

**St Michael's CE Primary School
Sydenham**



Equality Policy

Agreed by the Governing Body on: *November 2013*

Signed (Chair): *Beryl Fielder*

Review Date: *November 2016*

Equal Opportunities Policy

1 Introduction

At St Michael's our school life is founded on our Christian ethos and therefore we expect that everyone, staff, children and the wider community, will be treated and treat others with respect.

Our school's vision statement "For every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God" reflects the individuality of all of our children. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter.

This Equal Opportunities Policy extends to adults: staff, parents and carers.

This policy is in accordance with The Equality Act 2010, which replaced all previous legislation in relation to equal opportunities. In line with that legislation, it seeks to ensure that this school provides equal opportunity for all children and adults, giving due regard to groups with 'protected characteristics', in terms of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership, in accordance with the Act.

2 Aims and objectives

- We aim not to discriminate against anyone, be they staff, pupil or parent, on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership.
- We aim to promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some pupils differently.
- We seek to ensure that 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 for some groups of pupils.
- We aim to ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training processes are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.
- We aim to challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.
- We value each pupil's worth, celebrating the individuality and cultural diversity of our school community, and showing respect for all minority groups.
- We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are often caused by poor self-image and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

3 Racial equality and cultural diversity

In our school we:

- Promote equality of opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture or religion and promote good relations between people of different racial, cultural and religious groups and communities;
- Will strive to eliminate all forms of racism which seek to disadvantage persons on the grounds of colour, culture or ethnic origin
- Will not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour such as name calling, stereotyping of all ethnic groups, insulting remarks, offensive graffiti, undue pressure on individuals and bullying. It will not use literature that is racially biased and dependent on stereotypes, nor will it allow the distribution of racist literature or pamphlets or permit the wearing of racially offensive symbols.
- Will take immediate and positive action against any racist offences whoever may be the perpetrator according to the school policies and procedures. Those responsible will be made aware of the school's opposition to racism and reasons will be given.
- Will endeavour to develop the curriculum in order to create an ethos that meets the needs of all its pupils and so provide the best possible environment in which all children flourish in their potential, spiritually, morally, socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically.

4 Disability equality

- Some children in our school may have disabilities. We are committed to addressing individual support as required. All reasonable steps are taken to remove barriers to access and to ensure that these children are not disadvantaged compared with non-disabled children.
- The school is committed to monitor the school for accessibility for all and where necessary make modifications as are reasonably possible which would allow disabled children and adults full access to the school premises and to all areas of learning.
- Teachers modify teaching and learning and review the curriculum regularly to ensure all pupils have equal access to learning. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, ensure access, modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities if children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.
- To ensure there is equal access to out of school activities, including educational visits.
- The school's aim is to ensure the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities and to provide signing or translation when needed.

5 Gender equality

The Equality Act (2006) amended the requirements of the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). It added to the duty to eliminate sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, the duty to promote gender equality. However we recognise that there is still widespread discrimination and persistent gender inequality. Both sexes suffer from the stereotyping of their roles and needs and such stereotyping has to be understood, challenged and overcome.

In accordance with our school's mission statement and values, we welcome the statutory Gender Equality Duty. In compliance with the General Duty, St Michael's CE School has due regard for the need to, and works to:

- Eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination
- Eliminate sexual harassment
- Promote gender equality

By unlawful sexual discrimination, we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could be done directly but that it could also occur indirectly. Indirect discrimination means that a particular policy or practice may impact more negatively on one gender than on the other, or may favour one gender to the disadvantage of the other.

By sexual harassment we refer to behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. We see such behaviour as also damaging to the perpetrator.

We understand 'sex' to refer to the **biological** differences between males and females and 'gender' to refer to the wider **social** roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognize and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.

We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage.

We will take steps to counteract the effects of any past discrimination in staff recruitment. Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender we will seek specialist advice.

We are working to develop our understanding of the major gender equality issues in our school's functions and services. In order to do this we:

- Collect and analyse school data and other gender equality relevant information, including data about our local area
- Review all our school policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality
- Ensure governors, staff, pupils, parents and others in our school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality
- Assess and address the causes of any gender pay gap

We have put in place a number of measures to raise the achievement of the boys, in literacy particular. These may include:

- ensuring that early literacy skills are promoted in all activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- ensuring that the starting points for writing activities capture the interests and imagination of boys and girls alike;
- removing gender bias from our resources and ensuring, for example, that fiction books capture boys' interest;
- employing a variety of activities, and include a kinaesthetic element;
- making sure that our school environment promotes positive male role models, in relation to learning and achievement;
- minimising male stereotyping;
- providing challenge, competition and short-term goals;
- valuing and celebrating academic achievement in ways which will motivate boys.

6 Religion and Belief

As a church school we aim to provide a quality education based on Christian values preparing children to become good citizens of the world in which we live. At St Michael's we aim to teach our children the Christian values such as trust, honesty, forgiveness and compassion for one another. We live in a multicultural and multifaith society, so it is important that we teach our children about other faiths. The school has drawn up a balanced Scheme of Work which teaches about the major religions Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. We want to ensure that our children have an understanding of different faiths and are capable of making balanced judgements in the future. We also want them to see that similar values underpin different religions.

7 Sexual orientation

Our school recognises the need to protect students from unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation as required by the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.

Therefore school will not tolerate abusive comments which relate to people's sexuality. Such incidents will be recorded and parents involved.

8 Anti-bullying and discrimination

Bullying occurs when someone knowingly, and often repeatedly, commits an unwelcome act (either verbal or physical) towards an individual or group.

Harassment is a form of bullying where the intention of the unwelcome act is to cause insult or injury for specific reasons connected to the recipient's identity.

Please see [anti-bullying policy](#) for detail regarding the procedures in place to deal with bullying and harassment.

9 The role of the class teacher

- Class teachers recognise the possibility of their own prejudices, but do their best to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. We do not knowingly discriminate against any child.
- When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups, or of boys and girls. All staff ensure that the language they use does not reinforce stereotypes or prejudice.
- We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics include examples of the significant contributions women have made in this country's history. In geography, the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia, and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.
- All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any incidents in the school log book and draw them to the immediate attention of the headteacher.

10 The role of the Headteacher

It is the headteacher's role to:

- ensure that the school's policy on Equal Opportunities is implemented effectively;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on Equal Opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations;
- ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against;
- promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum for pupils, and in providing opportunities for professional development for staff;
- promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in school assemblies, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the school;
- manage all incidents of unfair treatment, and any racist incidents, with due seriousness, in line with this policy and report it to governors.

11 The role of governors

In this policy statement, the governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

The governing body collects, analyses and evaluates a range of school data. We check that all pupils are making the best possible progress and that no group of pupils is underachieving. To do this we monitor:

- admissions;
- attainment;
- exclusions;
- rewards and sanctions;

- parents' and pupils' questionnaires.

The governing body seeks to ensure that people from the 'protected groups' as defined by The Equality Act 2010 (see section 1.2 above) are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or minority group a child may come from.

The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their gender, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion has a bearing on school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively, and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

12 Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The governors will therefore:

- monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it with the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process, so that no one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- require the headteacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents/carers, staff or pupils regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the school's Behaviour Policy, and the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years or sooner if it is considered necessary.