pupils and the curriculum

At St. Paul and St. Timothy's Catholic Infant School we follow the governing body pupil admission policy that does not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as criteria for admission. Our aim is to provide for all children according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin. The Education Reform Act 1988 stated that 'the school curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse society to which pupils belong and of which they will become adult members.' Pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which avoids stereotypes and provides good role models for all children. Equality of opportunity informs the whole of the curriculum and is reviewed regularly.

Equal opportunities issues are taken into account when planning the curriculum. This is reflected in curriculum planning documentation.

Internal managerial issues

These guidelines are primarily designed to address employment aspects of governance and management. However, in consulting on the policy and developing it further, the head teacher and

members of the senior leadership team will take a range of other internal issues into account. Many of the issues listed will already be the subject of detailed agreed policies. All existing policies are 'audited' from an equal opportunities perspective.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

1. Governors have a duty to ensure that policies are regularly monitored and reviewed. Monitoring is an essential aspect of this policy, as it provides important information by which we can measure our performance against its aims and objectives. Statistical information also enables the governors and head teacher to detect where potential or actual imbalances exist and to take steps to correct them.

2. Monitoring with respect to employment will be undertaken in the following areas on at least an annual basis by sex, race, disability, grade and subject area:

- composition of the school staff;
- recruitment trends;
- take up of training opportunities;
- promotion patterns;
- use of complaints procedure;
- use of grievance, disciplinary, harassment etc;
- use of sanctions;
- take-up of family-friendly policies, e.g. flexible working arrangements.

3. Exit interviews can also provide further helpful information and feedback.

4. Governors ensure that the Equal Opportunities Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Appendix A: Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation is illegal. However, for the school community, discrimination is also unacceptable on any of the other grounds referred to in this policy statement. Failure to comply with the policy will be fully and promptly investigated using the appropriate procedures.

There are four ways in which discrimination may occur:

1. **Direct discrimination:** This means treating someone less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex etc.
2. **Indirect discrimination:** This means applying a requirement or condition which cannot be justified to all groups but which has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group because the proportion of that group which can comply is smaller than the proportion of the group(s) which can comply with it.
3. **Victimisation:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other persons would be treated because that person has done a 'protected act' under the Equal Pay Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act or Employment Equality Regulations, for example, by bringing forward proceedings or giving evidence or information.
4. **Harassment:** Harassment can take many forms, from the most obvious abusive remarks to extremely subtle use of power. As with unfair or unlawful discrimination, harassment can be intentional or unintentional. However, the key issue is not simply the intention of the offender but the impact of the behaviour on the person receiving it.

Harassment may involve any of the following:

- physical contact or violence;
- offensive humiliating and intimidating remarks or actions;
- exclusion from participation in job-related or classroom-related discussions, training or social or other events;
- unfair work allocation;
- unjust or excessive or humiliating criticism of performance;
- offensive signs or notices;
- graffiti;
- repeated demands or requests for sexual favours.

These are merely examples and not an exhaustive list. Whatever the form, the school will provide support for any member of the school community, pupil or staff member who feels threatened or isolated because of such actions.

Appendix B: HIV/AIDS guidelines

The governors and school will:

- ensure that job applicants who are deemed to be medically fit to perform the job for which they have applied, are not denied an offer of work solely because they are HIV positive. In arriving at the decision, the school's normal recruitment criteria will be observed including the normal medical procedures;
- ensure, where possible, that resources are available to support employees or pupils with AIDS or other major health problems associated with HIV infection. The school's normal rules and procedures regarding ill health will apply in such cases. Equally the school will make appropriate arrangements for the provision of counselling (i.e. by referral to external agencies);
- give positive consideration to applications for unpaid leave for those with responsibility for caring for people with AIDS-related conditions in accordance with carers' leave arrangements;
- treat any breaches of confidentiality as a serious matter to be dealt with in accordance with the normal disciplinary (or other appropriate) procedure;
- provide appropriate training in relation to AIDS in order to combat fears and prejudice and to enable the school community as a whole to function without risk to health.

Review Schedule: Annual

May 2015

Jan 2016

Feb 2017
