

English Martyrs Catholic Voluntary Academy
Single Equality Scheme
and Action Plan 2015-2018



“We learn and grow as a family in the footsteps of Jesus“

This information can be made available in different languages and in alternative formats such as large print or audio tape. Please contact the School if you require a copy in a different format.

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INTRODUCTION

Our School is part of the Church’s Mission to pass on the good news of Christ’s Gospel through learning, worship and the formation of character in a caring environment, which embodies Christian Values and discipline.

God has created every child out of love and the human dignity of each will be rightfully valued and respected.

Our School community will embrace a spirit of welcome, fairness and understanding as it strives to recognise God’s Grace within each of us and within our whole community.

We are committed to the promotion of equality and diversity. In so doing, we realise the valuable contribution which all members of the community can make to the school. Our policies and practices will be reviewed to take into account the different needs and contributions of pupils, staff, parents and Governors.

Vital to our work on equality and diversity is to ensure that pupils and staff can develop in an environment which is supportive of academic and emotional needs.

The legislation which applies to schools with regard to equality is complex and requires us to have in place various policies and practices. We have chosen to combine these requirements into a single resource and strategy for equality and diversity. Crucial to this is our intent that all those involved have access to a single resource which clearly details our commitments, describes our processes and sets out how we will deliver equality in schooling.

Taking a combined approach strengthens our commitment to equality and diversity, realising that individuals may have multiple needs and requirements. Our strategy makes clear those specific duties required of us.

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

Our Single Equality Scheme (SES) and action plan covers a three year period from 2015 to 2018.

County Councils consulted widely on their Equality and Diversity Strategy, and in so doing, worked with schools to identify the level of priority given to education in the counties. Responses to this consultation

showed that accessibility in schooling was a clear priority for the people of Lincolnshire and Rutland among all respondents¹.

An important part of developing our Single Equality Scheme was to consult with our Governors, staff, parents, volunteers, professional visitors, pupils and other interested parties. As a result of this consultation and comments made, the Policy/Scheme and Action Plan have been amended and improved to make it more meaningful to all those who are involved in our School.

As actions are developed, and the results of monitoring become available, we will be able to consult more meaningfully on specifics with those people involved. Also, our annual reports will show the progress we are making, and we invite comments from people on these.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality duty that applies to public bodies including schools and Academies, and which extends to all protected characteristics; race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to **have due regard to the need to:**

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Where schools are concerned, age will be a relevant characteristic in considering their duties in their role as an employer, but not in relation to pupils.

DISABILITY EQUALITY

Within our Single Equality Scheme, we recognise our responsibilities arising from all legislation relevant to Disability and Special Educational Needs.

In responding to our duties in this context, we will ensure access to education and inclusion for disabled pupils in every aspect of school life by:

- Protecting pupils from discrimination
- Providing improvements to increase access over time, and
- Providing auxiliary aids and services
- Increase reporting of harassment and bullying
- Recognise that bullying may be motivated by hostility or prejudice against disabled people
- Intervene effectively to prevent escalation of bullying
- Better support for disabled pupils

¹ The consultation exercise assessed the level of priority respondents gave to services, and also their satisfaction with those services. Responses have been extracted to assess differences between those that use the services and those that do not, and also by equality categories to assess any differences therein.

- Improve joint working with other agencies.

Our responsibilities extend to our staff, parents and Governors. We will eliminate discrimination in employment and recruitment and actively encourage disabled parents/guardians, and the parents/guardians of disabled children, to participate in relevant school activities.

Other legislation still relevant for disabled people are:

- The SEN and Disability Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (SEN) duties in the Education Act 1996

The Equality Duties require us, when carrying out our functions, to have regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010
- eliminate disability related harassment
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

. The main new provisions in the Act are:

- new disability discrimination provisions:
 - direct disability discrimination
 - indirect disability discrimination
 - discrimination arising from disability

Discrimination in the context of the Equality Act occurs if:

- A disabled pupil or prospective pupil is treated less favourably than another for a reason related to their disability and without justification
- A school fails, without justification, to take reasonable steps to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (known as reasonable adjustment).

The reasonable adjustment duty requires us to anticipate the barriers that disabled pupils may face and to then remove or minimise these before substantial disadvantage occurs.

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) duties in the Education Act 1996

It is important to note that the definition of Special Educational Needs is different to that of Disability, although there are overlaps between them both.

The SEN duties require schools to use their 'best endeavours' to make appropriate provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs.

Definitions of Impairment and Disability

The Equality Act 2010 uses a World Health Organisation definition of disability as being “a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

The effect must be substantial, long term (that has lasted or is likely to last for at least a year) and adverse.

The Act covers people with a physical impairment, a visual impairment, a hearing impairment, a learning difficulty, a specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia), mental health issues, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) if it has a medical basis e.g. ADHD, ASD, people who are Deaf BSL users and people with long term health conditions²

We are committed to supporting and promoting the Social Model of Disability, which says that people are disabled not by their impairment, but by a society that does not take account of their needs and prevents them from having full access to society due to physical, communication and social barriers. The social model identifies the problem as being the disabling world.

GENDER EQUALITY

Within our Single Equality Scheme, we recognise our responsibilities arising from legislation relevant to gender. In responding to our duties in this context, we will ensure eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between males and females involved in the school: pupils, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and Governors.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that we eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment, and promote equality of opportunity between males and females (including transgender).

Unlawful sex discrimination and harassment includes discrimination as defined by the Equality Act, which replaces the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Equal Pay Act 1970 and Gender Recognition Act.

RACE EQUALITY

Our Single Equality Scheme states clearly our commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting good community relations. This applies to issues of ethnicity, nationality and national origin. Statute requires schools to have a policy on race equality, we have developed a strategy which ensures that all matters of equality are addressed in our equality scheme, giving them equal respect and consideration. Within our approach to equality and diversity, race equality is covered by both our policy and our single equality scheme and the procedures which are included within them.

In all that we do within the school, we will work to provide equality of opportunity for pupils, parents and employees. We will deliver our commitments as required under the Equality Act 2010, which replaces the Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Racial harassment,

² The Act also covers people with medical conditions from the point of diagnosis for example diabetes, multiple sclerosis and people living with HIV and cancer.

victimisation and bullying will not be tolerated, and will be handled effectively in line with our policy on dealing with and reporting racist incidents in the school.

AGE EQUALITY

Our Single Equality Scheme states clearly our commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting good community relations. This applies to issues of age. In our employment practices, we will observe relevant legislation with regard to age and eliminate discrimination on this basis. Age is also included in our single equality scheme and so also our Equality Impact Assessment procedures, where it is relevant to policy consideration. We will carry out our duties with regard to the Equality Act 2010, which replaces the Employment Equality (Age) Regulation 2006.

RELIGION AND BELIEF EQUALITY

Our equality scheme states clearly our commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting good community relations. This applies to issues of religion and belief. Within our approach to equality and diversity, religion and belief are covered by both our policy and our equality scheme and the procedures which are included within them. We will carry out our duties with regard to the Equality Act 2010, which replaces the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION EQUALITY

Our single equality scheme states clearly our commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting good community relations. This applies to issues of sexual orientation. Within our approach to equality and diversity, sexual orientation is covered by both our policy and our single equality scheme and the procedures which are included within them. We will carry out our duties with regard to the Equality Act 2010, which replaces the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003.

ASSOCIATION AND PERCEPTION

It is unlawful to discriminate because of the sex, age, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom a pupil is associated. So, for example, a school must not discriminate by refusing to admit a pupil because his/her parents are gay men or lesbians. It is also unlawful to discriminate because of a characteristic which a person has, even if you are mistaken

EMPLOYING PEOPLE

We will work to develop a workforce that broadly reflects the communities we serve. We will include equality of opportunity in all our employment practices, from advertising and recruitment, through to professional development and terms and conditions of employment. In delivering our aims for equal opportunities in employment, we are making commitments which we will observe in our policies and day-to-day operations.

Work Environment

- Constantly reviewing and developing policies and procedures for employment which reflect equality legislation and modern working practices
- Ensuring that the work environment is safe and free from harassment, victimisation and bullying
- Making adaptations, where appropriate, to support staff in post
- Communicating our Equal Opportunities Policy and Single Equality Scheme to all employees and clarifying everyone's role in delivering them
- Dealing with all breaches of policy in a transparent, supportive and fair manner
- Monitoring personnel activities to ensure discrimination does not take place.

INVOLVEMENT

We recognise that successful implementation of our aims and values depends on the involvement of all involved. In the first instance, this requires us to communicate our aspirations, policies and plans to children, parents, staff and Governors. Also to maintain these communications by reporting on our progress.

In order to be successful, we need to reflect the views and desires of those involved in the school, and so we will consult with children, parents, staff and Governors as appropriate in order to identify areas for priority improvement and to receive feedback on our actions.

Successful consultation will depend on our reaching *all* people involved in the process, and ensuring that we receive the views of people from different groups.

ASSESSING FUNCTIONS AND POLICIES

As legislation prescribes, our 'functions' are our full range of duties and powers. Our 'policies' are the full range of formal and informal decisions that we take in carrying out our duties. In common with all public authorities, we will have some explicit 'policies' and other practices which are embedded in our day-to-day activities. We will assess those functions and policies 'relevant' to equality, meaning those that have, or could have, implications on the promotion of equality. In our action plan, we will identify those areas in need of assessment. The process for undertaking this 'checking' is called Equality Impact Assessment and we will use a process which covers all areas of equality.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment is an assessment across all strands of the equality agenda. "An EIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is written or unwritten, formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of the policy"

The purpose of an EIA is to determine whether there could be an adverse impact on groups in society. In so doing, all policies that have an effect the public and/or staff should be assessed for their impact. It should be noted that changes to an existing policy, or proposals to delete a policy are also subject to Equality Impact Assessments as these constitute 'new' policy.

CONSULTING ON THE LIKELY IMPACT OF POLICIES

When revising existing policies, or producing new, we consult with relevant people involved in the delivery and purpose of the policy. All new and revised policies will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment as part of their development.

Our consultation activities also need to take account of the needs of different people.

When consulting, we will make sure that:

- we value the views of all those responding, and give serious consideration to the views that we receive
- our priority is to listen to those who are most likely to be affected
- the purpose of the consultations are clear
- appropriate methods are used to consult with different groups, and every effort is made to make the consultation accessible to all people
- relevant community groups, with specific expertise and members, are involved in the process, and that
- the results of the consultation are made available.

Working with County Councils and other schools in Lincolnshire and Rutland, we will support the development of countywide groups representing those with special interests and needs in the context of equality. This will help us to ensure that we both receive the views of people who are more likely to experience disadvantage, and to receive feedback on how we can continually improve our consultation methods.

COMMUNICATION

This single equality scheme will be made available to all staff, pupils, Governors, parents/guardians, other visitors to the school and the community. The information contained herein will be provided as required in alternative formats if required such as large print, audio tape or translated into other languages.

Each year, we will monitor progress with our Single Equality Scheme (including the Accessibility Plan). We will include reference to our Single Equality Scheme, particularly our key commitments, on the school websites.

Every three years, we will review our Single Equality Scheme and produce a revised version. However, where our monitoring and progress reports show the need for change or revision, we will make those changes as required each year to keep the Scheme up-to-date and meaningful.

IMPLEMENTATION

Following an audit of our functions and policies, we have developed a three-year action plan to deliver on our equality commitments. This plan is structured in such a way that it combines all our equality planning into a single plan of action. The plan is laid out so that it can be seen which area of the equality agenda we are addressing with the action, by reference in a column to 'race', 'disability' etc, as

appropriate. The headings in the plan reflect those required for an accessibility plan. Therefore, we have planned for all activities in a single resource.

It is our belief that planning for equality in this way enables us to work in a joined-up and effective way, ensuring that all issues are taken into account at the same time.

The plan lasts for three years. Where the results of our activity indicate the need for more actions to be included, we will update the plan to include this. Though subject to a formal three yearly review or as legislation requires, we will keep the action plan up-to-date.

Each action is assigned to a responsible person, or group of persons. The Headteacher and governing body will monitor progress on the action plan throughout the academic year. We will report annually on our progress.

PROCUREMENT

Our obligations under statute extend to those services we contract to other providers. In the first instance, all contractors will be required to have in place their own equal opportunities policies for staff and customers, and/or a commitment to abide by our equality policies. In some circumstances, contracts may need to include requirements of providers to monitor their customers and/or staff in order that we can meet our obligations to assess our own services and/or workforce.

School staff will be aware of Section 6 of the Act when hiring transport as it puts new duties on transport providers, including the bus and coach companies, and the taxi and private hire car trade. The requirement to provide accessible vehicles is extended to include these transport providers. Bus companies will not be able to refuse a job because, for example, it may take longer to pick up disabled students.

TRAINING

In order to meet our responsibilities under the Acts, we will ensure that all staff, including Governors, are aware of the general duty to promote race, disability and gender equality, and any specific duties relevant to their roles. All existing and new staff will be made aware of the School's Single Equality Scheme, its purpose and how it takes effect. Specific training will be undertaken on key aspects of the scheme, most particularly for staff with designated responsibilities such as the teacher responsible for special educational needs etc. Additionally, we will monitor all training provided to teachers and staff to ensure that there is an equitable take-up and provision.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body

The Governors are responsible for:

- making sure the school complies with all relevant legislation, and
- making sure the Single Equality Scheme is followed
- ensuring that the procedures for candidates to stand for election and for parents to vote for candidates are accessible

- ensuring they consider the impact of the equality duty when reviewing of all school policies

The Head Teacher

The head teacher is responsible for:

- making sure the Single Equality Scheme is readily available and that the Governors, staff, pupils, and their parents and guardians know about them
- making sure the Single Equality Scheme is followed
- producing regular information for staff and governors about their responsibilities to the scheme and providing training and support for them, if necessary
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and/or discrimination
- Ensuring the principles of relevance, proportionality, reasonable adjustment and positive action are applied appropriately.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- dealing with discriminatory incidents, and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- promoting equal opportunities and good community relations, and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, gender, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation
- keeping up to date with the law on discrimination, and taking up training and learning opportunities
- ensuring pupils understand their responsibility to themselves and others 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.

Visitors and contractors

Visitors and contractors are responsible for:

- accessing and following, our equality policy.

EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

YEAR 1

ACTION	RELEVANCE	LEAD
Consult on Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan	All	Governor responsible for Equality
Publish the adopted Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan	All	Governing Body
Review training needs of all school staff and Governors on equality and diversity	All	Headteacher and Governing Body
Review the provision of school meals to ensure religious and dietary requirements can be catered for	Race, Religion and Faith	Headteacher and Governing Body
School Council to lead on raising awareness of not taking/using scooters or bikes in the school playground or in the car parking areas	Disability, Age	School Council
Awareness training for staff on different disabilities/illnesses and medical conditions to continue to be a priority	All	Headteacher and Governing Body
Review and monitor pupil and staff attendance	All	Headteacher and Governing Body
Review and monitor attendance in school teams and after school activities to ensure inclusion of opportunity for all	Disability, race, gender	Governing Body
Improve data collection of incidents of bullying and harassment of race, gender, SEND pupils	Disability, race, gender	Headteacher

YEAR 2

ACTION	RELEVANCE	LEAD
Review progress on Single Equality Scheme Action Plan with parents, children, staff, Governing Body and others, updating and revising as appropriate	All	Headteacher and Governing Body
Engage with children and young people with additional needs and to consult with parents of pupils from different backgrounds, with different needs, on service provision, development and satisfaction	Disability, Race, Religion/Belief	Headteacher and Governing Body
Review the provision of school meals to ensure religious and dietary requirements can be catered for	Race, Religion and Faith	Headteacher and Governing Body
Communicate Single Equality Scheme to contractors and requirement to abide by its content	All	Headteacher and other School staff
Awareness training for staff on different disabilities/illnesses and medical conditions to continue to be a priority	All	Headteacher and Governing Body
Annually educational standards/achievements by gender, race and disability and Ever6 eligible pupils produced and inequalities addressed	Gender, Race and Disability	Headteacher and Governing Body
Continue to investigate working with other Schools to ensure a wider ranging view from different groups of people is heard	All	Governing Body/MAT

YEAR 3

ACTION	RELEVANCE	LEAD
Review the provision of school meals to ensure religious and dietary requirements can be catered for	Race, Religion and Faith	Headteacher and Governing Body
Review the provision of school meals to ensure religious and dietary requirements can be catered for	Race, Religion and Faith	Headteacher and Governing Body
Consult with pupils, parents and staff on development of the next Single Equality Scheme, reviewing progress and future plans	All	Headteacher and Governing Body
Develop second Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan, updating and adding to policy and action plan where necessary	All	Headteacher and Governing Body
Review training needs of all school staff and Governors on equality and diversity	All	Headteacher and Governing Body
Awareness training for staff on different disabilities/illnesses and medical conditions to continue to be a priority	All	Headteacher and Governing Body
Staff Survey to include questions on equality to ensure any staff issues are addressed	All	Governing Body