

**ST JOHN'S SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
A CATHOLIC ACADEMY**

Equality & Diversity Policy



Aims & Values

St John's School and Sixth Form College, a Catholic Academy is situated in Bishop Auckland and has a catchment area that covers a large area of the South West of County Durham. As a "Learning Community Guided by Gospel Values", we believe that Christ is the foundation of everything we do and the Gospels provide us with our influence and inspiration. As such everyone working and studying here is valued highly and tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils to maximise their potential regardless of age, sex, race, colour, religion or disability. We endeavour to promote positive relationships with parents/carers, governors and members of the wider community.

At St John's School and Sixth Form College, A Catholic Academy we aim to promote equality and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

We are therefore committed to promoting:

- **the uniqueness of the individual;** we believe that every person is a unique individual, created in God's image and loved by Him. We are therefore committed to treat every person with equality of esteem and the respect and dignity due to a child of God.
- **the search for excellence;** we are called to seek perfection in all aspects of our lives. We celebrate the enrichment of the total community which flows from diversity of age, gender, racial and social origins, abilities, culture and religion. We are, therefore, committed to ensure that all are to be given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.
- **the education of the whole person;** we offer young people the experience of life in a community guided by Gospel values. Through this we aim to prepare young people for a life working with others in communities which may be diverse socially, culturally and religiously.
- **the education of all;** we have the duty to care for all, with preferential consideration for the poor and to ensure that we provide for those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged.
- **moral principles;** our belief in the Gospel message commits us to be in the forefront of the movement for social and racial justice and harmony. We believe this is fundamental to the common good. We aim to prepare our young people to serve as witnesses to these moral and spiritual values in the wider world.

Consequently, we will strive to ensure that:

- any person recruited to the service of the school, whether as a member of staff or a volunteer, is made fully aware of our aims and objectives and required to support them;
- children who are admitted to the school and their families are fully aware of our aims and objectives and undertake to support them;
- all of our structures and policies are evaluated and kept under constant review to ensure that no individual is subject to unlawful discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, and to ensure that all are enabled to reach their full potential.
- we acknowledge that minority groups have often suffered disadvantage due to prejudice or ignorance. We recognise that it is all too easy for the structures of institutions to result in “inequality by default”. We, therefore, commit ourselves to take positive steps to examine our policies and practice and to change them where necessary.
- a secure environment is provided, in which all our children can flourish and achieve all five outcomes of **‘Every Child Matters’** (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and enjoy economic well-being);
- a learning community guided by Gospel values is provided where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- children are prepared for life in a diverse society in which they are able to see their place in the local, regional, national, faith and international community;
- the contribution of all families is included and valued in our understanding of quality and diversity;
- positive non-stereotyping information is provided about different groups of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity
- discrimination and disadvantage are actively challenged
- inclusion runs through all our activities.

To achieve these aims we will:

- involve stakeholders in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures;
- publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community;
- collect and analyse data to ensure all groups are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage;

- use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for all, respond to students' diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning;
- ensure that the wider school curriculum makes explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity;
- have high expectations of behavior which demonstrates respect to others.

The legal framework for this policy is:

Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended in 2000)

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended in 2005)

Children Act 2004

Equality Act 2006

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Duty to Promote Community Cohesion, Education and Inspections Act 2006

Leadership, Management and Governance

St John's School and Sixth Form College, A Catholic Academy is committed to:

- being proactive in promoting good relationships and equality of opportunity across all aspects of school life and the wider community;
- encouraging, supporting and enabling all pupils and staff to reach their potential and make a positive contribution;
- working in partnership with families, the local authority (LA) and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and tackle discrimination ensuring that our **Equality and Diversity Policy** is followed.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body

It is the Governing Body's responsibility to:

- ensure that the school complies with equality legislation;
- meet requirements to publish equality schemes;
- ensure that the school's policy and its procedures and strategies are carried out and monitored with appropriate impact assessments informing future plans;
- scrutinise the recording and reporting procedures at least annually;
- follow the LA's admissions policy, which is fair and equitable in its treatment of all groups;

- monitor attendance and take appropriate action where necessary;
- have equal opportunities in staff recruitment and professional development and membership of the Governing Body;
- provide information in appropriate, accessible formats;
- be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy;
- be pro-active in recruiting high-quality applicants from under-represented groups.

The Headteacher

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to:

- implement the policy and its strategies and procedures;
- ensure that all staff receive appropriate and relevant continuous professional development;
- actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice;
- deal with any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with LA guidance;
- ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality and diversity policy;

All Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of harassment and bullying;
- deal effectively with all incidents from overt name-calling to the more subtle forms of victimization caused by perceived differences;
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture;
- promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, religion, age and sexual orientation;
- promote an inclusive curriculum and whole school ethos which reflects our diverse society;
- keep up to date with equality legislation, development and issues by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

Breaches of the Policy

All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to the Governing Body and LA as required.

Policy Planning and Review

Whilst we have a duty to develop and publish equality schemes in relation to both gender and disability, we at St John's School and Sixth Form College, A Catholic Academy are considering all aspects of diversity and equality in this comprehensive policy to be followed by a specific equality and diversity action plan in relation to access, gender and race equality.

Policy planning and development

- In the planning and development stage of policy-making, we will ensure we have consulted and taken into account stakeholder views.
- All improvement plans will be designed with an element of impact assessment built in to monitor the success of each activity.
- There will be a systematic review of the impact of all policies and procedures on equality and diversity to address any areas of inequality. (School to detail some whole school systems. Eg. achievement and attainment will be analysed to ensure progress for all, especially in relation to any identified disadvantaged groups; attendance and exclusion data will be reviewed to ensure no over-representation of any one group.)
- Our target-setting processes ensure appropriate, challenging targets are set in relation to identifiable groups as well as individual pupils / cohorts.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- Each student's progress is monitored and tracked. The resulting data is analysed in respect of gender, race, ability or additional needs, looked-after status.
- In addition to monitoring to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the school meets its duty to positively promote diversity.
- The data collected is used to inform further school planning, target-setting and decision-making.

Reviewed: February 2014

To be reviewed: February 2018