

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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Policy Available for Staff at:	College website
Policy Available for Parents at:	College Website
Headteacher:	Ms M Roberts

This policy links with our policies on:

- Accessibility Plan
- SEND Report Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- British Values Statement

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

**“THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE, BETWEEN SLAVE AND FREE, BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN, YOU ARE ALL ONE IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS”.
(GALATIANS 3:22)**

RATIONALE

The school believes that it must ensure that each and every individual realises their potential in a complete range of educational experiences: academically, socially and spiritually.

We recognise individual needs and differences and respond to them. No pupil should be discriminated against because of any protected characteristic as determined by the Equalities Act 2010. These characteristics are:

- Gender
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Age (not in relation to students)
- Marital and civil partnerships (not in relation to students)

There are exceptions made to the discriminations provision for schools in the Equality Act, these include 'schools of a religious character'.

We are a community which actively promotes equality of opportunity, tolerance, understanding and the respect of the individual.

Equal opportunities will affect every aspect of school life, the way in which the school is run, what is taught, what materials are used for teaching purposes, and how governors, staff and pupils behave towards each other.

PURPOSES

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PESD) referred to as the General Duty. This came into force in schools in 2012 and is supported by the Children and Families Act, 2014. The General duty requires public bodies, including schools, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is 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 across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Equality Act (2010) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, eg it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, eg a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection

The Equality Act also introduces specific duties to help public bodies meet their obligations under the PSED.

The specific duties regulations require schools:

- To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- To prepare and publish equality objectives.

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation

THEREFORE

In fulfilling our legal obligations we will be guided by seven core statements

1. All learners are of equal value.
2. We recognise, welcome and respect diversity.
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging
4. We observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development.
5. We aim to reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers
6. We consult and involve
7. We strive to ensure that society will benefit.

We must ensure that the aim of developing individual potential to the full is not compromised by prejudiced, traditional expectations. We must ensure that no pupil limits their horizons, or restricts their choices.

We will need to be conscious of pupils with special needs and support them in their development.

We must give opportunities within the curriculum to explore bias and prejudice in our society; the ways in which conditioning occurs, the attitudes which underline it, the effects it has, the alternatives which exist.

Positive attitudes in all pupils and staff towards equality must be promoted.

We must show positive, flexible approaches to implementing curriculum access for those with physical disability, in order to facilitate their whole school involvement.

GUIDELINES

Content and Delivery of the Curriculum

- The curriculum should be open to all pupils. The curriculum will be such that no pupil experiences curriculum restriction due to protected characteristics. This includes any reasonable adjustments needed for disabled persons.

The only exception to this is PE/Games. In games there is greater focus on team Games such as rugby and netball and in PE it was felt that boys and girls perform better in single sex groups. This ensures quality of performance, rather than quantity of sports.

- The option system should be broadly based. Prior to option and career choices every effort will be made to counteract any notions that pupils may already have, that certain subject or career choices are not 'suitable' for their gender.
- The setting/grouping system must be used as a vehicle for ensuring each pupil is being taught in an appropriate group to help them achieve their highest standard, not as a means of classification and organisation which lowers self esteem and reduces expectation of effort and achievement. Staffing must reflect this commitment.
- The curriculum should create an understanding of different environments, societies, cultures and beliefs across this and other countries. Pupils are encouraged to recognise that each society and culture has its own values and traditions.
- Work Experience and careers guidance should not have any gender bias and should challenge all to aspire to achieve their full potential.

Teaching Materials and Resources

- Lists and Records should be in alphabetical order, except where their specific use is for monitoring of achievement by gender.
- Where possible syllabuses, resources and documentation should be free from bias and stereotyping, and promote equal opportunity.
- Displays should promote positive images.

Classroom Practice

- Teachers should make every effort to apportion time equally to all pupils.
- All pupils should be encouraged to participate equally in all activities.
- Pupils will be encouraged to work in mixed gender and mixed ethnic groups.
- Teachers should be conscious of all activities that could lead to pupils devaluing themselves, eg class marks should not be read out, though that is no reason why individuals should not be praised for good work and effort.
- All staff should take care in the use of language to ensure that it does not reinforce any bias, eg in picking pupils for particular "jobs", they should not be chosen on the basis of gender "strong boys to move tables and girls to put up displays".

Assessment and Record Achievement

The procedures for assessment and recording of achievement should recognise the uniqueness and worth of the individual. They should promote self esteem, self confidence and personal dignity. They should celebrate achievement and set targets for future development and progress.

Extra – Curricular Activities, use of Playgrounds, Sports and School Facilities

All facilities must be equally available to all pupils, and all pupils must have equal access to them.

Assemblies/Services

Equal opportunities should be evident in the values we project to the school community.

Assemblies should not reinforce stereotyping but work positively at promoting right attitudes, positive images, cultural understanding, and social responsibility.

All pupils must be encouraged to take part in assemblies and services, not just the most talented or confident.

Time and effort must be given to pupils to ensure that they are delivering to their best for their own self-esteem, and for the promotion of respect for each other.

Relationships

Relationships between pupils, staff and parents must reflect mutual respect and support.

All forms of discrimination and racial abuse by persons within the school are to be treated seriously. It will be made clear to offending individuals that such behaviour is unacceptable.

Pupils must be made to realise their importance to the community, and our need for their commitment and involvement.

Uniform

The school has an agreed uniform code. This applies to all students. Exceptions, based on religious belief, are agreed at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupil attainment, attendance and exclusions will be analysed through internal tracking systems. This will focus on all key stages and all OFSTED groupings. Imbalance will be responded to and strategies devised to address underperformance.

Achievement across the whole ability range will be tracked within departments on a half termly basis with focus on pupil groups: gender, ethnicity, SEND.

Availability of access to the curriculum and achievement, by those with special educational needs, and disability will be regularly assessed with particular focus at the end of each key stage.

Consideration of option subject uptake will be monitored in terms of gender imbalance and approaches considered.