

St John's C of E Infant School

Equal Opportunities Policy

Agreed by Staff:	October 2020
Agreed by Governors:	October 2020
Next Review:	October 2023

Schools are required to meet significant 'positive statutory duties' in the area of equality. These duties require schools to promote equality of opportunity in everything that they do.

The "Public Sector Equality Duty" means that schools may not take a **reactive** approach to equality, but a **proactive** approach to equality must be adopted. In practice, this requires all schools to:-

- take positive and proactive steps to identify areas of potential inequality before they have the chance to have an impact on people;
- make changes to ensure that any areas of potential inequality are eliminated.

Overall, equality duties are not new to schools. The Duty to Promote Race Equality came into force in 2002, The Duty to Promote Disability Equality came into force in 2006 and The Gender Equality Duty in 2007.

As of 1 April 2011, The Equality Act (2010) has required schools to meet a single Public Sector Equality Duty which encompasses "general" and "specific" duties in promoting equality across the full range of protected characteristics, namely:

- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy or Maternity
- Age (as their role as employers)

Our Single Equality Scheme (SES) integrates our statutory duties in relation to race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, age, marriage and civil partnerships and promoting community cohesion. The duties cover staff, pupils, and people using the services of the school, such as parents and community, and includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

Our Scheme enables us to achieve a framework for which action covers all eight equality strands and ensures that we meet our responsibilities of the public sector duties in an inclusive way.

We will continue to meet our statutory duties by reporting annually and it will be reviewed by our Governing Body and will cover activities undertaken in relation to the eight equality strands and promoting community cohesion.

2 Meeting our duties

Under statutory duties all schools have a 'General Duty' to:

- (i) **Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;**
- (ii) **Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; this means: -**
 - removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
 - encouraging persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- (iii) **Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; this means: -**
 - tackling prejudice
 - promoting understanding.

Our commitment to this is evident in our Inclusion Policy which should be read in conjunction with this scheme.

Race Equality

The **general duty** to promote race equality means that we must have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
2. Promote equality of opportunity
3. Promote good relations between people and different racial groups.

Dealing with racist incidents

We follow the Local Authority Procedures for dealing with racist actions or any form of discrimination.

Disability Equality

The **general duty** to promote disability equality is owed to all disabled people which means that we must have due regard to:

1. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
2. Eliminate unlawful discrimination
3. Eliminate disability related harassment
4. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
5. Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
6. Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

Accessibility

There is specific disability legislation in relation to disabled pupils and accessibility which means we must plan strategically over time to:

1. Increase access to the curriculum
2. Make improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access
3. Make written information accessible to pupils in a range of different ways

We must ensure that disabled pupils do not receive less favourable treatment and to do this the school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Gender Equality

The **general duty** to promote gender equality means that we must have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and
2. Promote equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys.

The duty also includes the need to consider actions to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

Transgender

Transgender people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty. The term transgendered refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender. The school will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within the school community.

Age, sexual orientation, religion, belief, pregnancy and maternity

We must ensure that we do not discriminate on these grounds. The scheme includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

Community Cohesion

We also have a responsibility to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across different cultures, ethnic, religious and non-religious socio-economic groups.

3 Our School Values and Vision

A copy of our current school aims is attached in the appendix and can be viewed on the school website and school prospectus. In addition, in meeting the duties described above will mean that all our actions will embody our school's key principles and values which include:

- We strive to make the best possible provisions for all pupils, regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious belief, national origin or status, gender or sexual orientation.
- We respect diversity. We know that treating people equally is not simply a matter of treating people the same. We believe the process of taking necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given an equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and enjoy community life. This means that we do our best to make reasonable adjustments for disability, recognise and celebrate cultural differences, and understand the different needs and experiences of boys and girls.
- We know that equality is not simply about protecting the potentially vulnerable. We believe that all children may be disadvantaged by the holding of prejudicial views and seek to promote good relationships between all groups, and positive attitudes towards disabled people, people from different ethnic or cultural groups or faith backgrounds and people of different gender or sexual orientation.
- We value staff for their ability and potential to help us make the best possible provision for the children in our school, regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious belief, national origin, gender or sexual orientation.
- We are proactive in our efforts to identify and minimise existing barriers or inequalities.
- We seek the views of all groups affected by the policies and work of our school and try to involve them in policy review.
- We recognise our role in promoting community cohesion, and actively encourage the participation in the community of all learners in our school.

4 Our School Setting

St John's C of E Infant School has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30 with the capacity to accommodate 90 pupils, aged 4-7. The vast majority of pupils speak English as a first language with very few EAL children. We also have a very low percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium.

5 Collecting and analysing equality information for pupils at St John's Infant School

At St John's C of E Infant School we use the curriculum and teaching to enhance the self-esteem of all those it serves and to provide a learning environment in which each individual is encouraged to fulfil her/his potential.

We collect and analyse the following equality information for our pupils:

- Attainment levels
- Progress levels
- Attendance levels
- Exclusions
- Attendance at extended school activities/extra-curricular activities (eg, educational visits)
- Participation in School Council
- Inclusion in the following groups: EAL, SEND, FSM, Summer born.

6 Collecting and analysing equality information for employment and governance at St John's C of E Infant School

St John's C of E Infant School is committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

St John's C of E Infant School also aims to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and governing body that is able to provide a service that respects and responds to the diverse needs of the local population.

All staff vacancies are filled using the Local Authority application forms which contain requests for information relating to ethnicity, gender and disability. Applicants can, however, choose to indicate they do not wish to give this information. All information relating to staff is kept on the school's central database – SIMS. We collect and analyse the following profile information for our staff and governors.

Information Gathering (Staff and Governors)

- Applications for employment (via local authority recruitment forms) □ Staff profiles
- Attendance on staff training events
- Disciplinary and grievance cases – if any
- Staff appraisals/performance management.

We are mindful of the laws relating to confidentiality when devising this Policy. Although there is a statutory duty to share information about the school's Single Equality Scheme (SES), we recognise that care must be taken when sharing or publishing statistics, data or information to ensure that any information published cannot be used to identify individuals.

In respect of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, any analysis of sensitive information is undertaken by a senior member of the school staff and a synopsis passed to a working party as required.

We have identified the following: The Governing Body profile is not collected.

7 Consultation and Involving People

St John's C of E Infant School is in Churt which is a village with a predominantly white community. We appreciate that the legislation states it is important that minority groups (for race, disability and gender) are involved in the formulation and development of equality schemes and action plans, and we endeavour to involve as many people as possible in our community. We believe that there has been equal opportunity for all genders to contribute also.

We involve pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers, and our wider school community in creating the Single Equality Scheme and policy

Examples include:

- Discussion at School Council
- Contact of parents/carers
- Discussion at staff meetings
- Discussions at governing bodies

During discussions, the following good practice was identified: □

Disabled toilet available

- Staff well trained on the needs some children have
- Friendly and approachable staff
- Procedures in place to meet medical needs children may have in conjunction with school nursing team
- Good record of pastoral care
- Admission form criteria includes information on disability
- Key policies in place – including Healthy Schools
- IEPs in place for pupils with specific needs

Discussions also identified the following needs:

- Ensure easy access to the Equality Scheme when complete – for all our staff community. Share the findings equally and easily
- Ensure all in the school community understand the definition of 'Disability' as stated by the 2005 Disability Act
- Ensure children are taught about differences and tolerance – as part of the PSHE curriculum
- Create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect where persons involved with the school feel confident about disclosing any disabilities they may have. Also, to feel comfortable with being open about ethnicity/religious beliefs
- Ensure community views are sought in a variety of ways – rather than just questionnaires, to ensure equality of ability to participate in any information gathering
- Improve areas of the school to ensure they are fully accessible to all in our community – including those with physical disabilities, hearing and visual disabilities

8 What We Have Achieved So Far

This section details what we have achieved so far in relation to the equality duties and celebrating the outcomes.

Race equality

We have no tolerance on racist incidents, we monitor and implement training should we have such incidents.

Disability equality

Currently we do have a disabled pupils with limited accessibility problems within the school as well as a disabled volunteer who visits. All pupils and staff are fully involved in the life of the school and have full access to all we offer. If we foresee that mobility could become an issue for a staff member or a pupil, action will be taken. We recognise that the main entrance to the school and internal access to classrooms are conducive to independent access for a wheelchair user. We also have a toilet accessible to disabled users.

In addition, we believe that St John's C of E Infant School can celebrate the following good practice:

Community Cohesion

In addition to the detailed description given above, we also undertake the following:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – Our curriculum is fully accessible to all children. Parents are regularly informed of the learning that takes place both in newsletters and through open meetings. We feel that our curriculum has a global perspective, (eg, Festivals, Tales from Other Cultures, Around the World in 80 minutes) enabling children to see themselves in context in the wider world community. Our children, through PSHE and the RE curriculum, have a sound understanding of difference and how different is neither better nor worse – it is something to be celebrated.
- Engagement and extended services – all our children have access to a range of extended services. We have a wonderful Home School Link Worker who works closely with the Headteacher and all staff to provide additional support to families where needed.

Age

There is representation on our School Council from children from Years R, 1 & 2. The School Council meets regularly and is supported by a staff member. They disseminate discussions and decisions via class meetings. As children progress through the school the children begin to gain responsibilities. These encourage children to become fully involved in the life of the school and to gain an understanding of what it means to be an active member of a community

Religion and Belief

Pupils are taught about Christianity and the major world faiths – Judaism & Islam in detail. Festivals from a variety of faiths are celebrated, eg, Diwali, Chinese New Year. Worship and prayer are explored in the context of all religions and we try to convey to children how important faith, belief, worship and prayer are to some people and to encourage the value of respect for all. As a Christian school, we have strong links with the local church. The local vicar or members of the Weyside Assembly Team may lead Acts of Worship throughout the year. All children are encouraged to attend – and participate at their own level. We respect parents right to withdraw their children from RE and Collective Worship.

9 Equality impact assessments

Equality impact assessment is a systematic method of checking all school policies and practices to ensure they are genuinely accessible and meet the needs of all our staff and the local community in relation to age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

St John's C of E Infant School is keen to ensure that none of its policies and practices disadvantages people with disabilities, from different ethnic backgrounds or a differing gender. The school has in place a range of associated policies that have been agreed by all staff and governors.

All school policies are reviewed over a three-year period, some key policies more frequently than this – on the next review, provision for disabled staff and pupils will be considered.

10 Other School Policies

We have used our existing school policies and documents to inform our Single Equality Scheme (SES). These include:

- School Development Plan
- Inclusion Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Personal, Social & Health Education Policy
- Inclusion and Accessibility Action Plan
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Whistle-blowing Policy

11 Roles and Responsibilities

- Our governing body will ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements in respect of this Scheme and Action Plan.
- Our Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this Scheme, and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and report progress to the governing body.
- The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the scheme.
- Our staff are expected to promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for children with additional needs, maintain a good level of awareness of equalities issues.
- Our pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to treat each other with respect, to feel valued and to speak out if they witness or are subjected to any inappropriate language or behaviour.
- We will take steps to ensure all visitors to the school, including parents and carers are adhering to our commitment to equality.

12 Commissioning and Procurement

St John's C of E Infant School is required by law to make sure that when we buy services from another organisation to help us provide our services, that organisation will comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in selection during any tendering process.

13 Publishing our scheme

Our Single Equality Scheme policy will be made accessible to all persons within our local and school community in the following ways:

- School website
- Parents notice board
- Staff meetings
- Staff induction

14 Annual Review of Progress

We will continue to review annually the actions we have taken in the development of our Single Equality Scheme policy:

- The results of any information gathering activities for race, disability and gender and how we used this information towards improvement
- The outcomes of involvement activities from minority groups within our community
- A summary from equality impact assessments undertaken
- An update of the progress made against priorities
- Celebrating what we have achieved in relation to promoting community cohesion

15 Ongoing evolvments of our scheme

We will continue to involve people from all aspects of our school community in the ongoing evolution of our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan. This includes:

- A regular slot at School Council meetings to discuss equality and diversity issues
- A regular slot at staff meetings
- Having periodic school Open Days for the wider school community to celebrate the work of pupils and give the opportunity for feedback, including plays and performances.

Our Aims

Enquiring Minds and Open Hearts

- To provide a school day that excites, challenges and motivates each child
- To encourage children to become independent learners
- For all children to reach their full potential academically, socially and physically
- To ensure children acquire a sense of personal and social responsibility and spiritual and moral awareness
- To ensure children develop confidence, high self-esteem and tolerance of and respect for other people including those of other cultures and races
- To develop lively enquiring minds that will enable children to reason, question and participate in discussions
- To provide our children with an enthusiasm to be life-long learners and confident citizens of the future

Achieved by

- Having high expectations for all children with regard to all areas of school life including behaviour
- Providing equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities regardless of aptitude, ability, gender, or ethnic background
- Providing a caring and Christian environment in which children feel safe and happy to learn
- Providing a caring and Christian environment in which children feel able express their faith
- Providing an excellent education delivered through a broad and balanced curriculum and a wide range of experiences
- Ensuring that spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is evident throughout the curriculum
- By celebrating achievements and nurturing the development of the whole child
- Maintaining close links with our parents, St John's Church and the local community
- For staff to act as role models with regard to behaviour, showing respect and relationships
- Providing a range of teaching strategies to accommodate all learners
- To organise children's learning in ways that promote excellence, enjoyment, perseverance, self-discipline and independent learning
- By having all staff and governors working towards these shared goals

We aim to provide an abundance of experiences and activities which will help all children to develop their capabilities as fully as possible within the needs and complexities of today's society. By the time children leave St John's, our aim is for them to be independent, confident learners, who:

- Read fluently and accurately with understanding, discrimination and enjoyment
- Communicate clearly in speech and writing in ways appropriate to various occasions and purposes
- Write legibly and readily with satisfactory standards of spelling syntax, punctuation and usage
- Are numerate and able to apply mathematical concepts in every day settings
- Have developed an enquiring mind and scientific approach to problem solving
- Are confident to use their ICT skills to support their learning throughout the curriculum
- Work in collaboration with others to investigate, interpret and solve problems
- Use a range of creative media to express themselves
- Possess a degree of agility and co-ordination leading to confidence in a range of physical activities
- Have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities regardless of aptitude, ability, gender or ethnic background
- Have acquired a sense of personal and social responsibility and spiritual and moral awareness. They will have developed a feeling of self-worth, self-esteem and tolerance of and respect for, other people, including those of other cultures and races

In summary, our school aims to provide an environment in which the best qualities of mind, body and spirit can be nurtured, thereby developing feeling and imagination together with an aesthetic awareness and appreciation of the natural world. We aim to preserve a sense of awe and wonder in the children's perception of the universe and to ensure an appreciation of spiritual values and the heritage of human achievement in art, music, literature, science and technology. We hope our children will have the enthusiasm to be joyful, lifelong learners and confident citizens of the future.

