



Equality And Diversity Policy

2021 - 22

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At St John Plessington, we seek to build a community of faith where our pupils have the social, intellectual and cultural capital to have:

- Unlimited ideas and dreams
- A vision of what they want to achieve in life and how to achieve it
- A strong sense of duty and service to others
- Care and Compassion for each other
- Choice filled lives and be good people

One of the ways in which we achieve these aims is to implement a comprehensive equality and diversity policy.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

Schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment.

The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools that existed under previous legislation – such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to single-sex schools and schools of a religious character, are all replicated in the new act. However, there are some changes that will have an impact on schools as follows:

- It is unlawful for employers to ask health-related questions of applicants before job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work. This means that schools should no longer, as a matter of course, require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. Schools are advised to review their existing practices to ensure they are complying with both the Health Standards Regulations and Section 60 of the Equality Act.
- It is unlawful to discriminate against a transgender pupil.
- It is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil who is pregnant or has recently had a baby.
- New Positive Action provisions will allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics. Such measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim.
- Extending the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils.

Aims and Values

St John Plessington Catholic College is a welcoming College where everyone is valued highly and where 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 Catholic 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, governors and members of the wider community.

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

We aim to:

- provide a secure environment in which all our pupils can flourish and lead choice- filled lives;
- provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- prepare pupils for life in a diverse society in which young people are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide positive non-stereotyping information about different groups of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age;
- plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity; actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage;
- make inclusion a thread which 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 pupils' 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 behaviour which demonstrates respect to others.

Leadership, Management and Governance

St John Plessington Catholic College 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 diocese, 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 College complies with equality legislation;
- meet requirements to publish equality schemes;
- ensure that the College's policy and its procedures and strategies are carried out and monitored with appropriate impact assessments informing future plans;
- scrutinize the recording and reporting procedures at least annually;
- follow the College and Diocesan admissions policy;
- 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 Head Teacher

It is the Head Teacher'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 & MAT guidance;
- ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality and diversity policy;
- produce a report on progress for governors annually.

All Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- be vigilant in all areas of the College for any type of harassment and bullying;
- deal effectively with all incidents from overt name-calling to the more subtle forms of victimisation 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.

Community Cohesion

We are committed to supporting community cohesion by:

- developing a common vision and sense of belonging in a faith based community;
- developing an appreciation of the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances;
- creating opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential;
- building strong and positive relationships;

Engagement and extended services:

- We have good links with other schools, locally and regionally and school within our MAT;
- Teachers have links with other schools and promote good role models when interacting with staff from other schools, through a range of activities;
- Learners have a strong voice and opportunities to take responsibility through our Student Council;
- We engage parents through a range of activities including consultation evenings. Our pastoral system works with the EWS service, to improve children's attendance;
- We have strong links with external agencies including social services, the EWS, the health service and police;
- Multi- agency working with voluntary agencies and private sector. Building networks and partnerships between services to encourage joint thinking and sharing of skills;
- Relevant signposting to other agencies in the community;
- Raising awareness in the community about the range of services on offer at the centre and locally.

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 MAT 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 consider all aspects of diversity and equality in this comprehensive policy.

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.

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 all protected characteristics including CLA.

In addition to monitoring to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the College meets its duty to positively promote diversity. (e.g. lesson observations record evidence of differentiation and texts are reviewed to ensure appropriateness and inclusivity.)

The data collected is used to inform further school planning, target-setting and decision- making.

Equality Objectives 2021/2022

Equality objective 1: To provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students.

Equality objective 2: To close the gap in progress and attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their non disadvantaged peers.

Equality objective 3: To improve the attendance of disadvantaged students.

Equality objective 4: To reduce prejudice-related bullying and the use of derogatory language.

Equality objective 5: To improve knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable pupils to appreciate and value difference and diversity, e.g. increasing understanding between pupils from different faith communities.

Equality objective 6: To increase the participation rates of disadvantaged pupils in extra- curricular activities.

Equality objective 7: To further improve accessibility across the school for students, staff and visitors with disabilities, including access to specialist teaching areas.

Equality objective 8: To ensure that the junior leadership teams of the College are reflective of the local community.