



EQUALITIES POLICY

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Document History		
Version	Date	Notes on Revisions
1.0	01 Sept 2017	New Policy – replaces separate policies relating to Equalities
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Statement of Principles

The policy outlines the commitment of the staff, students and governors of Mount St Joseph to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community. For our school this means not simply treating everybody the same but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of students in school, whilst celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all members of the school community. These include:

- Students
- Staff
- Parents/carers
- The governing body
- Multi-agency staff linked to the school
- Visitors to school
- Students on placement

We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

At Mount St Joseph, equality is a key principle for treating all people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential - irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

Our school is driven by its values which go beyond measurable results. Achievement in the classroom is crucial, though our priority is not examination grades but the stimulation of independent enquiry and intellectual curiosity. In each individual we seek to encourage leadership, and to nurture students to become confident, caring and contributing citizens in the modern world. By affording our students the opportunity to explore their inner selves - so that they derive a sense of personal worth, we actively promote personal integrity, tolerance, understanding and independence of thought. We encourage young people to work with and learn from each other, as well as to show moral courage to stand up for what they believe in. The breadth of a Mount St Joseph education supports our students in challenging themselves and develops their abilities to communicate with others. We believe these values remain with them for life.

School in Context

Below you will find information relating to the main characteristics of Mount St Joseph in relation to the characteristics of equality in this policy, the diversity of the school and community make up.

- There are 904 students on roll. Currently we have 448 boys and 456 girls are on the school roll (as at 10 July 2023)
- There are 500 students with ethnic backgrounds other than white British.

- The number of students who do not speak English as a first language is 318.
- There are 4 children with a known disability are known to the school.
- Currently there are a number staff or Governors who have disclosed a disability.
- The school is physically accessible.
- At this time there are 6 Looked After Children.

Ethos and Atmosphere

- At Mount St Joseph, the leadership of the school community demonstrates mutual respect between all members of the school community.
- There is an *openness* of atmosphere which welcomes everyone to the school.
- All within our school community will challenge any type of discriminatory and/or bullying behaviour, e.g. through unwanted attentions (verbal or physical) and unwelcome or offensive remarks or suggestions.
- All students are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect
- The displays around the school are of a high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality of opportunity and are frequently monitored
- Provision is made to cater for the spiritual needs of all the children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and externally based activities

Policy Development

This policy applies to the whole school community. It has been drawn up as a result of the outcomes of a transparent process and through consultation with:

Through full and meaningful engagement Teachers, Governors, Students and parents via one to one discussion, group meetings, forums, staff training and questionnaires have.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed formally on an annual basis. The school action plan is subject to change and is classed as a working document.

Single Equalities

This policy and action plan seeks to address the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (which replaced the Equal Pay **Act** 1970, Sex Discrimination **Act** 1975, Race Relations **Act** 1976, Disability Discrimination **Act** 1995, Employment **Equality** (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, Employment **Equality** (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Employment **Equality** (Age) Regulations 2006) and to further the aims of our vision by continuing to improve all aspects of the physical environment of the school site and other resources so that all students can take full advantage of the education and associated opportunities provided by the School.

Definition (Equality Act 2010)

The Equality Act 2010 protects the following characteristics from discrimination:

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

Data Collection

As a school we have a statutory duty to collect and analyse a range of equality information for our students/students ensuring all groups are looked at e.g. free school meals, girls, boys, SEN.

We make regular assessments of students' learning and use this information to track students' progress, as they move through the school. As part of this process, we regularly monitor the performance of different groups, to ensure that all groups of students are making the best possible progress. We use this information to adjust future teaching and learning plans, as necessary.

Resources are available to support groups of students where the information suggests that progress is not as good as it should be. The governing body receives regular updates on student performance information. At staff meeting we discuss children causing concern and agree a plan of action.

School performance information is compared to national data and local authority data, to ensure that students are making appropriate progress when compared to all schools, and to schools in similar circumstances.

As well as monitoring student performance information, we also regularly monitor a range of other information. This relates to:

- Attendance
- Exclusions and truancy
- Racism, disabilities, sexism, homophobia and all forms of bullying
- Parental involvement
- Participation in Extended Learning Opportunities

Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in student performance and provide specific support as required, including pastoral support. This allows us to take appropriate action to meet the needs of specific groups in order to make necessary improvements.

Mount St Joseph is also committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation. We aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and establish a governing body that is

representative of all sections of the community in order to respect and respond to the diverse needs of our population.

The Employment Duty within the legislation states all schools should collect information on staff in post, and applicants for employment, training and promotion. This is deemed to be best practice in order to identify potentially discriminatory practice.

We collect and analyse a range of profile information for our staff and governors:

For example, applicants for employment, staff profile, governing body profile, attendance at training events, disciplinary and grievance cases, staff appraisal. This information is deemed to be confidential.

Due regard is given to the promotion of equality in the School Improvement Plan. The lead person responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the policy and action plan is the Headteacher, although all staff play a key active part.

Their role is to:

- Lead discussions, organise training, update staff in staff meetings, support discussions
- Work with the governing body on matters relating to equality
- Support evaluation activities that moderate the impact and success of this policy

Developing Best Practice

Learning and Teaching

- We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, teaching and learning will:
 - Provide equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society
 - Use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping
 - Use materials to promote a positive image of and attitude towards disability and disabled people
 - Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour
 - Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and religions and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
 - Use a range of sensitive teaching strategies when teaching about different cultural and religious traditions
 - Develop student's advocacy skills so that they can detect bias, challenge discrimination, leading to justice and equality
 - Ensure that the whole curriculum covers issues of equality and diversity;
 - All subject leaders' departments, where appropriate, promote and celebrate the contribution of different cultures to the subject matter
 - Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education

- Provide educational visits and extended learning opportunities that involve all student groups
- Take account of the performance of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of students
- Identify resources and training that support staff development

Learning & working Environment

There is a consistently high expectation of the whole school community regardless of a person's gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination. All are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others. Parents are also encouraged to view their own children's achievements in this light.

- Teacher enthusiasm is a vital factor in achieving a high level of motivation and good results from all students
- Adults in the school will provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity
- The school should place a very high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability.
- We will meet all students' learning needs including the more able by carefully assessed and administered programmes of work
- The school must provide an environment in which all students have equal access to all facilities and resources
- All students are encouraged to be actively involved in their own learning
- A range of teaching methods are to be used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all students
- Consideration will be given to the physical learning environment – both internal and external, including displays and signage

Curriculum

At Mount St Joseph, we aim to ensure that:

- Planning reflects our commitment to equality in all subject areas and cross curricular themes promoting positive attitudes to equality and diversity
- Students will have opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality
- Steps are taken to ensure that all students have access to the mainstream curriculum by considering their cultural, backgrounds, linguistic needs and learning styles

- All students have access to qualifications which recognise attainment and achievement and promote progression

Resources and Materials

The provision of good quality resources and materials within school is a high priority. These resources should:

- Reflect the reality of an ethnically, culturally and sexually diverse society
- Reflect a variety of viewpoints
- Show positive images of males and females in society
- Include non-stereotypical images of all groups in a global context
- Be accessible to all members of the school community

Language

We recognise that it is important at Mount St Joseph that all members of the school community use appropriate language which:

- Does not transmit or confirm stereotypes
- Does not offend
- Creates and enhances positive images of particular groups identified at the beginning of this document
- Creates the conditions for all people to develop their self esteem
- Uses accurate language in referring to particular groups or individuals and challenges in instances where this is not the case

Extended Learning Opportunities

It is the policy of this school to provide equal access to all activities. We undertake responsibility for making contributions to extended learning opportunities and are aware of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. We try to ensure that all such non-staff members who have contact with children adhere to this policy.

Provision for Bi-lingual Students

At Mount St Joseph we would make appropriate provision for all EAL/bi-lingual children/groups to ensure access to the whole curriculum. These groups may include:

- Students for whom English is an additional language
- Students who are new to the United Kingdom
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children

- Advanced bi-lingual learners
- Use first language effectively for learning

Personal Development and Pastoral Guidance

- Staff take account of gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination and the experience and needs of particular groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, refugee and asylum seeker students
- All students are encouraged to consider the full range of career opportunities available to them with no discriminatory boundaries placed on them due to their disability, gender, race or sexual orientation (whilst acknowledging that a disability may impose some practical boundaries to some career aspirations)
- All students/staff/parents/carers are given support, as appropriate, when they experience discrimination
- We recognise that perpetrators may also be victims and require support
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of students can see themselves reflected in the school community
- Emphasis is placed on the value that diversity brings to the school community rather than the challenges through classroom-based discussions during form time and in school assemblies

Staffing and Staff Development

We recognise the need for positive role models and distribution of responsibility among staff.

- This must include students' access to a balance of male and female staff at all key stages where possible
- We encourage the career development and aspirations of all school staff
- It is our policy to provide staff with training and development, which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of students
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds

Staff Recruitment

- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process
- The Equalities policy and practices are covered in all staff inductions
- All temporary staff are made aware of policies and practices

- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and impact

We understand that under the Equality Act 2010, in very limited circumstances, an employer can claim that a certain religious denomination or belief is considered to be a genuine occupational requirement of that role. An aided school may be able to rely on this for some roles in school, particularly those roles that provide spiritual leadership.

In addition, there are also instances in which a job will qualify for a genuine occupational requirement on the grounds of gender. However, only in very few instances would this be permissible, for example, where the job is likely to involve physical contact with members of the opposite sex, where matters of decency or privacy are involved.

Partnerships with Parents/Carers/Families and the Wider Community

We will work with parents/carers to help all students to achieve their potential.

- All parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the full life of the school.
- Setting up, as part of the schools' commitment to equality and diversity, a group made up of all stakeholders of the school community. This has been/will be developed to support the school with matters related to its equalities duties
- Members of the local community are encouraged to join in school activities
- Exploring the possibility of the school having a role to play in supporting new and settled communities

Roles and Responsibilities

- Our Governing Body will ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements in respect of this policy and action plan
- The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and report progress to the Governing Body
- The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of this policy
- Our staff will promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for children with additional needs and maintain a good level of awareness of equalities issues
- All members of the school community have a responsibility to treat each other with respect, to feel valued, and to speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour
- We will take steps to ensure all visitors to the school adhere to our commitment to equality

Commissioning and Procurement

Mount St Joseph will ensure that we buy services from organisations that comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in any tendering process.

The Measurement of Impact of the Policy

In 2020 the school received the Equalities Award in recognition of its work to ensure school fulfils its statutory duties to:

- Eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations (Equality Act, 2010)
- Promote community cohesion (Education and Inspections Act, 2006)
- Prevent people being drawn into terrorism (Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015)
- Safeguard children and promote spiritual moral, social and cultural development (Education Act, 2002)

This policy will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on students, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school.

Publicising the and reviewing the policy

This Policy is a public document that will be made available to any interested stakeholder. We publicise the policy via the school website, staff and parent newsletter, induction booklets. The policy is reviewed annually.