

EQUALITIES POLICY

Author / reviewer responsible:	NM	Last amended:	T3 25/26
Authorisation by resolution of:	Governors	Date of authorisation:	T3 25/26
		Date of next review:	September 2027

1. Guiding Principles

The purpose of this policy is to define St Joseph's Catholic Primary School's commitment to equality in everything that we do.

St Joseph's is committed to equality in both employment and education provision. We recognise that there is a great deal of diversity in our school and aim to ensure that pupils, parents, governors, employees, contractors and those who may potentially join the St Joseph's community, are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. We oppose all forms of discrimination and it is our policy and ethos to promote equality to all.

As a Christian school we believe we are created in the image and likeness of God. We also believe that we were born to be part of one body and as such, although each person is unique, everyone should be treated with respect, compassion and as members of God's family.

Through this policy we:

- Recognise the importance of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (the Act), of Age, Disability, Sexual orientation, Race (including nationality, ethnic or national origin), Gender (including gender reassignment), Religion or belief, Pregnancy or maternity, and Marital status (including civil partnerships).
- Consider wider grounds such as carer responsibilities, domestic circumstances and trade union affiliation in ensuring we act fairly and equally to all.
- Ensure we do not discriminate by association or perception, e.g. treating a pupil unfairly based on the protected characteristics of their parents or other family members.
- Recognise the four types of unlawful behaviour which are set out in **Appendix 1**.

2. Equalities vision

As a school at the heart of the Malmesbury community we aspire to give children an allround education that is rooted in Christian values. These values although Christian by nature have strong multi-faith and non-denominational characteristics and as such promote a nurturing environment where all within our community have the opportunity to flourish, become lifelong learners and aspire to fulfil their potential.

3. Equality Objectives 2025 – 2027

As a reflective school, St Joseph's monitor and assess its processes, to ensure they continues to promote equality of opportunity for all. To demonstrate this commitment, we have developed the following equality objectives which will help us take forward equality and diversity matters as an educator and employer, over the next 3 years.

These objectives are as follows:

- To use performance data to monitor pupil achievement and respond to variations between groups of pupils, subjects, key stages, trends over time and comparisons with other schools
- To raise the awareness and skills of staff to promote fairness, equality and good relations in the context of their role
- To ensure that the whole school community contributes to providing an environment that welcomes, protects and respects diverse people
- To ensure that all pupils and other stakeholders are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to school life
- To increase pupil awareness and understanding of different communities, particularly through assemblies and cultural events
- To raise awareness of the impact of bullying, especially where this relates to protected characteristics
- To monitor the incidence of policy breaches

4. Equality into policy and practice

Teaching and Learning

- 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 in respect of this policy.
- Encourage classroom, staffroom and wider school community discussion of equality issues which reflect social stereotypes, expectations, and the impact on learning.
- Include teaching and classroom based approaches appropriate for the whole school population which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.
- Seek to involve the community around the schools in the celebration and raising awareness of cultural issues.

Employment

- St Joseph's is committed to ensuring that employees have equal access to recruitment and career opportunities, training, and professional development.
- St Joseph's recognises that the Act extends beyond the protected characteristics of an individual employee and has broader responsibilities to employees and situations that may be covered by the Act. For example, an employee with parental or caring responsibilities for a disabled dependent may have rights under the Act which the Trust, as their employer, would need to consider.
- All recruitment will be within the provisions of the Act and applications will be monitored to report on recruitment activity, in line with the Act.
- We will make every effort in creating equality of opportunity for employees, ensuring these are accessible and fair to all. Where necessary we will implement reasonable adjustments or additional support, to ensure equality of access to the working environment and opportunity to undertake the job role successfully.
- HR policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to improve, adapt or amend current practices to promote equality of opportunities. All HR and employment policies will be applied consistently and fairly and refer to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010.
- Employees who are in breach of this policy will be dealt with under the staff disciplinary policy.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Governors

The full governing body will approve this policy and are committed to ensuring that it is consistently applied fairly and consistently in policy development, decision making, discussions and initiatives within the school's improvement plan.

As part of this process the governors will nominate a SEN Governor with responsibility for monitoring the quality of SEND provision in St Joseph's

5.2 The headteacher

The headteacher will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently across the school's day to day operation. The headteacher will deal, in the first instance, with any relevant complaints raised under the grievance policy.

5.3 Curriculum leaders including the SENDCo

Curriculum leaders will be responsible for ensuring that St Joseph's Catholic Primary School offers an inclusive curriculum, which promotes equal opportunity and good relations across all groups of pupils, and ensuring that St Joseph's develops teaching and learning strategies and quality CPD that enables all staff are able to deliver inclusive learning.

Curriculum leaders are responsible for ensuring that the St Joseph's SEND and Behaviour Policy is applied consistently within their subject. Through this they will aim to ensure that all adults working within their subject promote equal opportunities and respectful relationships. To enable this the school's SENDCo will oversee and coordinate how teachers manage and enable the day-to-day provision for the school's vulnerable learners. This means that first and foremost the class teachers and classroom adults are the most important people in ensuring the needs of each child are met.

5.4 Employees / other staff

All staff must adhere to this policy. Any relevant complaints from staff will be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure, and as such appropriate staff will deal with the relevant stage of the complaint.

St Joseph's will view all complaints of discrimination seriously. Any complaints will be investigated in accordance with the grievance or complaints policy, whichever is appropriate.

6. Breaches of the Policy

All breaches of this policy should be reported using the appropriate procedures. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant policy.

7. Related policies and documents

- SEND policy
- Admissions policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Children's Anti Bullying Charter
- Children's Behaviour policy
- Supporting children with medical conditions policy
- Accessibility plans – school based
- Complaints policy
- Grievance Policy

8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Full Governing Body or relevant committee every three years or following legislative or procedural change, or following any event that demands retrospective action.

The Equalities Act 2010 defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination – for example if a school were to refuse to let a student be a prefect because she is a lesbian, or an employee was refused a promotion because of their race.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. An example might be holding a parents’ meeting on a Friday evening, which could make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend, or arranging the weekly CPD sessions for teachers on days when no part-time staff are available for work. It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”. This means both that the reason for the rule or practice is legitimate, and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate.

Harassment has a specific legal definition in the Act - it is “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.

Where schools are concerned, the offence of harassment as defined in this way in the Act applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. It is very important to recognise that this does **not** mean that schools are free to bully or harass pupils on these other grounds - to do so would still be unlawful as well as unacceptable. Any case against the school would be on grounds of direct discrimination rather than harassment.

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. Even if what a person did or said was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, they are protected against retaliation unless they were acting in bad faith. The reason for this is to ensure that people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation. As well as it being unlawful to victimise a person who does a protected act, a child must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or a sibling in relation to the Act. This means that a child must not be made to suffer in any way because, for example, her mother has made a complaint of sex discrimination against the school, or her brother has claimed that a teacher is bullying him because he is gay, whether or not the mother or brother was acting in good faith.