



# Saint Aidan's Church of England High School

## Single Equality Policy

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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	<b>Andy Smith</b>
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## **1 AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

The Single Equality Policy brings together the school's approach for promoting equality in our policies and procedures and, most importantly in our day-to-day practices and interactions with the whole school community.

Our policy includes our whole school; students, staff, parents, carers, Governors and all those within our extended school community.

It is very important for us all to work together in achieving our aim of being fully inclusive and accessible in order to provide a high quality learning experience for our students.

We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

At Saint Aidan's, equality is a key principle for treating all people the same irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

## **2 SAINT AIDAN'S PROFILE AND CONTEXT**

- Rural location;
- Year 7 intake number is 168, with all years currently full or nearly full;
- About 70% of students travel to school by bus or taxi;
- FSM and FSM6 are rising but still below national averages;
- Ethnic background – predominantly “White British”. Minority Ethnic Groups very low (less than 3%) compared to the national figure;
- Strong support from families;
- Strong community partnerships;
- Strong partnership with primary and secondary headteachers;
- Nearest secondary neighbours – 7- 9 miles – in Poulton-le-Fylde;
- Strong partnerships with local FE providers
- International links with a school in Cape Town, South Africa.

### **3 WHAT IS THE SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN?**

Our Single Equality Policy and Action Plan integrates our statutory duties in relation to race, disability and gender and promoting community cohesion. The duties cover staff, students and people using the services of the school such as parents/carers.

It also addresses the legislation relating to religion or belief, sexual orientation and age and therefore includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

Our Single Equality Policy and Action Plan enables us to achieve a framework for action which covers all six equality strands and ensures that we meet our responsibilities of the public sector duties in an inclusive way.

We will continue to meet our statutory duties by reporting annually on the progress of the Single Equality Policy and action plan. This will be reviewed by our Governors and will cover activity undertaken in relation to the six equality strands.

### **4 MEETING OUR DUTIES**

Under the statutory duties all schools have responsibilities to promote race, disability and gender equality.

#### **4.1 Race Equality**

The general duty to promote race equality means that we must have due regard to:

**4.1.1** Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;

**4.1.2** Promote equality of opportunity;

**4.1.3** Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Dealing with racist incidents:

All racist incidents are reported to a senior member of staff and logged. The school has adopted the Lancashire Guidelines on reporting.

## **4.2 Disability equality**

The general duty to promote disability equality is owed to all disabled people which means that we must have due regard to:

- 4.2.1** Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- 4.2.2** Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- 4.2.3** Eliminate disability related harassment;
- 4.2.4** Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- 4.2.5** Encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- 4.2.6** Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

## **4.3 Accessibility**

There is specific disability legislation in relation to disabled students and accessibility which means we must plan strategically over time to:

- 4.3.1** Increase access to the curriculum;
- 4.3.2** Make improvements to the physical environment of the school to improve access;
- 4.3.3** Make written information accessible to students in a range of different ways.

We must ensure that disabled students do not receive less favourable treatment and to do this the school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

## **4.4 Gender equality**

The general duty to promote gender equality means that we must have due regard to:

- 4.4.1** Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and
- 4.4.2** Promote equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys.

The duty also includes the need to consider actions to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

Lancashire County Council considers that this has been addressed through the implementation of unified conditions and pay for all staff.

## **4.5 Transgender**

Transgendered people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty. The term transgendered refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender. The school will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender re assignment and will provide a supportive environment within its school community.

## **4.6 Age, sexual orientation, religion and belief**

We must ensure that we do not discriminate on these grounds. This Scheme includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to above:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs;
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;
- All homophobic incidents are reported to a senior member of staff and logged.

## **5. SAINT AIDAN'S VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Meeting the duties described above will mean that all our actions will embody the following statements:

We strive to make the best possible provision for the whole school community regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious belief, national origin or status, gender or sexual orientation.

We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people;
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents;
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

All students are of equal value. We see all students and potential students, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they have learning support needs or are disabled;
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status;
- whatever their gender and gender identity;
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background;
- whatever their sexual identity.

We recognise and respect difference. Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We know that treating people equally is not simply a matter of treating everyone the same. We adopt the view that inclusion is: “The process of taking necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given an equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life.” This means that we do our best to make reasonable adjustments for disability, recognise and celebrate cultural differences, and understand the different needs and experiences of boys and girls.

Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made;
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised;
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised; religion, belief or faith background;
- sexual identity.

We know that equalities are not simply about protecting the potentially vulnerable. We believe that all children may be/ are disadvantaged by the holding of prejudicial views, and seek to promote good relationships between all groups, and positive attitudes towards disabled people, people from different ethnic or cultural groups or faith backgrounds and people of different gender or sexual orientation.

We value all staff for their ability and potential to help us make the best possible provision for the children in our school, regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious belief, national origin, gender or sexual orientation.

We are proactive in our efforts to identify and minimise existing barriers or inequalities. We seek the views of all groups affected by the policies and work of our school, and try to involve them in policy review.

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We ensure the values and principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- students' progress, attainment and achievement;
- students' personal development, welfare and wellbeing;
- teaching styles and strategies;
- admissions and attendance;
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development;
- care, guidance and support;
- behaviour, discipline, suspensions and exclusions;
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians; working with the wider community.

## **6 COLLECTING AND ANALYSING EQUALITY INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AT SAINT AIDAN'S**

Saint Aidan's is an inclusive school. We use the curriculum and teaching to enhance the self-esteem of all those it serves and to provide a learning environment in which each individual is encouraged to fulfil her or his potential. We collect and analyse the following equality information for our students:

- Attainment levels;
- Attendance levels;
- Suspensions and exclusions;
- Attendance at extra -curricular activities ;
- Complaints of bullying and harassment;
- Participation in Student Council;
- Choice of options selected;
- Rewards and Sanctions.

Any issues identified from this information gathering would appear in the action plan at the end of this scheme.

### **6.1 COLLECTING AND ANALYSING EQUALITY INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AND GOVERNANCE AT SAINT AIDAN'S**

Saint Aidan's is committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment. We also aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce that is representative of all sections of the community in order to provide a service that respects and responds to the diverse needs of our local population. We collect and analyse the following profile information for our staff and Governors:

- Applicants for employment;
- Staff profile;
- Governing Body profile;
- Disciplinary and grievance cases;
- Staff appraisals/performance management.

Any priorities identified from the analysis of this data would appear in the action plan at the end of this scheme.

## **7 CONSULTATION AND INVOLVING PEOPLE**

We will involve students, staff, parents, carers, Governors and our wider school community in reviewing this Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan. This will help to ensure that the views of potentially disadvantaged groups will be fully incorporated in the development of this Scheme and action plan. Examples include:

- Discussions at school council;
- Contact with parent/carers;
- Staff surveys;
- Discussions at staff meetings;
- Discussions at Governing Body;
- Scheme available for comment on the website.

## **8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

Equality impact assessment is a systematic method of rigorously checking all school policies, procedures and practices to ensure they are genuinely accessible and meet the needs of our staff and the local community in relation to age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation. We will undertake equality impact assessments to identify the impact or effect (either negative or positive) of our policies as they come up for review, paying particular regard to the needs of minority groups. Where negative impacts are identified we will then take steps to deal with this and make sure equity of service to all.

## **9 OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES**

We have used our existing school policies to assist us in drawing up our Single Equality Policy. These include:

- School Improvement Plan;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- SEND Policy;
- Accessibility Plan;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **10 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Our Governing Body will ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements in respect of this Policy and Action Plan.

Our Headteacher and SLT are responsible for the implementation of this Policy and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and report progress to the Governing Body.

Our staff are expected to promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for children with additional needs, maintain a good level of awareness of equalities issues.

Our students have a responsibility to themselves and others to treat each other with respect, to feel valued, and to speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour.

We will take steps to ensure all visitors to the school, including parents/carers are adhering to our commitment to equality.

## **11 COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT**

Saint Aidan's is required by law to make sure that when we buy services from another organisation to help us provide our services, that organisation will comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in selection during any tendering process.

## **12 PUBLICISING OUR SCHEME**

Our Single Equality Policy will be published:

- On the School website;
- Staff SharePoint;
- Copies will also be available on request.

## **13 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS**

We will continue to review annually the actions we have taken in the development of our Single Equality Policy which include:

- The results of information gathering activities;
- The outcomes of involvement activities from minority groups;
- A summary from equality impact assessments undertaken;
- An update of the progress made against priorities;
- We will review our Single Equality Policy and Action Plan every three years.

## **14 ONGOING EVOLVEMENT OF OUR SCHEME**

Opportunities to explore equalities and diversity issues through:

- School Council meetings;
- Curriculum topics in Personal Development lessons;
- Personal Development Days;
- Discussions at staff meetings;
- Having senior staff available to discuss equality and diversity matters during parent consultation meetings;

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If you have any comments about our policy, please contact us.

## 15 EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

All aspects of our Equality Policy are important so that everyone in the school community can thrive. However, in 2023-24 we are focusing in particular on the following objectives:

### Objective A

**To work to track and eliminate incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault between students.**

**We have chosen this objective because** we are aware that many secondary school students, particularly girls, can worry about sexual harassment and sexual assault, and that incidents can and do occur in all schools. We have dealt with incidents of sexual harassment and have sometimes noticed attitudes among some students, male and female, which would seem to normalise this.

**We intend to achieve this objective by:**

- Specifically tracking incidents of sexual harassment through Synergy.
- Dealing seriously and appropriately with incidents which occur, treating sexual harassment as a serious aggravating factor in any incident of bullying.
- Regularly discussing students' views and attitudes through lessons and in our Student Council.
- Amending our Personal Development programme to include more specific reference to these issues and the wider societal context, including sexist language.
- To ensure that teaching on Consent makes it clear that there is no acceptable level of unwanted sexual harassment or assault.
- To ensure that all students, especially girls who research suggests are more likely to be victims, feel comfortable reporting incidents to the school.

### Objective B

**To continue to address casual attitudes of a minority of students to the use of racist and homophobic language.**

**We have chosen this objective because** we believe that casual use of words like "gay" as an insult and racist slurs in everyday conversation should not be part of anyone's experience at Saint Aidan's. However, teachers and students report that on occasion some students still use these terms to insult one another or in conversation between them.

**We intend to achieve this objective by:**

- Continuing to challenge use of terms like "gay" as an insult by students, and any racist or homophobic language, even when there is no immediate "victim".

- Tracking use of these and similar terms in any context as racist / homophobic / sexist / transphobic and reporting to Governors.
- Including education for students in our Personal Development programme and in school worship so that they are aware of why they should not use these terms.

### **Objective C**

**To ensure that our curricular and extra-curricular programme is open to all students, including those who might be seen as disadvantaged.**

**We have chosen this objective because** we run a very large extra-curricular programme and know that there are barriers to participation for some students which, as a Christian school, we should work to overcome.

**We intend to achieve this objective by:**

- Using Synergy to log participation in extra-curricular activities. This will allow us to check which students are not taking part in anything.
- Working with identified students to encourage their participation and remove barriers.
- Use Pupil Premium funding to allow students to access visits outside school hours who might otherwise not be able to go.