

# Equality Policy and Strategy

| History of the Policy |         |                 |                                   |
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| Date                  | Page    | Need for change | Action and page number            |
| Sept 22               | 5 and 6 | Annual update   | Achievements & Objectives updated |

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## 1 Introduction and Purpose

Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and well-being outcomes and notes the fundamental rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

St John's Primary School believes that inclusion is a basic human right of every child and adult. We value diversity, and welcome and respect all members of our local community and our visitors, whatever their age, ability, background or circumstances.

We endeavour to provide opportunities for all to participate fully and equally. We expect all members of the school community to appreciate and understand differences between peoples and communities, to seek to help others, and to speak out against injustice. The school will promote equality of opportunity by example, through its policies, curriculum and staffing. We are committed to working with all members of our community to remove any attitudinal, physical or organisational barriers.

This Policy contains the school's understanding of, and approach to all protected characteristics (disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual identity (sexual orientation and gender reassignment), age and marital status) cultural or social background. It replaces our previous Equalities Policy and Accessibility Plan.

Status: APPROVED

Version: 3

Date Approved: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022



## The legal framework

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools not to discriminate in the **provision of education** on the basis of any of these protected characteristics:

- sex
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy and maternity, or
- gender reassignment.

Guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, 'What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools', explains the different forms of discrimination covered by the Equality Act 2010 and considers what schools must do to meet the requirements of the Act in relation to pupils.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination by schools in their role as **employers** on any of the grounds listed above, **and** also on grounds of age or marriage/civil partnership.

Schools are also required by the 2010 Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations across all the protected groups (the 'public sector equality duty').

At St John's we recognise that socio-economic disadvantage can have a significant impact on children's opportunities and achievement. Although socio-economic background is not included in the Equality Act 2010 as a protected characteristic, it is covered by this policy.

Schools also have a statutory duty under S.21(5) of the Education Act 2002 (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) to promote community cohesion.

### 1.1 Purpose

1. To articulate the school's commitment to equality and, therefore, the values that permeate all other school policies and practices.
2. To seek to ensure that everyone who belongs to, or comes into contact with, our school community is valued and respected.
3. To promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
4. To explore the school's links with the wider local, national and global community.
5. To comply with statutory duties under equalities legislation and relevant Codes of Practice.
6. To seek to address all equality and anti-discrimination issues in one document.
7. To seek to ensure that any barriers to learning and participation of any groups within our community are reduced or removed.
8. To seek to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and that any form of prejudice is challenged and eliminated.

## 2 School Context:

St John's C of E Primary is a larger than average primary school in Clifton and Redland, just north of the city centre of Bristol. In September 2012 we increased our intake from 45 to 75, we now have a capacity of 525. Currently (September 2022) approximately 21% of our children are from overseas including China, the Middle East, Europe and America. For 24% of our children English is an additional language. The percentage of children receiving SEN support is 12%.

## 3 Our commitment:

St John's Primary School is committed to promoting an ethos that safeguards the dignity and well-being of everyone and encourages practices that take into account the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity

and respect. We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and victimisation directed at anyone because of any personal or protected characteristic.

St John's Primary School seeks to foster a warm, welcoming and respectful environment, while allowing us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully, and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore seek to achieve equality for all by treating everyone fairly based on their level of need.

We will build on our similarities, seek enrichment from our differences, celebrate diversity and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

School leadership and Governors are committed to make all reasonable efforts to ensure that equality is considered in all decision-making.

We will continue to review our policies, practices and procedures so that they do not adversely affect anyone because of any protected characteristic, and comply with the three main equality duties.

## 4 Definitions of protected characteristics

### 4.1 What do we mean by Disability Equality?

We recognise that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (generally >12 months) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

We will not unlawfully discriminate against anyone who is disabled.

### 4.2 What do we mean by Sex Equality?

We recognise that a person's sex refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or to boys or girls.

We recognise that stereotypes exist for both sexes and some can lose opportunities because of these stereotypes, and we welcome the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 with specific provision for Sex Equality.

### 4.3 What do we mean by Gender Reassignment Equality?

We recognise that a person may express their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex that they were born with.

We understand that gender reassignment does not necessarily require a medical process to be undertaken and that a person will be protected because of gender reassignment if they:

- Make their intention known to someone at the school
- Start to behave or dress according to the gender they identify with
- Undergo treatment such as surgery or hormone therapy
- Have already received a gender recognition certificate under the Gender Recognition Act 2004

The school will also respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within its school community.

### 4.4 What do we mean by pregnancy and maternity equality?

Treating a woman (or a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger, is unlawful.

We will not discriminate against pupils or staff in absences related to pregnancy and maternity.

Specific provisions for pregnancy and maternity for staff are covered by the BCC adopted Policies – “Maternity and Caring Employee Scheme” and “Teachers Maternity and Adoption Scheme”.

#### 4.5 What do we mean by Race Equality?

The school adopts the definition of Race as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 as one of the protected characteristics which refer to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

The School recognises that pupils and staff from ethnic minorities may experience discrimination on the basis of race, colour, nationality and ethnic origin. This discrimination can manifest itself in all areas of their lives and can have serious consequences in terms of damaging people emotionally and physically, and limiting life choices and opportunities.

The school and governing body does not tolerate any form of race discrimination which it recognises is unacceptable, discriminatory and unlawful, and is proactive in ensuring that people whatever their race are treated fairly.

#### 4.6 What do we mean by Religion or Belief equality?

A Religion or belief refers to a religious and/or philosophical belief including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). A religion must be identifiable and have a clear structure or belief system. A belief need not include faith or worship of a god or gods, but must affect how a person lives their lives or perceives the world (e.g. Humanism).

We recognise that discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of religion and/or belief or non-belief may be experienced in a number of ways, including day-to-day interaction with fellow pupils, staff and visitors.

The school seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination and prejudice based on religion and/or belief or non-belief, either direct or indirect, and is committed to treating staff, pupils and others fairly, regardless of their religion or belief and will not condone unfavourable treatment on this basis.

We will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to religion or belief and any incidents of bullying, harassment and/or victimisation on the grounds of religion and/or belief or non-belief will be taken seriously and could provide grounds for disciplinary action that may lead to dismissal or exclusion from the school.

#### 4.7 What do we mean by sexual orientation equality?

The school uses the definition as outlined in legislation as sexual orientation meaning a person's sexual attraction towards:

1. persons of the same sex
2. persons of the opposite sex, or
3. persons of either sex

The School will combat discrimination faced by lesbians, gay and bisexual (LGB) people. We want to ensure equality of opportunity for LGB stakeholders across our curriculum provision, services and employment. We will respect the rights of individuals to be open about their sexual orientation, tackle homophobia and challenge stereotyping.

The school recognises the need to protect pupils and staff from unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation as required by the Equality Act. We are committed to taking a pro-active approach to preventing all forms of homophobia within the school.

We will deal with complaints of discrimination and harassment speedily and according to Local Authority Guidance and notify complainants of the outcome and actions taken.

## 5 Achievements and Objectives

There are 3 general duties of the Equalities Act. This section outlines our Achievements and Objectives for each duty.

**5.1 Strand 1: To eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the act.**

**5.2 Strand 2: Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.**

**5.3 Strand 3: Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.**

*An equalities consultation took place with parents, governors and staff during the academic year 20-21 to create objectives that fed into our 4-year Equality Plan and the Equalities Strategy. Additional pupil voice interviews were carried out in 2022 to reflect further on perceptions of equalities and representation in school which again is reflected in our objectives. Achievements and objectives in this strategy are updated annually. Previous achievements can be viewed by clicking on this [link](#).*

### **ACHIEVEMENTS for the year 21-22:**

#### **Strategy:**

- Equality was on the SIP for 2021-22 to kick start this key focus.
- A staff & governor working group was established
- The group developed a 4-year Equality Plan in response to feedback from all stakeholders

#### **Staff CPD on Equalities:**

- Staff CPD on equality, the duties and Unconscious bias completed for all staff.
- Improved staff equalities awareness and confidence scores on staff questionnaires increasing by 1.4 points (out of 10) following the CPD.

#### **Rebalancing Representation:**

- Pupil Voice carried out to look at how equality and representation in school feels for children from protected groups.
- Responses were positive with a rating of 8.9 (out of 10) saying that teachers show equality to all and 8.8 saying other children show equality too. We will aim to maintain and improve these scores in the future.
- Some Protected Groups felt less represented in school. This will feed into our objectives next year, but curriculum leaders are starting to ensure the curriculum reflects society, promotes equality and shares positive role models from protected groups.
- Services are now delivered termly on both sites with an equality focus to raise awareness and promote positive role models.

#### **Improved EAL Support:**

- A revised 'New to English New Arrivals' process was developed with Better Bilingual and it has been implemented with staff to ensure better support for pupils and families.
- All EAL group data showed improvements in language learning following intervention groups.
- All teachers completed the gap task during CPD to try out new strategies with all committing to 1 or 2 changes in their own practice that will support EAL learners in class.
- A new 'New to English' teaching program was put in place and LSAs trained.
- Learning Village (EAL online tool) purchased, staff trained and implemented as a self-directed learning tool.
- Bespoke support by external partner for beyond New to English and more advanced EAL groups for Y5&6 and Y1&2/EYFS teaching staff were trained in the use of 'helicopter stories' to develop language learning.
- EAL Bell assessment used consistently across the school to identify needs for either intervention groups and help teacher focus their in-class support
- EAL leadership was commended by the external partner, stating the school had improved in all 4 areas especially in leadership and management of EAL, 'well done for their hard work and driving a strategic EAL agenda.'

#### **Improving Support for Vulnerable and Protected Groups (PG):**

- SEND coffee mornings and SEND Forums for parents/carers to provide a support network and advice.
- Accessibility Plan: Reviewed and updated by SENDCo to improve access for relevant groups.
- All SEND pupils made progress on their targets. 96% of pupils accessing interventions made progress.
- Mental Health: Pupil voice found that all pupils knew how to identify their emotions, with 93% able to use strategies to manage their emotions. Pupil voice indicated that all pupils have identified staff to talk to. All pupils attending ELSA sessions (emotional literacy support) reported that they found sessions helpful.

**OBJECTIVES 22-23:****Ongoing Objectives:**

An 'Equalities Filter' is placed on everything we do strategically in school; such as Senior leadership/ Governor meetings & actions so that any change has a positive impact on protected groups. This filter applied to this year's School Improvement Plan that has equality impact questions for each strand. An 'Equalities Impact Assessment' is being developed to review changes to policies and for relevant learning and employment decisions.

**Curriculum development** continues in the foundation subjects with subject leaders asked to look for opportunities to showcase and celebrate achievements from protected groups and have a wider representation of PGs ongoing.

**Specific Objectives:**

**Participation (and opportunities) for children from PGs/vulnerable groups** to be benchmarked and targeted for improvement to increase sport, music and enrichment activities for the PG children.

**Belonging - To comprehensively support refugee families** following the best practice.

- In class support to follow trauma informed approaches to support the MH needs of these pupils.
- Intensive EAL language learning support in place to increase pupil language development
- Refugee families linked to other families (and other refugee families) to help these families settle and overcome any challenges.
- Coffee mornings for Ukrainian families are put in place to allow networking and peer support, and to take advice from school or other professionals.

**Representation and Anti-Discrimination:**

- Services (and class service) are led at least termly on equality and the anti-discriminatory behaviour expected of pupils.
- Strong role models for PGs are shared and celebrated across a wide variety of PGs in service.
- SARI (Stand Against Racism & Inequality) are to visit school and lead some key services and lessons.
- Black History Month/ Disabilities Week/ Religious events (across a number of faiths) are marked in service.
- Anti-bullying and Behaviour Policy are reviewed with a specific focus on tackling discrimination.

**Enhanced support of PGs and vulnerable learners:**

- A new dyslexia intervention will look to improve pupil progress.
- Embed EAL support so that pupils make good progress in language learning.

**Specific Duty**

Under the Equality Act 2010, we recognise that from April 2012, as a school, we also have a "specific duty" to:

1. Publish sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty every four years, with an action plan review on at least an annual basis.
2. Prepare and publish equality objectives in an accessible manner, to meet one or more aims of the general equality duty

This policy is designed to meet the General and Specific Duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and objectives will be reviewed annually by the School Governors.

The policy will be available on the School Website [www.stjohnsprimary.org.uk](http://www.stjohnsprimary.org.uk) and available on request from the School Office.

## 5.4 Links with other school policies

School policies that link with this policy include

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy (absence for religious observance)
- Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff and Governors
- Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Policy
- Uniform Policy (modifications to accommodate religion or belief, ethnicity or disability, or cost)
- RSE Policy
- Employee Grievance Procedure
- Maternity and Adoption Scheme

## 6 Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this Policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body.

If a member of the public feels that they have suffered harassment or been treated unfairly by the school because of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation, they should report this without fail through the School's complaints procedure.

Complaints by staff will be dealt with under the Employee Grievance Procedure as appropriate.