St Catherine's
School & College

Specialists in Speech, Language and Communication Needs

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

JANUARY 2025

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Introduction

St Catherine's is committed to being inclusive. We view our diverse population of both students and staff as one of our greatest strengths. In order for us to ensure everyone can thrive and meet their full potential, it is essential that inclusion and equality of opportunity be at the core of all of our activities.
This policy outlines St Catherine's inclusive commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and equal treatment for staff, students, trustees, volunteers, parents, contractors, customers and others in terms of service provision and employment.

Scope

This policy applies equally to current and prospective members of our school community, including parents. The school is committed to a zero tolerance policy in relation to less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic. The policy applies specifically to discrimination and equality of opportunity in respect of 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equalities Act 2010: age; disability; race; sex; religion or cultural beliefs; gender reassignment; marital status and civil partnership; sexual orientation; and pregnancy/maternity. It applies across the range of employment policies and practice, including those relating to discipline and grievance.

Our school is committed to promoting and developing inclusion and equality of opportunity in all its functions and will see to do this by:

- Communicating its commitment to equality and diversity to all its members of its community
- Ensuring all staff and pupils are aware of this policy
- Developing monitoring, evaluation and review of mechanisms of school policies and decision making
- Demonstrating our zero tolerance attitude towards discrimination by taking all allegations seriously

Responsibilities

St Catherine's values its staff, students, governors, volunteers, parents, contractors, customers and others and expects them to be treated in a respectful manner. Accordingly, all have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The senior leadership team, both involving and supported by our school council and governing body, have responsibility for ensuring that the school operates within the legal framework for equality and for implementing the policy across our sites.

Each member of the school community is responsible for being alert to and challenging discrimination; embracing diversity; respecting different faiths and beliefs; and upholding quality of opportunity for all.

Legal framework

St Catherine's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination highlighted within the legal framework:

- Direct discrimination, where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic;
- Indirect discrimination, when a requirement or a condition is applied which has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate;
- Associative discrimination, where there is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic;
- Perceptive discrimination, where there is direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic;
- Harassment, when there is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic;
- Third party harassment, when there is potential liability for the harassment of staff, students, trustees, volunteers, parents, contractors, customers and others by other individuals or organisations; and
- Victimisation, when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equalities Act or is thought to have done so.

Aims and Values

St Catherine's aims to promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community and both celebrate and value diversity. The aims of this policy and the school's ethos as a whole are to:

- Eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a learning difficult or special educational need, or because English is an additional language
- Comply with the school's equality obligations contained in the Equality Act 2010
- Provide a secure and safe environment for our students where they can thrive and achieve all of the outcomes of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Provide an environment where all individuals through this policy and others such as PSHE and mental health and wellbeing, feel valued and have a sense of belonging
- Prepare our students for a life in a diverse and inclusive society where everyone has their place
- Include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity
- Provide and promote information about the diversity of UK society through areas such as our approach to SMSC
- Actively challenge discrimination and ensure that all members of the school community learning from these experiences
- Embed inclusion through all of our activities

St Catherine's will provide equality of opportunity and equal treatment as an integral part of good practice. The organisation is committed to a working environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are valued and recognised fully. It will support its staff, students, governors, volunteers, parents, contractors, customers and others in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour.

Our school will always be a welcoming place where everyone is valued 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 environment. Our broad, balanced and appropriate integrated curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of difference, to maximise their potential and thrive. We want to foster good relations and advance equality across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We actively promote inclusion and will challenge any form of discrimination and promote harmonious relations in all areas in internal and external school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement and take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

Admissions

Our school treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the school's admissions policy. St Catherine's accepts application from pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic.

Educational approach

Our school will afford all students access to an integrated educational provision including all benefits, facilities and services irrespective of any protected characteristics subject to our obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and considerations of safety and welfare.

Our school will not discriminate against a student on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

We will seek to educate students in a multicultural, anti-prejudicial and anti-racist environment using our curriculum, assemblies, PSHE and SMSC programme to promote understanding, appreciation and tolerance.

Our school recognises that discrimination may be direct or indirect or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and will be dealt with in line with our anti bullying and positive behaviour management policies.

We will:

- Treat all members of our school community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed within this policy
- Ensure that our students, who all have an EHCP, receive necessary educational and welfare services
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language receive additional support, as required
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviours by students, staff and parents

- Foster a culture that promotes openness and encourages and supports pupils to communicate if they have experienced discrimination
- Offer our students access to all areas of our curriculum, including being able to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities
- Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity and are given appropriate training and support
- Work with parents, carers and external agencies where appropriate to tackle and prevent discrimination in school
- Ensure that we review, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our inclusive practices

Reasonable adjustments

Our school has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled young people. We will both inform and consult with parents and carers about any reasonable adjustments, if any, that the school is able to make for their child. We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments (case by case considerations) for staff or students who request to be known as gender neutral, gender fluid, undergoing gender reassignment or are transgender.
We will continue to monitor and review our physical environment to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps could be taken to alleviate any substantial disadvantage caused to our students. Please see our accessibility plan for further details.

Employment practices

St Catherine's aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable in the context of this policy. Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. All training opportunities will be published widely to all appropriate employees and in such a way so as not to exclude particular groups.

St Catherine's regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of staff, students, trustees, volunteers, parents, contractors, customers and others in the course of work as disciplinary offences which could be regarded as gross misconduct.

St Catherine's as a service provider

In developing its services, St Catherine's will seek to ensure access for students, customers and others. St Catherine's will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any individual or group.

Supporting St Catherine's students' religious, spiritual and moral well-being

Our school is inclusive of all religions and faiths and both welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from all religions and faiths (or no religion or faith).

The principal aim of St Catherine's religious education programme is to enable students to understand the practice and nature of religious beliefs and their effects on people's lives.

Students may be excused from parts of our religious, PSHE and SMSC education at the request of their parents/carers. If a student has a particular belief that he/she wishes to practise, staff are happy to support him/her to attend services held locally wherever possible.

Responsibilities

Governing body

It is the schools governing body's responsibility to:

- Ensure that staff act as role models of inclusive behaviour and practice
- Ensure that the school complies with its equality obligations
- Ensure that the schools policies and procedures are monitored in light of this policy and the schools wider equality obligations
- Be involved, together with the Principal in dealing with serious breaches of this policy

Principal and senior leadership team

It is the Principal and senior Leadership teams responsibility to:

- Ensure effective implementation of this policy and its associated procedures
- Ensure that staff are sufficiently aware and trained with equality and diversity
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice within the school, be it by staff, students, parents or visitors
- Have procedures in place to deal effectively with any reported incidents of discrimination, victimisation or harassment
- Ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of and comply with this policy

All staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Positively role model inclusive behaviour
- Actively challenge any forms of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying
- Promote an inclusive environment, identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the school curriculum and in the school's culture
- Commit to broadening their knowledge, confidence and inclusive behaviour by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources

Concerns and complaints

Our school will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination and/or harassment. Any student that communicates that they have been discriminated against or been subject to discriminatory conduct can be supported by any adult from across our integrated care, education and therapy team who will then report this to the DSL.

Any student that harasses another student on the grounds of a protected characteristic will be subject to the school's disciplinary procedure through our positive behaviour management and anti-bullying policies.

If parents or carers feel that this policy has been breached then they should raise their concern or complaint via the school's complaints policy which is available on our website or in any format upon request.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and at least annually to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure appropriate steps can be taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to ensure the aims of the policy are carried out in accordance with the school's quality obligations.
The school's governing body will undertake monitoring of this policy and its associated procedures and effectiveness and the nominated equality and diversity governor will monitor the school throughout the academic year.
Any breaches of this policy will be rigorously followed up.

Data collection

St Catherine's complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Any data, either qualitative and/or quantitative, required in order to monitor the requirements of the impact of the Equalities Act 2010 will be collected where it is reasonable, proportionate and practical to do so.

Monitored by Governors February 2023, January 2025

Linked policies:
Student positive behaviour policy
Staff code of conduct
Recruitment policy
Admissions policy
Anti Bullying policy
Mental health and wellbeing policy
Accessibility policy

Legislation and guidance:
The Equality Act 2010
The Equality Act 2010 (specific duties) Regulations 2011
DfE The Equality Act 2010 and schools