



SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



Approved by:	 Headmaster  Chair of Governors	Date: 10/12/2024
Last reviewed on:	New Policy Autumn 2024	
Next review by:	December 2026	

1. Introduction

1.1 The school is committed to the need both to eliminate discriminatory behaviour and to promote equality for pupils, staff and others using school facilities. The Equality Act 2010 defines unlawful behaviour as direct discrimination, indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation of people on the grounds of protected characteristics – disability; age; race (including colour, nationality ethnic or national origin); religion and belief; sex, sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; gender reassignment. (See Appendix 1)

1.2 The school is committed to giving all pupils every opportunity to achieve the highest standards by:

- taking account of their varied experiences and needs
- offering a broad and balanced curriculum
- having high expectations of all pupils

1.3 The school complies with current legislation concerning unlawful discrimination and promoting best practice in equality of treatment. This policy accords with the Equality Act 2010 via guidance provided by the Department for Education in 'The Equality Act 2014 and Schools' (May 2014).

1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan
- RSE – Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Trips and Educational Visits Policy

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 The Governing Body is committed to a policy of equality and aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, pupil or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of disability; age; race (including colour, nationality ethnic or national origin); religion and belief; sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; gender reassignment.

2.2 All members of the school community, including visitors, are responsible for promoting the school's Equal Opportunities Policy and are obliged to respect it and act in accordance with the policy.

2.3 The school promotes the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that it provides in the school.

2.4 The school seeks to ensure that, wherever possible, all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.

2.5 The school strives to constantly identify and remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups by regularly assessing the impact of its policies, practices and guidelines.

2.6 The school ensures that recruitment, employment, promotion and development opportunities are open to all.

2.7 The school challenges personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur. The school is aware that prejudice and stereotyping can be caused by misconception and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's point of view, the school aims to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

2.8 The school values each person's worth, celebrating both people's individuality and the cultural diversity of the school community, and shows respect for everyone.

2.9 The school and its staff strive to be proactive in tackling prejudice and unlawful behaviour.

2.10 All employees have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy. Any employee found to have breached this policy will be dealt with as a possible case of misconduct or gross misconduct under our disciplinary policy. Further, employees are warned that, under the Equality Act 2010, an individual can be held personally liable for his/her own acts of discrimination towards others, or where he/she knowingly helps another to commit an act of discrimination.

2.11 The school seeks to ensure that the pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals.

3. Equal Opportunities in Recruitment

3.1 The School is committed to following the Safer Recruitment statutory guidance provided by Department for Education in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (as updated annually).

3.2 Recruitment and selection procedures and practices are regularly reviewed to ensure that no group is put at a disadvantage either directly or indirectly.

3.3 In accordance with the spirit of this policy statement, employees are given an equal opportunity for career progression within the organisation.

3.4 The aim of this policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee is discriminated against on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

4 Equal Opportunities in the Curriculum

4.1 Every pupil has an equal entitlement to the National Curriculum and, subject to entry requirements, to all other areas of the curriculum, regardless of language, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age.

4.2 Pupils should have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum that will prepare them well for life beyond school regardless of academic ability. Consequently, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Learning Support Policy.

4.3 Staff will actively encourage the breaking down of any traditional gender stereotyping regarding subject choices when advising on Key Stage 4 courses.

4.4 The school will monitor any careers advice or work experience placements provided by outside agencies with the aim of ensuring equal opportunities.

4.5 All forms of individual and subject support, guidance, amenities and facilities, including extra-curricular activities, will be equally available to pupils of both sexes.

4.6 Behaviour expectations and disciplinary sanctions will be free of any gender, sexual orientation, race or culture bias, religion and belief.

4.7 Teachers will assess all materials and resources used for teaching and take appropriate action whenever possible to ensure that they reflect concepts, themes and information which seeks to eliminate prejudice, and any other form of discrimination. Teachers should try to ensure that all pupils feel that their language and culture is both acknowledged and valued.

4.8 The school actively encourages an ethos in which all pupils feel secure and valued.

5 Race / Ethnicity

5.1 The school will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism (including against colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin) and racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups

5.2 The school will not tolerate any form of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, it will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures and logged accordingly.

5.3 The school endeavours to be welcoming to all minority groups. The celebration and understanding of cultural diversity are promoted through the topics studied by the pupils and is reflected in displays, resources and events.

5.4 Cultural diversity and respect for others are celebrated and reflected across the whole curriculum. The curriculum will enhance pupils' understanding of UK and world society and history, including the contributions of minority ethnic groups and key individuals within those groups.

5.5 The school will give pupils the understanding they need to recognise prejudice and reject racial discrimination.

5.6 As part of the broad and balanced curriculum, the school will ensure fundamental British values are promoted; giving pupils clear understanding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

6 Gender / Sex [see also 4.3]

6.1 The school will constantly examine its curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias, inequality or stereotyping.

6.2 The school will encourage pupils to be aware of the rigid gender stereotypes presented by, for example, the media and will try to ensure that resources include books and other learning materials which value the achievements of both women and men.

6.3 The school is committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions.

6.4 The school tries to ensure that:

- teachers allocate their time fairly between the sexes
- all pupils have opportunities to work with pupils of both sexes
- the traditional gender stereotypes are broken down
- pupils have opportunities to examine their own pre-conceived ideas of gender roles
- pupils are given the opportunity to pursue less conventional subjects and interests; for example, girls to read more non-fiction and boys more fiction.

7 Disability

7.1 There is a general requirement in The Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities. The school is committed to meeting the needs of both staff and pupils with disabilities and will make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices to alleviate disadvantage. All reasonable steps will also be taken to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not placed at any disadvantage compared to pupils without disabilities in terms of access to pupil information and the school curriculum.

7.2 The school will seek to provide an environment that allows pupils with disabilities full access (where reasonably practicable) to all areas of learning and opportunities afforded to all other pupils at the school, including educational visits.

7.3 Teachers will modify teaching and learning as appropriate for pupils with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities or modify teaching materials or offer alternative activities where pupils are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

8 Religion / Belief

8.1 The school respects the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils, parents and visitors and will comply with all reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. This includes respect for lack of religion or belief, as in atheism.

9 Sexual Orientation

9.1 The school will make no assumption about the sexual orientation of any of the members of its community.

9.2. In the curriculum, sexuality is taught within the context of loving relationships. Pupils' questions will be answered as they arise, honestly, factually and non-judgementally.

9.3. The school will promote pupils' understanding and awareness of issues related to sexuality and sexual diversity. Through the curriculum and wider opportunities for pupils, sexual diversity will be celebrated and pupils will develop respect and tolerance.

9.4. The school will not tolerate any form of homophobia or homophobic behaviour. Should a homophobic incident occur, it will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures and logged accordingly.

10 Age

10.1 The school will put procedures in place to ensure that no-one is denied a job, an equal chance of training or promotion, or suffers from discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of their age.

11 Due Regard

11.1 'Due regard' will be given to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed.

12 Training and Development

The school will seek to:

12.1 Enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status.

12.2 Provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all staff, including part time, on the basis of their assessed training needs.

12.3 Promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution that pupils, staff, Governors and parents can make.

12.4 Provide training to staff on equal opportunities to promote understanding of equalities legislation and the school's and their responsibilities.

13 The Role of Governors

13.1 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.

13.2 The Governing Body will ensure that no one is unlawfully discriminated against whilst in the school on account of their race, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

13.3 The Governing Body will monitor the implementation of this policy regularly through information provided by the Headmaster (see Section 17). The policy will be reviewed every two years.

14 The Role of the Headmaster

14.1 The Headmaster will ensure that the school's policy on equal opportunities is implemented.

14.2 The Headmaster will ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities and that these guidelines are applied fairly in all situations.

14.3 The Headmaster will ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one suffers discrimination.

14.4 The Headmaster will promote the principles of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum and in providing opportunities for training.

14.5 The Headmaster will promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in assemblies, for example, respect for other people will be a regular theme and it will also be in displays around the school.

14.6 The Headmaster will view all incidents of potentially discriminatory treatment with due concern.

15 The Role of Teachers and Support Staff

15.1 Staff will aim to ensure that all pupils, parents and their colleagues are treated fairly and with respect. The school will not discriminate against any child/young person, parent, member of staff or visitor and will actively seek to identify and remove indirect discrimination. Ignorance of what constitutes discrimination is not a defence.

15.2 When selecting classroom materials, teachers will strive to provide resources which promote positive images and which challenge stereotypes of minority groups.

15.3 When designing schemes of work, teachers will pay cognisance to this Equal Opportunities Policy, both in the choice of topics to study and in how to approach sensitive issues.

15.4 All teachers and support staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice or discrimination, and draw them to the attention of a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

16 The Role of Pupils

16.1 Pupils will be made aware of the policy and draw any incidents of prejudice or discrimination to the attention of a member of staff.

16.2 Pupils will be encouraged to show respect, tolerance and understanding towards others and expected to demonstrate these important values in their interactions with others.

17 The Role of Parents

17.1 Parents will be made aware of the policy through the school website and are expected to encourage their children to do as outlined in 16.2 and will draw any incidents of prejudice or discrimination to the attention of a member of staff.

18 The Role of Visitors / Contractors / Third Party Employees

18.1 All visitors and contractors are required to adhere to the Equal Opportunities Policy.

19 Complaints

19.1 Any complaints concerning equality opportunities should be addressed, as appropriate, through the school's complaints or grievance procedures.

20 Monitoring / Review

20.1 The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. The Governors will:

- monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process so that no-one applying for a post at the school is discriminated against;
- require the Headmaster to report to Governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from pupils, parents, staff or visitors 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.

Appendix 1 Definitions of Types of Discrimination

Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others, and is not justified.

Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Discrimination by association: this is a type of direct discrimination. It's also known as 'associative discrimination'. It means discriminating against someone because of their connection with either:

- someone who has a protected characteristic – for example a family member, friend or colleague
- a group of people who have a protected characteristic

Discrimination by association does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership.

Discrimination by perception: this is another type of direct discrimination. It's also known as 'perceptive discrimination'. It means discriminating against someone because of a 'perceived' protected characteristic. For example, thinking someone is a certain age and discriminating against them because of it, when they're not actually that age.

Discrimination by perception does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership.