

St Edmund's Catholic School
"Vibrant in Faith & Learning"



EQUALITY
STATUTORY POLICY

St Edmund's Catholic School, Dover
vibrant in faith and learning

Equality Policy 2014

1 Introduction

As a Catholic school, St Edmund's community commits to uphold and promote the teachings of Jesus Christ. In doing so we commit to be inclusive, recognising that every individual is a gift from God, with individual talents, skills and needs. Thus we aim to foster an environment where

- all are valued
- learning flourishes
- diversity is celebrated
- all are encouraged to reach their full potential
- we uphold and promote the dignity of the individual

It is within this context that we commit to comply with the spirit and requirements of the Equality Act, 2010.

2 Responsibilities

This policy aims to represent the constituent strands of the school community; the responsibility for the drawing up and overall implementation of the policy rests with the Interim Executive Board (IEB), which is the school's governing body, and its day-to-day implementation with the school's leadership team, with reference to the IEB where appropriate.

We look to staff and student members to uphold a culture of mutual respect so that ours is a school where good relations flourish and where good role-models abound. All members of our school community should appropriately challenge prejudice and discrimination and feel supported when they do so. Those in line-management roles must be conversant with policies aimed at effectively addressing and overcoming behaviours contrary to good practice and take appropriate action in accord with those policies.

3 The legal background

Date Issued	Date of Review	Approved by	Date Reviewed
January 2014	January 2017	IEB	28 January 2014

The Department for Education's publication *The Equality Act 2010: departmental advice for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies in maintained schools and academies*, February 2013, forms the basis of our Equality Policy.

The Equality Act, 2010, replaces previous legislation pertaining to gender, disability and race. It coins the term *protected characteristics* to define those individuals and groups towards whom discrimination is unlawful and refers to all members of the school community, both pupils and staff.

Protected characteristics:

The school will not discriminate through its teaching, admissions or employment practices against any group or individual because of their:

- sex
- race
- disability
- religion or belief *
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity
- age #

* Because St Edmund's is a Catholic school, we are legally entitled to give priority in our Admissions Policy to baptised Catholic students where there is oversubscription. Within our recruitment, remuneration and recruitment practices for teachers we may give preference to

- those whose religious beliefs accord with the school's ethos
- practising Catholics
- those willing to teach religious education

and, in considering dismissal, may have regard to conduct incompatible with our Catholic ethos.

discrimination by age refers to employment practice rather than admission of pupils by age.

4 Our commitment

We commit ourselves to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination
- advancing equality of opportunity
- making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, staff and visitors
- fostering good relations between people of *protected characteristics* and those who do not share those attributes
- eliminating discrimination by association (ie refusal to admit a pupil with gay parents)

We will make available information on how we monitor compliance with our equality duties through governors' minutes, publication of policies and information on our website.

5 Employment issues

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In our voluntary-aided school, the IEB is the employer and as such we commit to:

- compliance with current employment legislation
- transparency in recruitment, employment and disciplinary procedures
- ensuring that no unlawful discrimination takes place within recruitment, employment, promotion or disciplinary practices and that all issues concerning remuneration and decisions over the number, nature and recruitment to promoted posts are conducted fairly, in a non-discriminatory manner
- the exercise of compassion in individual cases
- provision of appropriate training, support and ongoing professional development
- ensuring that our compliance with the provisions and spirit of the Equality Act, 2010, is reflected in school policies and practices and is embedded in the working culture of the school

6 Our students

We are committed to providing the best educational experience for our students and equal access to the curriculum. We recognise that as each individual is unique so individual needs differ. We strive to provide equality of opportunity whilst recognising that treating people equally does not necessarily mean treating them the same and so we must be sensitive to the individual needs, backgrounds, potential barriers and disadvantages with which our students present and to help them address and overcome those issues which could prevent them realising more of their potential. It will sometimes be appropriate for teaching to take place within single-sex classes and we will ensure that in these circumstances no one gender will be unfairly advantaged.

As a Catholic school, we commit to inclusivity and see all students as of equal value, whatever their background, culture and *protected characteristics*. We promote mutual respect between all members of our school community.

Within the curriculum we seize opportunities to promote mutual respect of individuals and cultures and to overcome prejudice. We promote opportunities for empathy with those in differing circumstances. We recognise the need for positive discrimination and differentiation where appropriate (to encourage individuals in curriculum areas where there may be a traditional reluctance for particular groups to engage) and seize opportunities to celebrate success. We encourage our students to challenge discrimination should they encounter it in those around them and in society at large. We encourage them to see themselves as citizens of a world where injustice should be appropriately challenged and where all have rights and responsibilities.

In assessing the academic progress of individuals and groups we take account of *protected characteristics* and seek to provide appropriate additional support to overcome under-performance. In their monitoring of pupil progress, the IEB will look to staff senior leaders to account for the provision of appropriate support and its effectiveness.

In our striving for justice we look to the example and lifestyle of Jesus Christ and his reaching out to the poor and marginalised.

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