

EQUALITY POLICY



Bishop Challoner
Catholic Secondary School

Introduction

This policy is based on guidance issued to schools by the Catholic Education Service, the Local Authority, the 2010 Equality Act and the 2007 Gender Equality Act.

Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School wishes to go beyond mere compliance with legislation and seeks to be a centre of good practice. This is motivated by our school ethos, our mission statement, and our commitment to inclusion, community cohesion and excellence and opportunity for all members of our school community, students, parents/carers, visitors, governors and staff.

The 2010 Equality Act replaces a number of previous Acts and covers the same group that were protected by existing equality legislation:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity

These are now called “protected characteristics”. The Act also protects people who may be discriminated against because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic, ie, an employer who discriminates against a parent who has a child who is disabled.

Harassment

The definition of harassment has been extended to include harassment based on association and perception. Therefore, employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristics themselves.

The Equality Act extends protection against 3rd party harassment to all protected characteristics (other than pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnerships). The Act makes schools potentially liable for harassment of their employees by people (3rd parties) who are not employees of the school, such as parents, visitors, students and governors. Schools will only be liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions, the school is aware that it has taken place, and has not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again. The 3rd party can be the same or a different person on each occasion.

Individuals who consider that they have been discriminated against because of a combination of potential characteristics will be able to bring claims of dual discrimination. The concept only applies to claims brought based on two combined protected characteristics, excluding pregnancy and maternity, it will be limited to direct discrimination claims.

From a school perspective the Equality Act 2010 should be evident in:

- Employment policy and practice
- Human resource management
- Accessibility
- Admissions

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- Behaviour policy
- Curriculum - for all subjects and including extra-curricular events such as sports teams or school visits
- Setting and student grouping
- Communication and language, whether in official documentation or everyday language between staff, between students etc.

Employment

The Governing Body will operate an open and transparent process for all appointments, employment and pay processes. The Governing Body welcomes applications regardless of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. This does not limit the ability of the Governing Body to limit to the appointment of Baptised Catholics in “Good Standing with the Church” to the reserved posts of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Head of RE and Chair and Vice Chair of Governors. All requirements of the Act regarding employment practice will be followed.

Accessibility

Governors will ensure that all reasonable steps will be made to ensure that the school building and its grounds are fully accessible to staff, students and visitors with a disability. This will include workshops, changing facilities, classrooms, specialist facilities, toilet and dining facilities. All emergency exits and fire evacuation routes will be accessible.

The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that students and staff with short term mobility problems, ie a broken leg, are able to access all school facilities. Accessibility will be a priority when any new building or renovation is planned.

Admissions

The Admissions Policy will be compiled in a transparent way, admissions committee minutes will be published. The governors will apply the admissions code and any modifications to it.

Behaviour Policy

The agreed School Behaviour Policy, including rewards and sanctions, pastoral support and standards of behaviour, dress and appearance will be applied to all students in a fair transparent and equitable fashion,

Curriculum, Learning and Assessment

The taught and additional curriculum will be designed and applied to ensure that all students experience an appropriate and, as far as possible, personalised curriculum. This will include access to support for students with an identified special need, identified as gifted and talented or with a temporary need for additional support.

All extra curricular activities and visits will be accessible to all students unless it would be deemed unsafe or inappropriate for the student. In cases such as this the school would discuss the specific situation with the student’s parent/carer and carry out all reasonable actions/modifications to enable the student to participate in the activity.

KS4 pathways, exam policy, the agreed marking and assessment policy will be applied to all students.

Setting/Student Grouping

Setting will be on the basis of academic performance only. There will be opportunities for all students to change sets if academic progress warrants it.

Setting should not be on the basis of behaviour or any other hidden criteria, other forms of student grouping will fully apply this policy.

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Communication and Appropriate Language

The Governing Body is clear that inappropriate language is unacceptable at any time. Inappropriate reference to a person's gender, race, belief or age should not be made by or to any member of the school community. This includes homophobic, racist or other forms of discriminatory language or gesture. Language is taken to mean spoken or written language, electronic communication such as Facebook, e-mail, text or Twitter or any form of image or graffiti.

All communications from the school to parents/carer should be accessible to all. Any reasonable modification, translation etc will be made to ensure this is possible where the school is made aware of need. This includes pupil reports, parents' evenings etc, school letters and newsletter.

Ethos

As a Catholic school this policy and its application is informed by our school ethos, which sees all as equal before God. Any refusal to accept this policy will be viewed as a refusal to conform to school policy. Collective Worship is exempt from this policy and should always reflect the schools agreed Collective Worship Policy.

Monitoring

The school will monitor the practice of this policy, in particular, student performance and participation, parent/carer and attendance. Employment practice including staff appointments will be monitored using available data for vulnerable groups, economic dependent (FSM), looked after children, ethnic minority and gender groups, disability etc.