



St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School

Headteacher: Miss V Maher

Equality Policy

St Philomena's Catholic Primary School was founded by and is part of the Catholic Church. The school is to be conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with Canon Law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Southwark and at all times the school is to serve as a witness for the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Mission Statement

St. Philomena's Catholic Primary undertakes to reflect the Gospel Values and the teachings of Christ in a positive Catholic Christian environment. Christ recognised the value and dignity of each person and His ministry was one of forgiveness. St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School embodies this spirit and these values in educating the whole person, that is in the areas of spiritual, cultural, moral, mental, social and physical developments in reaching out to the parish community and to a wider society.

Definition of the policy

At St Philomena's Catholic Primary School measures are taken to create an inclusive culture to ensure equal educational opportunities for all our pupils and staff at all times. We take positive action to provide equal opportunity to all students and staff and others using school facilities.

Legal framework

1. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations among all members of the school community and particularly with respect to protected characteristics (age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment).
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise these duties are essential for achieving the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework, and that they reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations identified above, we are guided by six principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value. We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value, whether or not they have a protected characteristic.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that may already exist

Principle 6: We aim to consult and involve the school community.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but nevertheless do take account of differences.

At St Philomena's Catholic Primary School 31% of our children belong to various ethnic minority groups, and there are few children with a disability. We are therefore conscious of the need to heighten all children's awareness of the vast cultural richness and diversity, and the similarities and differences in abilities of people in our society. This is why opportunities are made to enrich the experience of all children through learning about the cultures, lifestyles and living conditions of families within and beyond the school community to widen their knowledge and understanding.

The Equality Act (EA) changes the definition of disability. The definition is almost the same as that under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, with two main exceptions:

There is now no longer a requirement that a mental impairment must be a clinically recognised illness.

There is no longer an exhaustive list of what constitutes day-to-day activities.

The consequence of the relaxation of the definition of disability is that more pupils are now legally disabled. It follows that more SEN children will now also be classed as disabled. As before, as soon as a child is legally disabled and the school either knows or could reasonably have been expected to know that they are disabled, discrimination provisions kick in to protect the pupil.

The EA extends the definition of discrimination.

Treating a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably than another for a reason related to their disability without justification.

Failing to make reasonable adjustments to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled pupils.

The definition of unlawful discrimination has not altered substantially but there is new terminology used to describe discrimination. There is now:

Direct discrimination: when you treat a pupil less favourably than you would treat another pupil because of a protected characteristic. It involves real and hypothetical comparators; it can never be justified.

Indirect discrimination: when you apply a provision, criterion or practice in the same way for a group of pupils but which has the effect of putting pupils sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and you cannot justify the practice as being a 'proportionate means of justifying a legitimate aim.'

Roles and responsibilities

Governing body - The Governors are responsible for making sure that the school complies with the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the 2000 Act and Equality Act 2010; and making sure that the Equal Opportunities and Race Equality, Gender Equality and Disability Policy and its procedures are followed. The governing body seeks to be accessible through publication of its minutes.

Head Teacher - The head teacher is responsible for:

- Familiarising governors and staff with the EA and guidance for education providers published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and ensure staff understand their obligations, including when pupils are legally disabled.
- Reviewing the school's policies and ensure that all relevant personnel are aware which pupils are legally disabled so that staff do not inadvertently discriminate.
- Ensuring any registers documenting which pupils are disabled are frequently checked and updated.
- Checking that the school's Disability Equality Scheme reflects the EA's provisions.
- Being aware of the financial impact it could have on the school. Many children with SEN will now overlap with disability discrimination laws and will therefore be entitled to added support when the exemption on schools to provide auxiliary aids and services is removed.
- Making sure that the Equality Policy and its procedures are followed in school and during school activities outside of school;
- Considering the views of pupils, parents and staff on the effectiveness of the Equality Policy, both informally and through more formal means such as questionnaires;
- Producing, annually, information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working;
- Ensuring that staff receive training on the policy, if necessary;
- Taking appropriate action/ensuring that all staff members take appropriate action in cases of racial harassment and racial discrimination.

All staff - All staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with any incidents involving discrimination
- Reporting, in accordance with this policy, incidents of racism. Also those incidents of discrimination that is unlawful under the EA
- Recognising and tackling bias and stereotyping;

- Promoting equal opportunities and good race relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of but not limited to race, gender, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Ensuring that all children are positively encouraged to participate fully in all learning activities including play
- Taking up training and learning opportunities, both in school and out of school, on discrimination
- Delivering an inclusive curriculum within which all ethnic groups can feel valued and within which inequalities are addressed.
- Promoting access to education and learning for all pupils

Visitors – Visitors are required to follow this policy in all their dealings with the school.

The Senior Leadership Team – The SLT is responsible for:

- Regularly monitoring and assessing the policy's effectiveness and practice on a day to day basis
- Analysing statistical information on the performance of pupils by ethnic group and gender and reporting back to the Governors, as appropriate;
- Maintaining a Racial Incidents Log.
- Reporting information on racial incidents (minus names) to the Governing body. This information will also be made available to the LA and through the minutes of the Governing Body.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our policy as part of an Annual Review process linked to the SIP by:
- Checking that all pupils achieve as much as they can, and get the most from what is on offer on the basis of their individual needs.
- Identify groups of pupils who are not achieving as much as they can and find out why these pupils are not achieving through usual termly monitoring practices
- Make sure that school policies, including its race equality policy are not having an adverse impact on pupils, parents or staff of particular gender, disability, religion or racial group.
- Be able to explain any differences in achievement and check that the explanations justified. For example they may be justified on non-racial grounds, such as English Language difficulties?
- Check that each relevant policy includes aims to deal with differences (or possible differences) in pupils' attainments between racial groups. Check that the policies' aims lead to action to deal with any differences that have been

identified (for example extra support for pupils or steps to prevent racist bullying)

- Evaluate what the school is doing to;
 - a. Prepare pupils for living in a multi-ethnic society
 - b. Promote race equality and harmony
 - c. And prevent or deal with racism
 - d. Decide on any changes the school needs to make to relevant policies, their aims, and any related targets and strategies.

Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils

Reasonable adjustments are made at individual pupil level and are decided in conjunction with parents, SENCo or Deputy Head and Head Teacher, and where appropriate, the child. In some circumstances, external agencies may be consulted to support the school in making such adjustments to the curriculum or physical environment. These will be considered and reviewed at IEP review meetings or parents' meetings as appropriate.

All changes to school practice and/or procedures as a result of the monitoring outlined will be identified in the School Equality Scheme, SEF and feeds into the SIP.