

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School



Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan 2023/24 -2026/27

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Date of Next Policy Review	Annual updates

1.1 Introduction

This equalities policy is an attempt to amalgamate all the equalities legislation into one single equality policy for Our Lady's Catholic Primary School.

1.2 Statement/Principles

The policy outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors to promote equality. This involves tackling the barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes so that there is equality of access and the diversity within the school community is celebrated and valued.

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 Our Lady's, equality is a key principle for treating all people the same, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs/faith/tradition, sexual orientation, age or any other of the protected characteristics (Single Equalities Act 2010).

This policy has been drawn up as a result of discussion within a working party and has been shared with the whole school community.

1.3 Legal framework

1. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual identity.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

1.4 Monitoring and Review

The staff member responsible for co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation is the Headteacher. In their absence this role is taken up by the Deputy Head Teacher. They will be responsible for:

- o Providing updates on equalities legislation and the school's responsibilities in this regard;
- o Working closely with the governing body.

Supporting positively the evaluation activities that monitor the impact and success of the policy on pupils from different groups, e.g. SEND, Children in Care, Minority Ethnic including EAL pupils and Free School Meals, in the following recommended areas:

- Pupils' progress and attainment
- Learning and teaching
- Behaviour discipline
- Exclusion
- Attendance
- Admissions
- Incidents of prejudice related bullying and all forms of bullying
- Parental involvement
- Participation in extra-curricular and extended school activities
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Visits and visitors

2 Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

2.1 Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- ❖ whether or not they are disabled
- ❖ whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- ❖ whatever their gender and gender identity
- ❖ whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background

- ❖ whatever their sexual identity.

2.2 Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- ❖ disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ❖ ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- ❖ gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- ❖ religion, belief or faith background
- ❖ sexual identity.

2.3 Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- ❖ positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- ❖ positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of
- ❖ prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- ❖ mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

2.4 Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- ❖ whether or not they are disabled
- ❖ whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- ❖ whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

2.5 Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- ❖ disabled and non-disabled people
- ❖ people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- ❖ girls and boys, women and men.

2.6 Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We consult and involve:

- ❖ disabled people as well as non-disabled
- ❖ people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- ❖ both women and men, and girls and boys.

2.7 Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- ❖ disabled people as well as non-disabled
- ❖ people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- ❖ both women and men, girls and boys

2.8 Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- ❖ disability
- ❖ ethnicity, religion and culture
- ❖ gender

2.9 Principle 9: Objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement in which we have been involved (principle 7), in relation to:

- ❖ disability
- ❖ ethnicity, religion and culture
- ❖ gender

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.

Every three years, accordingly, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

3 Policy Commitments

3.1 Promoting Equality: Curriculum

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed. To achieve this we will ensure:

- Curriculum planning reflects a commitment to equality;
- The curriculum prepares pupils for life in a diverse society and uses opportunities to reflect the background and experience of pupils and families in the school;
- There will be opportunities in the curriculum to explore concepts and issues related to identity and equality;
- The promotion of attitudes and values that celebrate and respect diversity and challenge discriminatory behaviour and language wherever it occurs;
- The use of images and materials which positively reflect a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles.

3.2 Promoting Equality: Achievement

There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, social background and sexual orientation. To secure the best possible outcomes we recognise that:

- Adults in the school will be expected to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity;
- It is important to identify the particular needs of individuals and groups within the school and to use targeted interventions to narrow gaps in achievement;
- A range of teaching methods is used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils.
- All pupils are actively encouraged to engage fully in their own learning.

3.3 Promoting Equality: The ethos and culture of the school

- At Our Lady's we are aware that those involved in the leadership of the school community are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community;
- We strive to achieve a feeling of openness and tolerance which welcomes everyone to the school;
- The children are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect;
- The displays around the school reflect diversity across all aspects of equality and are frequently monitored;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure access for pupils, staff and visitors (including parents) with disabilities (this not only includes physical access, but takes account wider access to school information and activities);
- Provision is made to cater for the cultural, moral and spiritual needs of all children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and off-site activities;
- Pupils' views are actively encouraged and respected. Pupils are given an effective voice for example, through advocacy, the School Council, pupil perception surveys and there are regular opportunities to engage with pupils about their learning and the life of the school;
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils feel welcomed and included.

We ensure the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being

- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians - working with the wider community.

3. 4 Promoting Equality: Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

- All posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants;
- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and to ensure equality of opportunity.
- Steps are taken to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels of the school;
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds;
- Equalities policy and practice is covered in all staff inductions;
- All supply staff and contractors are made aware of the equalities policy and practice;
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and the impact of policies are kept under regular review

3.5 Promoting Equality: Countering and Challenging Harassment and Bullying

- The school counters and challenges all types of discriminatory behaviour and this is made clear to staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- The school has a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with prejudice related bullying incidents and has a nominated member of staff responsible for recording and monitoring incidents;
- The school reports to Governors, parents and LA on at least an annual basis the number of prejudice related incidents recorded in the school.

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

3.6 Promoting Equality: Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community Our Lady's School aims to work in partnership with parents/carers.

We:

- Take action to ensure all parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the life of the school;
- Maintain good channels of communication to ensure parents' views are captured to inform practice;
- Encourage members of the local community to join in school activities and celebrations;
- Ensure that the parents/carers of newly arrived pupils e.g. EAL or pupils with disabilities are made to feel welcome.

4 Responsibility for the Policy

In our school, all members of the school community have a responsibility for promoting equalities.

4.1 The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring that:

- The school complies with all equalities legislation relevant to the school community;
- The school's equalities policy is maintained and updated regularly; and that equality schemes are easily identifiable (these may be included within the School Development Plan, the school's Accessibility Plan or may be stand-alone documents);
- The actions, procedures and strategies related to the policy are implemented;
- The designated Equalities Governor will have an overview, on behalf of the governing body, on all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to these incidents.

4.2 The Head teacher and Senior Leadership team has responsibility for:

- In partnership with the Governing body, providing leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- Overseeing the implementation of the equality policy and schemes;
- Co-ordinating the activities related to equality and evaluating impact;
- Ensuring that all who enter the school are aware of, and comply with, the equalities policy;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support;
- Taking appropriate action in response to any prejudice-related incidents.

4.3 All school staff have responsibility for:

- The implementation of the school's equalities policy and schemes;

- Dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- Ensuring they do not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity and culture, disability, sexual orientation or other groups vulnerable to discrimination.
- Keeping up to date with equalities legislation.

5. Information and resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is accessible & known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

5.1 Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

5.2 Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

5.3 Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and governing body.

5.4 Monitoring and evaluation

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate. In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

5.5 Measuring the Impact of this Policy

The equalities policy and all other relevant policies will be evaluated and monitored for their equality impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school. This will be communicated with staff, parents, carers and governors by the Head Teacher.

The Equality Act and Purpose of the Plan

At Our Lady's our values reflect our commitment to a school where there are high expectations of everyone:

- Children are provided with high quality learning opportunities so that each child attains and achieves all that they are able to;
- Everyone in our school is important and included
- We promote an ethos of care and trust where every member of our school community feels that they truly belong and are valued
- We work hard to ensure there are no invisible children here, recognising everyone's uniqueness and success;
- We recognise learning in all its forms and are dedicated to nurturing lifelong learners;
- We are a safe school, committed to improving children's confidence and self-esteem.

The purpose of this plan is to show how Our Lady's Catholic Primary School intends to secure appropriate access to the school for disabled pupils. Therefore, we outline the purpose of this plan by addressing these key areas:

1. Improve the physical environment of the school in order to ensure all pupils all have access to the full range of the curriculum;
2. Developing the physical environment to ensure all pupils can access essentials needs and facilities;
3. Embed a culture in which all pupils, including those with disabilities, are able to communicate who they are and what talents they have.

Legal Background

This Accessibility Plan is drawn up in compliance with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010. School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting of progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period. The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act. The

effect of the law is the same as in the past, meaning that “schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation”.

Definition of Disability

According to the Equality Act (2010) a person has a disability if:

- He or she has a physical or mental impairment, and
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to secure appropriate access to education for disabled pupils in the three required key areas of; curriculum, environment and information;

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum, which 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, which 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. eg. 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.

Our Lady's Catholic 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 information analysis and parental discussions.

Contextual Information

- The school building and playgrounds are accessible for wheelchair users. Even though the school is a single storey building there is a slope and handrails outside classrooms, making it wheelchair accessible. The hall, playground and field are all accessible for PE lessons should this be required.
- A designated disabled parking space is available close to the school's main entrance. Steps are marked with visibility edging for visually impaired pupils and most doors are in a markedly contrasting colour to their surrounds.
- A disabled toilet facility is available in the main entrance.

The Current Range of Disabilities within Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

The school has children with a limited range of disabilities which include:

- Physical Disabilities,
- Visual Impairments
- Hearing Impairments
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder,
- Attachment disorder(s),
- Medical Conditions that require specialist support;
- Speech and Language difficulties;
- ADHD and Dyslexia.

When children enter school with specific disabilities, the school contacts a range of professionals for assessments, support and guidance for the school and parents.

We have some 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. Some children have allergies or food intolerances and these are included in the 'children with medical needs' details in classrooms, staffroom, kitchen and the main office. All medical information is collated and available to staff.

We have competent First Aiders who hold either a current 2 day First Aid certificates or a Paediatric First Aid certificate. The dinner ladies have also recently been trained in First Aid.

All prescribed medication is kept in the fridge in the office. 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.

Health Care Plans are completed by a) parents of children who require one and b) staff members who have also have medical issues. These are updated annually or sooner if required and the children's plans in particular are shared in some depth during INSET at the beginning of the school year. A copy of the pupil's plans is given to the parents, health professionals and the class teacher. They are placed in the staffroom and an electronic copy is stored on the office computer. The adult health care plans are also held in an electronic file.

We are proud to serve pupils from a wide range of ethnic or minority groups including (but not limited to):

- Children in receipt of Free School Meals and those eligible for Pupil Premium
- Families from the LGBTQ+ community
- Looked after children, and those previously looked after
- Families with disabled siblings
- Pupils and families for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL).

Accessibility and Equality Objectives

Equality and Inclusion	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe
To deliver annual staff training concerning disability issues which are specific to the school context: wheelchair users, supporting pupils with hearing impairments.	Audit the pupils in the school for whom an inclusive environment could be impeded by their physical ability/disability.	All staff are fully trained in supporting pupils with visual and hearing impairments which includes adjustments to classrooms and outdoor environments.	Autumn each academic year
To ensure that all policies consider the implications of disability access.	Ongoing review of policies.	Policies reflect current legislation.	On-going

Physical Environment	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe
To ensure that, adjustments to the school buildings and grounds maintain accessibility for all children and adults.	Audit of accessibility of school buildings and grounds by Governors when making building adjustment.	Modifications will be made to building /development proposals to maintain access.	On-going
To ensure building upkeep/maintenance takes account of accessibility requirements.	Consider colour/paint schemes for visual impairment needs when re-decorating. Maintain step edgings/outdoor ramps/footpath ramps/signs etc. to a good standard to secure ongoing suitable access. Adapting the school accessible toilet so that it can be more	Ongoing school upgrade and maintenance will meet requirements of DDA. Adaptations are made to the toilet so that pupils with disability issues can access the toilet.	Termly review

	frequently and readily accessed by pupils requiring it.		
Ensure hearing and visual environment in classrooms is regularly monitored to support hearing impaired and visually impaired children.	Seek support from LA HI and VI advisory teachers,	All children have access to the appropriate environment.	On-going

Curriculum	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe
To develop the staff understanding of addressing pupils who require trauma informed practice (TIP). approached.	SENDCo to review the needs of children and provide training for staff as needed. Continue accessing the central resource team through Warrington BC.	Staff are able to enable all children to access the curriculum. Where appropriate, individual behaviour plans are implemented which evidence the most recent research in the area of TIP.	Reviewed on a termly basis
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. special pencil grips, headphones, writing slopes etc.	Children will develop independent learning skills.	Reviewed termly by the SENDCo.
Increase confidence of all staff in adapting the curriculum for vulnerable / SEND pupils.	Be aware of staff training needs on curriculum access. Assign CPD for Dyslexia friendly classrooms, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) friendly classrooms and differentiation. Online learning modules if required.	Raised staff confidence in strategies for differentiation and increased pupil participation.	On-going

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 equipment etc. will be applied for as needed.	Barriers to learning will be reduced or removed, enabling children to achieve their full potential.	Annually

	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe
Written/other 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 is provided in alternative formats as necessary.	As needed
To ensure that parents who are unable to attend school, because of a disability, can access parents' evenings.	Staff to hold parents' evenings by phone or send home written information. Access to sign language interpreters to be considered and offered if possible.	Parents are informed of children's progress.	Termly
Provide information in other languages for pupils or prospective pupils.	Access to translators, to be considered and offered if possible.	Pupil and/or parents feel supported and included.	As required