

**ST ROBERT OF NEWMINSTER
CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**Equal Opportunities Policy
March 2023**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Introduction

St Robert of Newminster Catholic School has a long-standing commitment to equality of opportunity. This commitment is confirmed in a number of pre-existing policies. Where equality of opportunity exists, all staff and learners work in a more rewarding and less stressful environment, one free from prejudice and harassment and one more likely to enhance their performance and achievement.

The purpose of the Policy and Guidelines is to:

- Support the Catholic ethos of the school and create a climate for school improvement, enabling all pupils and staff to give of their best;
- Enable the School Governing Body to respond to legislation and best practice guidance in the field of equality and opportunity;
- Ensure that the School Governing Body's Policy supports the School's Mission Statement; and
- Provide a clear framework for action in relation to equality of opportunity over the coming years.

Aims and Intentions of the Policy

The Governing Body of St Robert of Newminster Catholic School has a vision of education, a Mission Statement and a commitment to Equal Opportunities.

The Commitment to Equal Opportunities is stated in the following Policy:

POLICY STATEMENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All human beings are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's Image. There is here a basic equality between all people, and it must be given ever greater recognition. Forms of social or cultural discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language, or religion, must be curbed as incompatible with God's design.

Gaudium et Spes 29.

The Governing Body of the school is committed to ensuring that all aspects of school life, including admissions, curriculum, and staffing are dealt with in a fair

and just manner. Governors believe that the principle of equal opportunity in all things is consistent with social justice and best educational and personnel practice; it is in keeping with our Catholic aim to recognise the dignity and worth of all people. To this end we aim to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the Law.

Admissions

In common with other Catholic schools in England, St Robert of Newminster Catholic School was founded to serve the local community, predominantly by providing education for the children of Catholic Families. The school thus has a duty to give preference in admissions to Catholic children. The Governing Body follows its admissions arrangements carefully and does not discriminate in terms of race, sex, colour, gender, sexuality, or disability.

Curriculum

All pupils are entitled to equal access to the full curriculum, recognising the importance of differentiating that curriculum in order to meet children's individual needs. The school staff and governors strive to be constantly aware that their own expectations can affect children's achievement, behaviour and status.

Personnel

The Governing Body's selection processes aim to select the best applicants assessed against professional criteria for the post. The school acknowledges its commitment to conducting our affairs in accordance with equal opportunities legislation. When drawing-up or applying selection criteria, the governors do not discriminate on grounds of age, gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, or disability.

Catholic schools have, as part of their character, a duty to provide Religious Education and a requirement that those schools be conducted in accordance with the rites, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic faith. It would therefore be clear that where applicants are equal in qualifications and experience in the context of selection criteria for a teaching post, that a Catholic applicant would have an advantage over applicants not of Catholic faith in compliance with the Diocesan Policy in being able to contribute to the mission of the Church in Catholic education. The posts of Headteacher, Deputy Head teacher, Head of Religious Education department/ Religious Education Co-ordinator and certain other senior posts are reserved for practising Catholics.

In fulfilling the objectives of Catholic schools, governors must have regard to matters which are particularly significant in the light of the sacramental teachings of the Church. Catholic teachers by their example and practice are witnesses to the Gospels and to the Church's teachings.

Monitoring

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that this policy is carried out. A monitoring report will be drawn up by the Headteacher and considered by the Governing Body

annually, or when the policy is next reviewed.

The School Governing Body's Definition of Equality of Opportunity:

Equality of opportunity requires that everyone has an equal chance to develop themselves to their full potential. Consequently, equality of opportunity implies that:

- Equality of access exists for all:
- Individual choices are widened and everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
- Everyone is unique and has different needs and will be provided with a differentiated provision to meet those needs (equality of opportunity is underpinned by the idea of equality implies not sameness of service but diversity to meet diverse needs);
- No one experiences disadvantage or discrimination;
- Bullying and harassment, in any form, will not be tolerated;
- Change is managed for the benefit of all;
- Individuals and groups are allocated appropriate levels of support to ensure that their potential is fulfilled.

In relation to its more restricted role in the curriculum the School Governing Body defines equality of opportunity as a cross-curriculum dimension, which should be woven through the life, and work of the school, enlighten every area of the curriculum and be addressed by everyone who works within the school on a paid or voluntary basis.

Entitlement and Responsibilities

All learners and staff are entitled to work in an environment that meets their individual needs and develops them to their full potential does not unfairly discriminate against them in any shape or form.

All learners are entitled to full access to a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects, values and celebrates diversity within society locally, regionally, and nationally.

All learners and staff are entitled to be treated equitably and with respect irrespective of their gender, ability, or sexual orientation, their social, cultural or religious background, or their family circumstances or age.

All learners and staff are entitled to work in an environment in which they do not encounter bullying or harassment in any shape or form.

All those associated in any shape or form with the school are entitled to equality of opportunity as defined in this Policy and Guidelines, and they should have responsibility for its successful implementation.

Guidelines:

The Curriculum

The Governing Body believes as Christians that equality of opportunity should permeate all aspects of the curriculum and be promoted by all who work and learn in the school. There is no subject or programme of study that cannot be approached in a manner sympathetic to the aims of equality of opportunity. Consequently the School Governing Body will ensure that a curriculum review is undertaken by December of each year which:

- Ensures that all pupils have access to the same broad and balanced curriculum and which is appropriately differentiated to meet individual needs and aspirations;

Ensures any student with an Educational Health Care Plan is welcomed into the school community.
- Ensures that equality of opportunity is taught as a cross-curriculum dimension;
- Examines schemes of work and curriculum guidelines to ensure that full advantage is taken of the National Curriculum and Religious Education to promote equality of opportunity;
- Ensures that equality of opportunity is taught as a cross-curriculum dimension;
- Ensures that the curriculum reflects the diversity of the school community, and of society, locally, regionally and nationally;
- Ensures that teaching resources reflect the diversity of society locally, regionally and nationally;
- Ensures that teaching resources portray members of all groups, and particularly those groups most likely to encounter disadvantage and discrimination, in ways which are positive and non-stereotypical, especially in teaching groups which do not contain members of such groups;
- Considers the benefits of grouping pupils and students by gender and/or religion when particular activities are undertaken (e.g. Physical Education or swimming) or when particular topics are addressed (e.g. sex education); and
- Identifies how daily acts of collective worship can contribute to equality of opportunity.

Whole School Issues:

The School Governing Body believes that pupils learn from the informal as well as from the formal curriculum. Consequently, it will ensure that:

- Equality of access exists for all pupils and staff;
- The aims, objectives and implications of inclusion are understood by all Pupils, staff, parents and primary carers;
- The school respects any dress code which is formally required by pupils' faith traditions

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- Accurate information for the sole purpose of monitoring equal opportunities is kept about the ethnic origin, first language, religious affiliation and special needs of all pupils;
- Assessment procedures do not disadvantage any group of pupils;
- Assessment procedures are adequately resourced to take account of the specific needs of minority ethnic pupils, and of pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties;
- Underachieving pupils are given support and encouragement required to enhance their performance without the performance of other pupils being affected detrimentally;
- Gifted and talented pupils are given support and encouragement required to enhance their performance without the performance of other pupils being affected detrimentally;
- Strategies are put in place to motivate and reintegrate disaffected pupils;
- Reliable and effective means exist to inform all parents and primary carers of their children's progress;
- Community languages other than English are valued and encouraged;
- All pupils are given opportunities to meet their religious needs, especially when important festivals occur;
- Specific dietary needs of pupils are respected;
- Members of all groups are welcomed and valued;

- Members of all groups are encouraged to play an active role in school affairs, perhaps making a contribution towards the governance of the school;
- As far as possible, staffing reflects the diversity of society locally, regionally and nationally; and
- All incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with in an effective and consistent manner and complies with reporting legislation.

Signed: Angela Nichols, Chair of Governors

Date:

1.3.23
