

## Introduction

Mary Immaculate High School is committed to an Equality Policy which promotes equality of opportunity. We aim to foster positive attitudes to counter any anti-social behaviour which works, intentionally or unintentionally, against prospective, current or former employees, prospective, current and former students, services users and those with protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics are defined under the Equality Act 2010 as disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and age (applies to over 18 years). We will eliminate discriminatory practices and customs which may threaten equality of opportunity. We will monitor our curriculum and pastoral role so as to broaden the perspectives of all students by helping them to understand the world in which they live.

The overall objective of this Equality Policy is to provide a framework for the School to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment and promote equality of opportunity and encourage good relationships between people from all backgrounds and protected characteristics. The principles of this policy therefore apply to all members of the School community.

## Relevant legislation and guidance

The legal and local framework for this Equality Policy is as follows

- Equality Act 2010 and Codes of Practice;
- Education Act 1996 and 2002;
- Children Act 2004;
- The School's Mission Statement.

## Equality Aims & Values

The School is committed to providing equal opportunities. All members of the School's community, including students, parents, employees, governors and visitors are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of protected characteristics.

The School aims to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act as: sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, maternity and pregnancy. educate students and all members of the School community to understand others and value diversity in an inclusive and secure environment, preparing them for life in a diverse society; and actively respond to reduce any actual, potential or claimed discrimination and disadvantage. put in place reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, students and other members of the school community.
- recognise people with protected characteristics and behave sensitively to their social needs.

## Religious Principles

As a Catholic school, the School has a strong Catholic ethos and aims to build a community based on Christian values. Under the Equality Act 2010, the school is entitled to take into account faith when making certain decisions (for example, in relation to admissions and the recruitment of staff where some roles are reserved for practising Catholics) and some of the day-to-day practices within the School may focus on Catholic worship and values. However, the School respects and practises tolerance and understanding of the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students, parents and carers. The School also welcomes its duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

## How the school will ensure equality for protected acts and characteristics

The school is committed to comply fully with the Equality Act 2010 and codes of practice in all areas of the schools activities and services as an employer and service provider.

## Unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination can take the following forms: direct, indirect, by association by perception or because of pregnancy and maternity It occurs when you treat someone less favourably than you treat (or would treat) another person because of a protected characteristic or as a result of them making a claim under the Equality Act 2010.



The school is committed to the following

- opposing all forms of discrimination;
- Supporting members of the school community who may want to make a claim against the school under the Equality Act 2010 by supplying information requested which is relevant to support their claim.

### Harassment and victimisation

The school is committed to the following

- opposing all forms of harassment and victimisation to any member of the school community;
- will act on reports of harassment and victimisation by following the school policies and procedures;
- will provide support to victims of harassment and victimisation by following the schools policies and procedures.

### Commitment to Equality

The school's commitment to equality includes

- Ensure school policies and procedures promote equality for all;
- Provide support for those with protected characteristics through the pastoral care offered to students and employees;
- opposing all forms of harassment and prejudice and being pro-active in tackling and eliminating discrimination;
- promoting good relations between people from different groups within the School and the wider School community;
- ensuring equality in staff recruitment and development, regardless of protected characteristic;
- a commitment to recognising the needs of different cultural backgrounds and responding to their needs;
- promoting equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons and encouraging participation by disabled people;
- promoting equality of opportunity between both male and female employees and students.
- welcoming prospective, current and former students and employees, current parents and carers with disabilities into the School Community; taking into account differences by making reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the groups named above;
- promoting mutual respect and good relations between males and females;
- the elimination of sex discrimination and sexual harassment, whether physical or verbal;
- ensuring equality in staff recruitment and development, regardless of gender and sexual identity, with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

### Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of **the School's Governing Body** to ensure that

- the School complies with all relevant equality legislation;
- this policy and related policies, strategies and procedures are implemented and carried out, reviewed regularly; and
- it is involved in addressing any serious breaches of this policy.

It is the responsibility of **the Headteacher** to

- work with the Governing Body to ensure that all relevant policies, strategies and procedures are implemented and carried out and reviewed regularly;
- ensure that staff at the School are aware of the School's aims as set out in this policy and their responsibilities to act in accordance with this policy; and deal with any reported incidents of discrimination or harassment and delegate responsibility where appropriate to enable investigations to be carried out.

It is the responsibility of **all employees at the School** to

- be vigilant in all areas of the School for any type of discrimination or harassment and deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur in an appropriate manner;
- promote an inclusive learning environment both in and outside of the classroom;



- support children within their class for whom English is an additional language; and attend relevant training to keep up to date with equality legislation and issues.

### **Complaints**

Any person who believes that this policy has been breached by the School should make a complaint in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy. Students who believe that they are a victim of discrimination or harassment should talk to a member of staff.

### **How will breaches of this policy be dealt with?**

Any breach of this Equality policy will be treated seriously. Every complaint will be investigated and investigations will be carried out independently and objectively.

Complaints will be resolved in accordance with the procedures and timescales set out in the School's Complaints Policy. The following principles will also apply

- During the course of investigations, the accused should be informed of the complaint and have the opportunity to respond;
- Confidentiality should be maintained to the extent possible and the request of a witness to remain anonymous should be respected;
- A written record should be kept of the complaint and the subsequent investigations by the member of staff to whom the complaint was made and/or the member of staff carrying out the investigation;
- Both the complainant and the accused should be informed of the outcome of an investigation.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The School will collect, examine and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy and make adjustments as appropriate. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if changes in legislation mean an amendment is required.

**Policy Approved:** December 2017

**Policy Review Date:** December 2018