St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School

EQUALITY STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

"We learn together, we play together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God"

St.Theresa's
Catholic Primary School

Validation grid

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1. Statement of Intent

St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School (St. Theresa's / school / we) understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, all schools have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality between different groups;
- Foster good relations between different groups; and
- Promote mental health and wellbeing.

Our school's overall values are underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to ensuring that every pupil receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential, and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our pupils.

We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender identity and/or reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics), amended in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We have developed this policy to provide a clear framework for how we will achieve our school's aims.

To achieve our aims, we will adopt the following methods:

- Embedding equality within teaching and resources;
- Using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of our school;
- Promoting community cohesion;
- Promoting parental engagement;
- Investing in regular staff training;
- Using key data, such as measures of wellbeing, to monitor the progress of pupils with protected characteristics; and
- Regularly reviewing our equality policy to ensure it reflects current trends and issues.

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including members of the SLT, teachers, TAs, support staff, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, agency staff (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this policy) and all pupils.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs Regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2017
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Department for Education (DfE) (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE (2018) 'Gender Separation in mixed schools'
- DfE (2014) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

The Equality Act 2010 provides a modern, single legal framework with three broad duties:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations.

The Equality Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil (or member of staff) or potential pupil (or member of staff):

- In relation to admissions or employment
- In the way it provides education for pupils.
- In the way it provides pupils and staff access to any benefit, facility or service.
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

- Because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent / carer, with whom the pupil is associated.

3. Principles and Aims

We see all staff, all learners and potential learners, and their parents / carers, as of equal value, regardless of any protected characteristic. Our policies, procedures and activities will not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences in life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to any protected characteristic.

The school will:

- Promote **race equality** and have due regard to eliminating unlawful racial discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.
- Promote **disability equality**, ensuring equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful discrimination and disability-related harassment and encouraging participation by disabled people in public life.
- Promote **gender equality** by eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote the equality of opportunity amongst individuals of all genders.

Transgender people are explicitly covered by the Equality Act. For the purposes of this policy, the term '**transgender'** refers to an individual whose gender expression or identity is different from that traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. The school will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within the community.

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice and recognises that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice-related discrimination may fare less well in the education system. The school will ensure that all staff comply with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations. The school's Admissions Policy will not discriminate against any protected characteristic in any way.

The school will:

- Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities, given necessary training and support, and report progress to the governing board.
- Ensure that the recording and reporting of equality and diversity is sufficiently scrutinised.
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, a shared sense of cohesion and belonging, and ensure this is promoted in our policies, procedures and activities.
- Observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development, and ensure that all policies and procedures benefit all employees

and potential employees regardless of any protected characteristic, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

- Reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.
- Engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy, procedure or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- Ensure that policies, procedures and activities benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in the public life of everyone, regardless of any protected characteristic.
- Ensure staff promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school, challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, and showing appropriate support for pupils with additional needs, maintaining a good level of awareness of issues surrounding equality.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that St. Theresa's complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish the Equality Policy.
- Ensure that St. Theresa's policies and procedures are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans.
- Ensure that the recording and reporting of equality and diversity data is sufficiently scrutinised.
- Ensure that St. Theresa's Admissions Policy, whilst it gives preference to Catholic applicants, does not discriminate in any other way.
- Ensure equal opportunities in its staff recruitment and promotion practices, continuing professional development (CPD) programmes and in membership of the governing body.
- Proactively recruit high-quality applicants from under-represented groups.
- Provide information in appropriate and accessible formats.
- Ensure that the necessary disciplinary measures are in place to enforce this policy.

The Executive Headteacher will:

- Implement the policy and its procedures.
- Set an appropriate standard of behaviour and lead by example.
- Take appropriate steps t accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities, in line with the Local Authority's Flexible Working Policy.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff.
- Ensure staff are helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Make staff progression decisions based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act 2010).
- Review employment practices and procedures where necessary to ensure fairness.
- Update employment practices and procedures, and this policy, to take account of changes in the law.
- Ensure that all staff members receive the appropriate equality and diversity training as part of their human resources (HR) induction and CPD.
- Ensure that all parents / carers, visitors and contractors are aware of, and are in compliance with, the provisions of this policy.
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any case of discriminatory practice.
- Address any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with DfE guidance.
- Report to Governors on the progress of implementing the provisions of this policy.
- Ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for pupils who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.

Staff will:

- Be mindful of any incident of harassment or bullying in the school.
- Address any minor issues of harassment or bullying in the school and report any major breaches of the policy to the Executive Headteacher.
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and the school's culture.
- Promote equality and good relations, and not harass or discriminate in any way.
- Monitor pupils' progress and academic needs to ensure the appropriate support is in place.
- Keep up-to-date with equality legislation and its application by attending the appropriate training.

- Have due regard to the sensitivities of all pupils, and not provide material that may cause offence.
- Act as a role model for equality, diversity and inclusion across the whole school community.

Pupils will:

- Not discriminate or harass any other pupil or staff member.
- Actively encourage equality and diversity in the school by contributing their cultural experiences and values.
- Report any incidences of bullying or harassment, whether relating to themselves or to others, to a member of the school staff.
- Abide by all the school's equality and diversity policies, procedures and codes.

5. Data Protection

Please refer to the school's Data Protection Policy which can be found on the school website https://www.st-theresas.barnet.sch.uk/

6. Protected Characteristics

We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of their:

- Sex.
- Race.
- Disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy or maternity.

We will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent / carer, with whom the pupil or prospective pupil is associated.

We will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if the belief is mistaken.

We will regularly review our school practices to ensure that they are fair with regard to all the protected characteristics listed.

7. Sex

For the purpose of this policy, sex refers to a person's biological assignment at birth depending on their reproductive organs. We understand some pupils may wish to identify with another gender, and we will support pupils through their transitioning phases.

We will ensure that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to pupils of other sexes.

There may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single-sex classes, such as Relationship and Sex Education (RSE), but we will ensure that such classes do not give pupils an unfair disadvantage when compared to pupils of the other sex in other classes.

The school will only separate pupils by sex where there is reasonable justification or if one of the following applies:

- Pupils will suffer a disadvantage connected to their sex.
- One sex has needs that are different from the needs of the other sex.
- Participation in an activity by one sex is disproportionately low.

The school will consider non-statutory exceptions on a case-by-case basis, and regularly review the impact of any separation to ascertain whether it remains lawful.

Pupils will be offered an equal opportunity to undertake any activity in the school.

Occasions where pupils are separated to be taught in single-sex classes will be documented and the separation justified to ensure parents / carers, Ofsted and, where necessary, the wider community can understand the reasons behind segregation.

Where a subject is taught in a single-sex class, pupils undergoing gender reassignment will be allowed to attend the single-sex class that corresponds with the gender they identify with.

Pupils' age and stage of development will be taken into consideration before segregating sports teams.

Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities; where segregation is deemed necessary, the single-sex sports teams will receive the same quality and amount of resources.

8. Race and Ethnicity

We will ensure that pupils of all races and ethnicities (including those who have English as an Additional Language (EAL)) are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will not segregate pupils on the basis of their race or ethnicity, understanding that claims of 'separate but equal' will not be tolerated, and that such actions will always be viewed as direct discrimination.

We may, however, take positive action, e.g. organising open days for pupils and families of a specific race that is under-represented, to address the particular challenges affecting pupils of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

9. Disability

We will ensure that pupils with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other pupils simply because they have a disability, which includes any mental health issue, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.

We will ensure that we do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for him/her to get in and out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

We will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of pupils with disabilities, especially where the pupil also has Special Educational and Disability (SEND) but does not have a SEND statement or EHC plan.

We will meet our duty to undertake accessibility planning for pupils with disabilities and ensure that an Accessibility Plan is implemented and reviewed where necessary.

The school adheres to the SEND Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for pupils with SEND.

If staff are disabled, or become disabled, they are encouraged to tell the school about their condition so that they can be supported appropriately.

If a member of staff experiences difficulties at work because of a disability, they will meet with their line manager and/or HR to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. A referral to Occupational Health may be made.

If the school considers a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, where possible, an alternative solution will be discussed.

10. Religion and Belief

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their religion or belief, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

Absences in relation to religious observances will be handled in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy.

11. Sexual Orientation

We will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents / carers, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will ensure that any religious beliefs with regards to sexual orientation are taught.

We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where pupils can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

RSE lessons will be taught in accordance with our Relationships and Sex Education Policy which can be found on the school website. https://www.st-theresas.barnet.sch.uk/

12. Gender Reassignment

Transgender people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'transgender' refers to an individual whose gender expression or identity is different from that traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. This school will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within the social community.

A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if that person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

All members of staff and pupils have a right to privacy, which includes the right to keep one's transgender status confidential. School staff should not disclose information that may reveal a child or other staff members' transgender status.

The school will appoint a staff member in whom any transgender child can confide and who can deal with any issues that may arise, for instance bullying or harassment.

Staff have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code.

Pupils have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity outlined in our School Uniform Policy.

As pupils who identify as trans girls (biological boys) are not permitted to use the girls' toilet or changing facilities, and pupils who identify as trans boys (biological girls) are not permitted to use the boys' toilet or changing facilities the school will provide suitable alternative provision, such as suitable private or unisex toilet, washing and changing facilities.

We will ensure that there are suitable toilet and changing facilities for pupils to use, including:

- Unisex toilets
- Gender specific toilets
- Private changing facilities

The facilities will be made available to all pupils and pupils can use the facility they feel most comfortable with e.g. a transgender pupil using a private changing room.

A glossary of terminology related to the transgender field can be found on the Gender Identity Research and Education Society Website. https://www.gires.org.uk/

13. Maternity and Pregnancy

We will ensure that no member of staff is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, as a result of their pregnancy or maternity leave.

The school will follow all HR guidelines in this matter.

14. Looked after children

Looked After Children (LAC) and previously LAC (PLAC), will be given the highest priority for admissions, as per the requirements of our Admissions Policy.

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.

A personal education plan will be created, and implemented, for all LAC and PLAC, to ensure that their education and development needs are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.

We will ensure that any SEND that a LAC or PLAC has, are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.

The school adheres to our Looked After Children Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for LAC.

15. The Curriculum

We believe that pupils should be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, however challenging or controversial, and will not make any unjustified changes to our curriculum content on the grounds of any protected characteristics that a pupil may have.

We will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way that prevents discrimination, and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.

16. Promoting Inclusion

We will promote inclusion and equality at our school through:

- Ensuring that pupils are called by their preferred names, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that our governing board and staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
- Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
- Instilling in pupils an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.
- Providing a variety of educational and residential visits that expose pupils to a wide range of cultural experiences.
- Ensuring equal access to opportunities, such as extra-curricular activities and the curriculum.
- Taking care in the use of language and the choice of resources, so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.
- Valuing the cultural experiences and contributions of all pupils, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.
- Communicating our policy to parents / carers to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
- Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the school council.

17. Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

We will ensure that any medical conditions related to a pupil with a protected characteristic is fully supported in line with our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and First Aid Policy.

18. Pupils that have left School

Our responsibility not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left school. It will continue to apply with regards to subsequent actions related to our previous relationship with the pupil, such as the provision of references.

19. The Public Sector Equality Duty

We will meet our duty to publish:

- Annual information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding pupils who have any of the protected characteristics outlined in section 6.
- Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how we may further equality in our school.

There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and pupils will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

20. Bullying and Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above.

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.

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.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

Any incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our Complaints Policy.

21. Staff Training

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.

Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training that will:

- Focus on staff specialisms in relation to equality, for example, a focus on homophobic bullying to address a planned approach towards inclusion.
- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards pupils with protected characteristics.

- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.
- Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents / carers, educators and pupils about any issues related to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that the school is aware of, and participates in, relevant awareness days, for example, Black History Month, World Disability Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, PRIDE, and International Women's Day.

22. Uniform and Dress Policy

The Act does not deal specifically with school uniform or other aspects of appearance, such as hair colour and style, and the wearing of jewellery and make-up, but the general requirement not to discriminate in the treatment of pupils applies here in relation to other aspects of the school policy.

St. Theresa's will ensure that blanket uniform policies do not discriminate because of protected characteristics.

St. Theresa's will be sensitive to the needs of different cultures, races and religions and act reasonably in accommodating these needs, without compromising important school policies, such as school safety or discipline.

The school has a Staff Dress Code which will not be discriminatory in respect to age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

23. Staff Recruitment

We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate. Short listing of applicants will be done by more than one person wherever possible.

Job advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. The school will take steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which will only be used with the HR's approval. For example:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.

- Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

Applicants will not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy.

We are required by law to ensure that all staff are entitled to work in the UK. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, will be expected to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.

24. Appeal Process

If staff believe that they may have been discriminated against they are encouraged to raise the matter through the school's Grievance Procedure.

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 Procedure.

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. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

Appendix - Equality Objectives

In order to meet our objectives, the school has identified the following priorities for the period 2025-2026:

- Ensure the governing body receives termly data regarding attendance/attainment/admissions/behaviour for the particular characteristics outlined in this policy.
- Increase the percentage of disadvantaged children meeting the expected outcome in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2).
- Increase the percentage of disadvantaged children achieving greater depth in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2.
- To narrow the gap in progress being made by children identified as having special educational needs compared to their peers.
- Staff will ensure that all pupils are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and the school will monitor uptake of these visits to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- St. Theresa's will ensure that all forms of prejudice-motivated bullying are taken seriously and dealt with equally and firmly.

Objective Group	Objective
Pupil Achievement	• All pupils are assessed, monitored and tracked through the school's assessment system. • Under-achievement is identified and appropriate intervention is applied. • Pupils are able to participate in a full range of extra-curricular opportunities.
Behaviour and Safety	• Pupils respect one another. • Pupils feel safe and valued. • Pupils, staff and parents / carers know that misconduct and gross misconduct will be challenged.
Teaching	• All pupils experience 100% 'good or better' lessons.
Leadership and Management	• The staff and governing body reflects the diversity of the school community. • No pupils (or their families) are disadvantaged academically, socially or emotionally. All staff are mindful of the academic and social needs of all children, especially potentially vulnerable children. • The Head of School is responsible for the collection and analysis of equality data including the recording of prejudice-related incidents.

The school will make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled pupils and implement an accessibility plan aimed at:

a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;

b) improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and

c) improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.