



Equalities Policy

Reviewed July 2022

1. Introduction and mission statement

Introduction

St Peter's is an inclusive school which thrives on the diversity of its staff, parents and pupils. The aim of this policy is to ensure that we promote equal and fair treatment of all members of our community.

This policy outlines the commitment of the staff, pupils and governors of St Peter's to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community. For our school this means not simply treating everybody the same but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of pupils in school, whilst celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all members of the school community. These include:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Parents/carers
- The governing body
- Multi-agency staff linked to the school
- Visitors to school
- Students on placement

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 St Peter's, equality is a key principle for treating all people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential - irrespective of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation,

age, gender re-assignment or any other recognised area of discrimination including pregnancy and maternity.

Our DEI mission is to promote equality of opportunity across all protected characteristics. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. At St Peter's, equality is a key principle for treating all people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential - irrespective of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, gender re-assignment or any other recognised area of discrimination including pregnancy and maternity.

It is rooted in the following key 7 principles:

1. All learners are of equal value. Whether or not they 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 and whatever their sexual orientation.
2. We recognize, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
3. We use our Christian values to foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.
6. We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

Ethos and atmosphere

At St Peter's, the leadership of the school community demonstrates mutual respect between all members of the school community:

- There is an openness of atmosphere which welcomes everyone to the school. We greet all children, staff and pupils warmly.

- All within the school community are prepared to challenge any type of discriminatory and/or bullying behaviour, eg through unwanted attentions (verbal or physical) and unwelcome or offensive remarks or suggestions
- All pupils are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect

2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Trauma Informed Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

3. Equal Opportunities for Staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at St Peter's School.

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer duties

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Senior Leadership Team and governors work together to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

4. Equality and the Law: the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws (concerning race, disability and gender) with a single Act. It simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. The Act also strengthens the law in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality. Most of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010 and it applies to the School leaders, staff and its Governing Body.

The Act ensures that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils or staff. Schools that were already complying with the previous equality legislation should not find major differences in what they will need to do.

The Protected Characteristics

The Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of eight “protected characteristics”. These are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race, including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

Disability

The protected characteristic of disability applies to a person who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal, day to day activities. To qualify for protection from discrimination, a disabled person no longer has to show that their impairment affects a particular capacity (such as mobility or eyesight). Where however unfavourable treatment of a disabled person can be justified by showing the treatment was

intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair, balanced and reasonable way, the treatment will not be unlawful.

Gender reassignment

The protected characteristic of gender reassignment applies to a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process to change their sex. To qualify for protection from discrimination a transsexual person no longer has to show that they are under medical supervision.

Direct discrimination

The law prohibits direct discrimination in services and public functions. Direct discrimination happens when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination covers disability. Direct discrimination can also occur when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic even though that person does not have that characteristic but is treated less favourably because they are linked or associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. Further, direct discrimination can also occur when a person is wrongly thought to have a particular protected characteristic or is treated as if they do.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination happens when there is a rule, policy or even practice that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantages people who share a particular protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination will only be lawful if it can be shown that the rule, policy or practice is intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair, balanced and reasonable way.

Harassment

If someone is harassed because of their protected characteristic and in consequence, treated less favourably than someone else, this counts as unlawful direct discrimination.

Victimisation

If someone is victimised or treated badly as a result of reasonably and fairly making or supporting a complaint, for example, about discrimination, that treatment is unlawful.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Act introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which applies to the School and which extends to all the 8 protected characteristics listed above. This duty came into effect 1 April 2010. It has 3 main elements. In carrying out their functions, the school leaders, staff and governors are required to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination** (i.e. harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act);
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims above in the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of all equality issues must influence the decisions reached by the school and its governors, such as how they develop, evaluate and review policy and how they design, deliver and evaluate services offered.

Having due regard to advancing equality of opportunity involves thinking about the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- meet the needs of those with protected characteristics and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to take part in public life.

Fostering good relations includes tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between those with protected characteristics and those without.

Complying with the PSED may result in some people being treated better than others as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve making use of the new positive action provisions in order to provide a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic. Such measure will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim, for example, providing catch up intervention for Bangladeshi pupils in KS2 or working to bridge the gap between disadvantaged and advantaged pupils.

Implementing the PSED means that the School should ensure:

Knowledge: those making decisions are aware of and comply with the Equality Duty;

Timeliness: the Equality Duty must be complied with before and at the time the decision or policy is made;

Real consideration: the Equality Duty is not tick-box exercise: it must be exercised as a matter of substance;

Sufficient information must be available to comply with the Equality Duty;

No delegation: the School must ensure that any third parties exercising functions on the School's behalf are capable of complying with the Equality Duty;

Review: the Equality Duty is a continuing duty and compliance with it must be kept under review.

Publication of equality information

It is up to Schools to decide in what format they publish equality information. The simplest approach may be to set up an equalities page on their website where all relevant information is kept or links to it are available. The key requirement is that the information is accessible to those members of the School community and the public who want to see it.

Equality objectives

We identify and publish equalities objectives on a four-year cycle. The objectives are reviewed each year by the Governing Body and published on our website.

Auxiliary Aids

The school is required by law to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. We are dedicated to making sure all our learners can make the most of their time at St Peter's. Specific guidance for making reasonable adjustments can be found on the school website.

Health related questions for job applicants

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. Therefore, applicants cannot be required to fill in a generic health questionnaire as part of the application process.

Community cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

5. Consultation and involvement

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, pupils and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, or governors' meeting;
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / INSET;
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole-school pupil surveys on children's attitudes to self and school;
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of governors

The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability.

The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.

The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.

The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

One link governor is appointed to ensure the school maintains provisions for Equalities and fair treatment.

The role of the head teacher (or senior leader responsible for Equalities)

It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's Equality Plan and she is supported by the governing body in doing so.

It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.

The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.

The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff (teaching and non-teaching)

All staff will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Plan.

All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.

All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the headteacher.

Teachers support the work of support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

7. Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headmistress and racist incidents are reported to the governing body and local authority where required.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as:

‘any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’.

Types of discriminatory incident

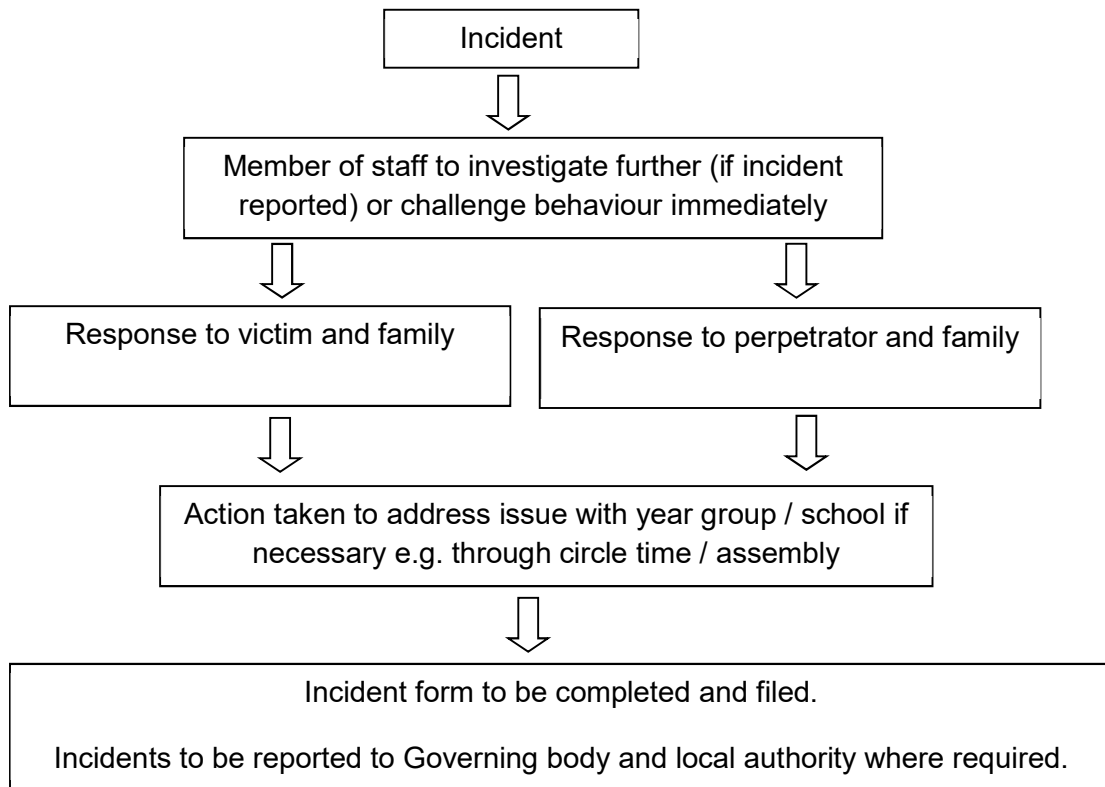
Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim’s race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and reporting incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

Procedure for responding and reporting is outlined below:



8. Review of progress and impact

The Plan has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Plan annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on a three year cycle.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

9. Publishing the plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme, we will:

- Publish our plan on the school website;
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available.

Signed:

Date: