

# St John's Catholic Primary School



## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

*“Christ is the Centre of our School Community where we live, love and learn together”*

### **Introduction:**

This policy sets out St John's Catholic Primary Schools commitment to equality and diversity. Liverpool is historically a diverse city giving it a rich and varied culture which has a positive impact on the lives of our citizens and visitors making Liverpool an excellent place to visit, live and work.

St John's will put equality and fairness at the centre of everything we do and promote equal opportunities for all our parents, visitors and staff. Value the diversity of our communities by setting the highest service standards and seeking to continuously improve.

### **Background to this Policy:**

Equality means ensuring people are treated fairly, giving them equal access to services and employment. Diversity is about valuing differences, whatever an individual's background. We will consider equality and diversity across the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, and will give protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

We will go beyond these protected characteristics and include social economic status as we recognise that there are disparities across our City and within our communities. Our policies and procedures are intended to promote fairness for all and reinforce our commitment to tackling inequalities wherever they exist and to eradicating the unacceptable treatment of any person.

## **Equality Act 2010:**

The Equality Act 2010 brought together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises previous legislation creating new discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. Where possible, we will try to exceed the demands of the law in our work in delivering equality. The Equality Act 2010 establishes both a general duty and specific duties for public bodies like St John's Catholic Primary School. In summary, those subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- The Act explains that 'due regard' for advancing equality involves:  
removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

## **Aims and Objectives:**

St John's Catholic Primary School aims to ensure that:

- We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff, pupil or visitor on the grounds of their ability, age, sex, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins.
- We will promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school.
- All pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning.
- All recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.
- We challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.

- We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups.
- We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.
- There is zero tolerance for any form of racism or racist behaviour.
- Should anyone at our school be a victim of racism, we will do all we can to support that person in overcoming any difficulties they may have.
- Our school is welcoming to all minority groups. To promote an understanding of different cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.
- Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So, for example, the history curriculum gives due emphasis to ancient African traditions and cultures in the work that the children do on the Ancient Egyptians. In the religious education curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children study the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

### **Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity:**

St John's Catholic Primary School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, celebrating and valuing diversity, eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including cyber or e-bullying and harassment, and promoting good relations. We are committed to achieving equality for all by reducing discrimination in employment and service delivery on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. Furthermore, we will also strive to ensure that people are not discriminated against due to their social economic background.

We will strive to:

- Meet all legal equality duties, exceeding them where we can, and follow Codes of Practice published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Monitor and evaluate the impacts and outcomes of this policy and take action on findings accordingly.
- Ensure that the allocation of financial resources takes into account equality and diversity considerations.
- Reflect equality of opportunity in our commissioning, purchasing and grant giving policies and procedures and make sure others providing services on our behalf comply with our equality and diversity commitments.
- Ensure that our jobs are accessible to all people and that our workforce is diverse and representative of the local community.

- Treat our staff equitably in all areas of employment, including career development, pay, training and promotion, and continually review our policies to assess their impact on the groups covered by this policy, including monitoring recruitment, promotion, retention, training opportunities, grievances, disciplinary procedures and exit from employment.
- Tackle harassment and bullying in the workplace.
- Improve consultation with staff.
- Engage people from all communities to help shape our services and develop our equality objectives.
- Make our school inclusive and accessible.
- Improve community relations and promote diversity through events, publicity, educational programmes and other initiatives and encourage participation in local democracy and representation on public and voluntary bodies.
- Tackle all forms of hate crime and harassment and promote safety and security.
- Uphold the right of all staff and service users to be treated with dignity and respect by fostering an environment free from ridicule, bullying, intimidation and victimisation.
- Train staff and make them aware of this policy.

### **Staff Responsibility:**

All staff are responsible for tackling equality and diversity issues in their daily working environment, for behaving appropriately and for fostering a culture which promotes dignity and respect. Equality and diversity education, teaching and learning will be the foundation of our organisational culture and will support our staff to recognise and respect the diverse backgrounds of all who come into St John's.

### **Individual Statements:**

St John's Catholic Primary School recognises that people will have multiple characteristics and may face increased disadvantage and discrimination because of this.

We will work to meet the needs of all people by:

- Carrying out our duties under the law, including the Equality Act 2010, and ensuring our service users and staff are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.
- Challenging all forms of discrimination by our colleagues, Elected Members, contractors, partners, services users and others and ensuring that all people have equal access to the highest quality services.
- Fostering an environment free from ridicule, bullying, intimidation and victimisation.

- Promoting harmony and the building of relationships between the City's diverse communities.
- Redressing any imbalances that exist in our workforce and striving to remove any barriers to services and employment opportunities.
- Ensuring transparency and communication which is accessible to all people and producing communications in plain language.
- Constantly reviewing and adapting our policies and procedures and carrying out our duties under the law as it develops to stop discrimination and support equality and diversity.

**These commitments apply across all individual statements which follow:**

**Age:**

St John's Catholic Primary School acknowledges that people can face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination, which is related to their age. Ageism can particularly affect people seeking employment or services and we recognise that people can also face lack of respect, ridicule and harassment due to their age.

Young people are essential to bring fresh perspectives and ideas and to replenish our workforce over time and older people have a wealth of valuable skills, expertise, knowledge and experience, all of which are essential to a balanced workforce. Issues of age can vary when combined with disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

St John's Catholic Primary School will work to meet the specific needs of people of any age by:

- Promoting the recognition of the fact that ageism is harmful as it undervalues the contribution that all people can make.
- Taking action, if necessary, to recruit and retain younger and older people to ensure a workforce age balance and to ensure we retain the valuable range of skills and experience that a balanced workforce brings.
- Regularly reviewing (and adapting where necessary) our policies and procedures to ensure they are not ageist, including reconsidering our policies in relation to the retirement of staff and the employment of people over retirement age, and carrying out our duties under the law to stop discrimination and provide equality of opportunity.

## **Disability:**

St John's Catholic Primary School knows that disabled people face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination, and that disabled people can face greater barriers related to their age, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Disabled people include people with learning difficulties, Deaf people and people who are hard of hearing, people with visual or physical impairments and people with mental health needs.

Disabled people often face ridicule, harassment, hatred and violence. Furthermore, we know that physical barriers can result in disabled people being physically excluded, marginalised or set apart. We will make sure our policies tackle these issues.

St John's Catholic Primary School will work to meet the specific needs of disabled people by:

- Ensuring that disabled people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery. We have set a high level priority to develop services to improve choice and provide support to enable people to live independent and inclusive lives.
- Supporting our disabled colleagues to fully develop their potential.
- Encouraging and creating an environment in which its workforce and citizens can feel confident in reporting incidents of disablist harassment and victimisation, in full knowledge that any such incidents will be addressed fully and effectively in accordance.
- Promoting equality for disabled people and positive images of disabled people, avoiding stereotypes and challenging attitudes that patronise or discriminate against them.
- Valuing the importance and engaging fully with any organisation formed by disabled people when considering the interests of disabled people, recognising that disabled people are best placed to speak on behalf of disabled people.
- Making St John's Catholic Primary School accessible to all.
- Continuing to work towards ensuring that school correspondence is accessible to all people.

## **Gender Identity/Gender Reassignment:**

St John's Catholic Primary School acknowledges that trans people face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination, because of their trans identity.

Trans (or transgender) is an umbrella term used by people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex. The term includes, but is not limited to, transsexual people and others who define as gender-variant.

Trans people may or may not choose to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically, known as gender reassignment or transition<sup>6</sup>. They often face ridicule, harassment, hatred and violence.

Trans issues can vary when combined with age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

St John's Catholic Primary School will work to meet the specific needs of trans or transgender people by:

- Providing appropriate advice and support to service users and staff undergoing gender reassignment.
- Treating trans people with respect and dignity including by ensuring staff are polite and respectful and use terms that acknowledge identity as a man or woman regardless of how far a trans person's transition has progressed.
- Encouraging and creating an environment in which its workforce and citizens can feel confident in reporting incidents of trans harassment and victimisation, in full knowledge that any such incidents will be addressed fully and effectively.

### **Race:**

St John's Catholic Primary School acknowledges that people face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination, because of their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. These groups of people share the same experience of racism, discrimination and inequality in employment and service provision and as a result suffer inequality. It can also mean they face harassment, hatred and violence.

Issues of racism can vary when combined with age, disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

St John's Catholic Primary School will work to meet the specific needs of all our communities by:

- Improving the achievement of underachieving children from minority groups.
- Encouraging and creating an environment in which its staff and visitors can feel confident in reporting incidents of racial harassment and victimisation, in full knowledge that any such incidents will be addressed fully and effectively.

## **Religion or Belief:**

St John's Catholic Primary School knows that to hold a religious or philosophical belief or no religion or belief is a basic human right that should be treated with respect. We acknowledge that people can experience harassment, discrimination or differential treatment because of religious beliefs that they may hold or because they do not have a religion or belief.

Issues of religion or belief can vary when combined with age, disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, sex or sexual orientation.

We will respect the right of every citizen and colleague to hold or not to hold political or other beliefs.

St John's Catholic Primary School will work to meet the specific needs of all religions and beliefs by:

- Providing scope for prayer and reflection within our flexible working practices and reasonable unpaid time off for festivals that are a part of a person's religion or belief.
- Not allowing religious harassment or discrimination and not permitting our staff to impose on others their religious, political or other views or philosophies whilst carrying out their employment.
- Ensuring sensitivity and respect to service users' religion or belief and avoid service delivery that is offensive to people's beliefs.
- Welcoming different forms of dress according to cultural and religious backgrounds, balanced with the need to provide a safe place of work.
- Promoting an inclusive working culture where people can practice their religion or belief safely and without fear of harassment and discrimination.

## **Sex / Gender:**

St John's Catholic Primary School acknowledges that gender discrimination can lead to inequality in access to jobs, training, development and services. Women and men can experience disadvantage, discrimination and violence and be subject to negative stereotypes and attitudes, however, we recognise that women are more likely to experience discrimination on the basis of their gender. As a major employer and services provider, we will continue to promote and champion equality for all employees and users of our services.

Issues relating to gender can vary when combined with age, disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

The contribution of women and men at all levels is vital and we will endeavour to make full use of their skills, experience, knowledge and perspective.



Women can be under-represented in the workforce at senior levels and can tend to be concentrated in lower paid, part-time work. We will try to redress any imbalance and are committed to encouraging women as role models.

The threat and use of gender based violence can limit choices and aspirations, reducing full participation in every day life and leading to a poor quality of life.

St John's Catholic Primary School will work to meet the specific needs of women and men by:

- Working to create equal access to jobs, training, development and services and not allowing sexual harassment or discrimination.
- Supporting the fact that both women and men may need to work flexibly or part-time or take a break to meet their caring and domestic responsibilities, and supporting employees, where we can, to care for others who depend on them in emergency and other situations whatever their gender.
- Challenge stereotypes of women and men that can contribute to limited choice and opportunities. Creating an environment where managers recognise the needs of employees in relation to workplace gender issues, for example, where employees may be isolated in single sex dominated workplaces. We will ensure the culture is not one of harassment and discrimination.

### **Sexual Orientation:**

St John's Catholic Primary School knows that lesbians, gay men and bisexual people face discrimination and disadvantage, including institutional discrimination. Homophobia and biphobia are collections of negative attitudes and prejudices that lead to discrimination against bisexual people, lesbians and gay men. Action will be taken to prevent discrimination or harassment on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation, including heterosexual.

Issues of homophobia and biphobia can vary when combined with age, disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or belief, or sex.

St John's Catholic Primary School will work to meet the specific needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people by:

- Ensuring that wherever within our power, service conditions of employees offer the same benefits to same-sex relationships as heterosexual relationships, including pensions, family friendly, special and parenting leave.
- Creating a climate of respect in the workplace where all people feel safe to be open about who they are.
- Challenge stereotypes of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals that can contribute to limited choice and opportunities

- Working in partnership with other organisations to combat sexual harassment, homophobia and biphobia - taking preventative action where practical and prosecuting if necessary.

### **Social Economical Status:**

St John's Catholic Primary School's Equality and Diversity Policy is not restricted to the nine protected characteristics and includes social economic status as this continues to be a major driver of disadvantage and inequality for many people.

We acknowledge that there are huge disparities across our City and within our communities and that communities suffer as a result of living in areas of deprivation. Many families have a history of worklessness, poor health and low incomes and expectations are reduced with people having suffered deprivation throughout their lives.

St John's Catholic Primary School will work to meet the specific needs of all our communities by:

- Ensuring equal treatment of all our employees and ensuring that people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery.
- Supporting our colleagues to fully develop their potential and not allowing any form of harassment.
- Promoting equality for all of our communities and challenging attitudes that discriminate against them.
- Challenge stereotypes of people in differing social economic classes that can contribute to limited choice and opportunities.

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership:**

St John's Catholic Primary School will ensure that wherever within its power, service conditions of employees offer the same benefits to same-sex relationships as heterosexual relationships, including pensions, family friendly and parenting leave.

### **People with an offending history:**

St John's Catholic Primary School recognises that people with an offending history can also experience discrimination. We will make all efforts to prevent discrimination or other unfair treatment against our staff or services users regardless of their offending history so long as this does not create a risk to the organisation, children or vulnerable adults.

## **GLOSSARY**

### **Age;**

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

### **Disability:**

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

### **Diversity:**

Where many different types of people are included.

### **Cyberbullying;**

Cyberbullying is the use of technology, such as mobiles and the internet, to bully other people.

### **Gender Reassignment:**

The process of changing or transitioning from one gender to another.

### **Protected Characteristics:**

These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

### **Race:**

Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

### **Religion and belief:**

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

### **Sex/Gender:**

A man or a woman.

### **Sexual orientation:**

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

### **Social Economic Status;**

Social economic status includes factors such as changes in the labour market, the delivery of public services such as education and health, and the immediate impact of how an economic downturn can negatively affect the life chances of individuals.