Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

St. Bernard's RC Primary & Nursery School
A Voluntary Academy

September 2026
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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

Catholic Education Service
Supporting Catholic Education Since 1847

Statement of Intent – Promoting Diversity in the Church School Workforce

In the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus Christ bestows upon his followers two unassailable truths:

'"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.' (Mark 12:30-31)

Christ did not give any exceptions for this love of our neighbour, therefore any kind of prejudice or discriminatory behaviour is incompatible with our faith.

We recognise that certain groups in society have been disadvantaged because of discrimination they have faced. Despite progress, unfortunately prejudice still exists today both explicitly and implicitly, and many still face discrimination due to their religion, race, sex, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or age.

Our collective Church teachings on human dignity and dignity in work give us a very clear instruction that our communities must not only stamp out prejudice wherever we find it, but take positive steps to building a more equal society.

As the providers of a third of all schools in England we know the invaluable contribution school staff make in shaping the attitudes of generations of children. Therefore, Church schools must be positive working environments where all pupils and staff can flourish free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation.

As the ecumenical bodies supporting Church schools in England we commit to:

- Promoting understanding of all protected characteristics[1] in Church schools
- Promoting best practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
- Ensuring that all national employment policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees regardless of any protected characteristic[2]
- Regular research and monitoring to identify any inequalities and barriers that potentially exist
- Ensuring any guidance on governance matters promotes diversity and equal opportunities
- Working with representative organisations and other faith groups to foster community cohesion

October 2020

[1] As outlined in the Equalities Act 2010.
[2] As above

1 - CONTEXT

1.1 Responsibility for Equality cannot be delegated and all staff of HFCMAT must exercise due regard in their day to day operations. The Trust's commitment to the identification and removal of barriers to success for all is based on the following core values and ethos expressed in our vision statement which can be viewed on our website – www.hfcmat.com

1.2 The Equality Act 2010 (which came into force on April 5th 2011) has replaced and unified all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It aims to ensure that people have equality of opportunity in accessing and experiencing public service. The Act provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

1.3 Equality of opportunity at HFCMAT is about providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents, directors and local community members.

1.4 The Accessibility Plan is fully consistent with the school's SEN policies and SEN legislation. It should also be applied consistently within other school and Trust policies.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

1.5 The General Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires schools, in the exercise of their functions and decisions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

1.6 The specific duties of the PSED states that academies are required to:

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the PSED annually.
- Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years.

2 AIMS

2.1 We aim to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across all aspects of school life. We do this by:

a) creating an ethos in which pupils and staff feel valued and secure;
b) building self-esteem and confidence in our pupils, so they can use these qualities to achieve their full potential and become rounded citizens of the wider community;
c) having consistent expectations of the pupils and their learning;

d) removing or minimising barriers to learning, so that all pupils can achieve;
e) ensuring that our teaching takes into account the learning needs of all pupils through our curriculum and lesson planning;
f) actively tackling discrimination and promoting equality through our curriculum;
g) making clear to our pupils what constitutes aggressive and discriminatory behaviour;
h) ensuring school resources reflect society as a whole;
i) having clear procedures for dealing with discriminatory incidents and that these are understood by all; and
j) ensuring all pupils develop mutual respect through our school's ethos, teachings and adult example.

2.2 These aims are designed to ensure that our schools meet their own needs and those of their communities, taking account the nine protected characteristics; race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships and gender reassignment. The philosophy of HFCMAT is based on inclusive principles which strive to promote equality. Equality of opportunity at HFCMAT is about providing equal access and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Trust is responsible for:

- Ensuring every school within the Trust complies with equality-related legislation.
- Ensuring the policy and its procedures are implemented.
- Ensuring all other school policies promote equality.
- Giving due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

3.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing the policy and its related procedures.
- Making all staff aware of their responsibilities and providing training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
- Taking appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
- Ensuring that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff.
- Ensure that all staff and students are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

3.3 All staff are responsible for:

- Enacting this policy, its commitments and procedures, and their responsibilities associated with this policy.
- Dealing with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and knowing how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Promoting equality and good relations and not discriminating on any grounds.
- Attending such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality legislation.

4. FORMS OF DISCRIMMINATION

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in Appendix A. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 School and Trust policies reflect a commitment to equality.

5.2 Governing bodies and school leadership teams set a clear ethos that reflect our school’s commitment to equality for all members of the school community.

5.3 St. Bernard's and the Trust promote positive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity.

5.4 The school leadership team will work in partnership with others to promote equality of opportunity and oppose all forms of oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination.

5.5 Directors, Governors and Staff contribute to policy documents. Parents can request to see policies and have their views noted. Regular feedback is obtained from a range of stakeholders including:

- School councils, PSHE lessons and student voice surveys;
- Staff surveys, meetings and INSET
- EHCP, IHCP and regular SEND review meetings
- PTA, parents’ evenings and meetings
- Governing body meetings

6 STAFFING, RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

6.1 St. Bernard's adheres to recruitment and selection procedures that are fair, equal and in line with statutory duties and guidelines.

6.2 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.

6.3 Equality policy and practice will be covered in all staff inductions.

6.4 All temporary staff are made aware of equality policy and practice.

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

6.6 Staff training needs and associated development opportunities will be identified through regular staff appraisals, in line with the school's Teacher Appraisal Policy and Support Staff Performance Management Policy. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit. The trust will adopt good practice in terms of data collection and use this data to monitor and measure the attraction, recruitment, retention and progression of staff.

7 CURRICULUM

7.1 Curriculum planning takes account of the ethnicity, backgrounds and needs of all pupils. The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated where appropriate to ensure the inclusion of all pupils.

7.2 St. Bernard's monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for all pupils.

7.3 Extra-curricular activities and special events cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils.

7.4 Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment.

8. DISABILITY & DISCRIMINATION

8. 1 The school will encourage staff who are disabled or become disabled to inform the headteacher or their line manager about their condition so that the school can support them as appropriate.

8. 2 Staff experiencing difficulties at work because of their disability (physical or otherwise) may wish to contact their line manager or Operations Manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Their line manager or HR may wish to consult with the staff member and a medical adviser about possible adjustments.

8. 3 The governing board will monitor the physical environment of the school premises to consider whether certain features place physically disabled staff, job applicants, service users, or other stakeholders at a substantial disadvantage compared to others. Where reasonable, the school will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

9 BREACHES

9.1 If a member of staff believes that they may have been discriminated against, they will be encouraged to raise the matter through the school's Grievance Policy. If they believe that they may have been subject to harassment, they will be encouraged to raise the matter with their line manager.

9.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

9.3 Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The school takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

10 MONITORING AND REVIEW

10.1 The Equality Information Advice and Guidance Policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

10.2 Progress towards the Action Plan will be reviewed as part of each school's annual evaluation of its Improvement Plan.

10.3 The results of that evaluation will be reported to the Governors' via the Head's report.

10.4 Evidence for the evaluation will include: actions taken; resources deployed; scrutiny of school communication systems; lesson observations; and a judgement of the impact on teaching and learning. Student/parent/staff and governor voice will be employed as appropriate.

10.5 Each school's plan is coordinated by the SLT, although other lead staff are identified in the plan.

10.6 School-specific Contextual Notes or Procedures are located on our individual school websites.

Annexe A

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Every 2 years St. Bernard's will set specific equality targets to improve the provision set out within this policy.

Equality Objectives action plan

Each individual school within HFCMAT is responsible for producing, implementing and monitoring an Action Plan to address equality objectives. Action Plans are a fundamental part of the Policy. Although an integral part of the Policy, the Action Plans are standalone documents and will change regularly as progress is made on the identified actions and new actions are identified.

Action Plans will link with school improvement, curriculum reviews and annual self-assessment. Whilst the Policy sets out the vision, the Action Plans translate that vision into actions targeted to achieve equality outcomes. The Action Plans detail the actions which will be taken to make the commitments in the Policy a reality.

Annexe B

St Bernard's RC Primary School Accessibility Plan 2026-28

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this plan is to show how St Bernard's RC Primary School intends, over time, to increase the accessibility of our school for disabled pupils

Definition of Disability

A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day- to -day activities

Legal background

From September 2002, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 outlaws discrimination by schools and LEA`s against either current or prospective disabled pupils in their access to education It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum (this includes teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits;
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services (this includes improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled. (this will include planning to make written information that is normally provided by schools to its pupils available to disabled pupils. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about school events. The information should take account of the pupils` disabilities and the preferred format of pupils and parents and be made available within a reasonable timeframe

St Bernard's RC Primary School aims to treat all stakeholders, including pupils, prospective pupils, staff, governors and other members of the school community favourably and, wherever possible, takes reasonable steps to avoid placing anyone at a substantial disadvantage. The school aims to work closely with disabled pupils, their families and any relevant outside agencies in order to remove or minimise any potential barriers to learning, which puts them at a disadvantage, but allows them to learn, achieve and participate fully in school life. The school is active in promoting positive attitudes to disabled people in the school and in planning to increase access to education for all disabled pupils. As part of the school's continued communication with parents, carers and other stakeholders we continually look at ways to improve accessibility through data collection, questionnaires and parental discussions.

Contextual Information

The school is a one storey building which has disabled facilities and toilets. Wheelchair access is available into the main building. All areas of the school grounds are accessible to wheelchair users. The Eco garden is accessible via the KS2 yard but wheelchair users would need support in accessing the area.

The Current Range Of Disabilities Within St Bernard's.

The school has children with a range of disabilities which include moderate and specific learning difficulties. When children enter school with specific disabilities, the school contacts the LA and appropriate professionals for assessments, support and guidance for the school and parents.

We have a number of children who have asthma and all staff are aware of these children. Inhalers are kept in the classrooms and a record of use is noted.

We have competent First Aiders and Paediatric First Aiders who hold current First Aid certificates. All medication is kept in a central safe and secure place which has easy access for First Aiders and staff members. Administration of Medicines consent forms are filled in by parents outlining the illness and amount and time of medication. All medication that is given is recorded.

Targets	**Strategies**	**Outcome**	**Timeframe**	**Responsibility**
Equality & Inclusion				
To ensure that the Accessibility Plan becomes an annual agenda item at FGB Meetings.	Clerk to Governors to add to list for FGB meetings.	Adherence to legislation.	Annually	JL
To improve staff awareness of disability issues.	Review staff training needs. Provide training for members of the school community as appropriate.	Whole-school community aware of issues.	On-going	JL / KB
To ensure that all policies consider the implications of disability access. .	Consider during review of policies	Policies reflect current legislation.	On-going	All staff
Physical Environment				

To ensure that all areas of the school buildings and grounds are accessible for all children and adults and continue to improve access to the school's physical environment for all.	Audit of accessibility of school buildings and grounds by SLT and Resources Governors. Suggest actions and implement as budget allows.	Modifications will be made to the school building to improve access.	Reviewed each summer term Ongoing	SLT / Resources
Ensure visually stimulating environment for all children	Colourful, lively displays in classrooms and inviting role play areas.	Lively and inviting environment maintained.	ongoing	All staff
Improve physical environment of school environment	The school will take account the needs of pupils, staff and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings.	Enabling needs to be met where possible.	as needed	SLT & govs
Curriculum				
To continue to train support staff to enable them to meet the needs of children with a range of SEN.	SENCo to review the needs of children and provide training for TA's as needed	TA's are able to enable all children to access the curriculum.	Ongoing	KB
To ensure that all children are able to access all out-of school activities. E.g. clubs, trips, residentials etc.	Review out-of-school provision to ensure compliance with legislation	All providers of out-of-school education will comply with legislation to ensure that the needs of all children are met	Ongoing	JL / ER
To provide specialist equipment to promote participation in learning by all pupils.	Assess the needs of the children in each class and provide equipment as needed e.g. carels, headphones, writing slopes etc.	Children will develop independent learning skills.	ongoing	KB
To meet the needs of individuals during statutory end of KS2 tests	Children will be assessed, in accordance with regular classroom practice, and additional time, use of	Barriers to learning will be reduced or removed enabling children to achieve	Annually	KB

	amanuensis etc will be applied for as needed.	their full potential.		
Written information				
To ensure that all parents and other members of the school community can access information	Written information will be provided in alternative formats as necessary	Written information will be provided in alternative formats as necessary	As needed	LC
To ensure that parents who are unable to attend school, because of a disability, to access parent's evenings.	Staff to hold parents evenings by phone or send home written informations	Parents are informed of children's progress	Termly	As appropriate staff