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St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School

**Policy Statement**

**For**

**Equality and Objectives**

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| This policy was adopted on | February 2024 |
| By name | Mr John Holmes |
| Position | Chair of Governors |
| Signature | On behalf of  St Laurence’s Primary School |

## ST LAURENCE’S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## EQUALITY POLICY

This single policy replaces any separate policies the school had previously on race, disability and gender to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

It reflects the legal duties set out in the **Equality Act 2010** and includes all the protected characteristics.

St Laurence’s is further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school’s physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments.

Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children’s educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN convention on the Rights of the Child. The guiding principles in this policy refer to all individuals and therefore are equally applicable to pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers and visitors to St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School.

**About our School**

We are a one and a half form entry primary school which caters for children from 3 to 11 years of age. Although designated as a Catholic Primary School we currently have a split of Catholic and children of other Faiths and Denominations across the school and very much see ourselves as serving the whole of Kirkby and the wider community.

**Background and Legal Framework**

Over recent years, we recognise that schools have been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their communities and recognising their role in promoting an understanding of equality for different groups of people. Much of this work is in response to legislation that places an increased duty within the specific context of a school’s role in providing learning and other opportunities for all - it is about fairness, rights and justice.

Inequality still persists in the UK despite 40 years of equality legislation. In Knowsley, we know some groups do less well than their peers in terms of progress, achievement and later life chances. This picture is reflected nationally. The recognition of diversity and the promotion of inclusive and equality practices will help to overcome this disparity.

The new Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to 9 protected characteristics:

• Age (adults only)

• Disability

• Race (including Gypsy and Traveller groups)

• Religion, Faith or Belief

• Gender

• Gender identity and transgender

• Sexual orientation

• Pregnancy and Maternity

• Marriage and Civil Partnership

Each relates to direct discrimination, discrimination by association, discrimination by perception, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School will seek to achieve positive action in respect of the Act.

**Equality Duty**

St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School recognises the Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector quality duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools and Academies. This combined Equality Duty came into effect in April 2011. St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School is mindful that the Duty has three main elements.

In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not.

* Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as outlined above. i.e:

* Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have ‘due regard’ when making a decision or taking an action which may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
* Schools should consider equality before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep it under review on a continuing basis.
* The Equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the Duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind - and to recognise it is not a tick box exercise.

Having due regards to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

* Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
* Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics.
* Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

**Specific Duties**

St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School recognises the Specific Duties require schools to:

* Publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty
* Publish equality objectives every four years (one or more as is proportionate to the school)
* All information must be published in a manner that is accessible to the public.

**Part one**

The primary aim of St Laurence’s School is to enable all pupils to take part as fully as possible in every part of school life by developing the children’s self-confidence, recognising their strengths and encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

St Laurence’s School will take steps to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the protected characteristics (age, race, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender, sexual orientation) within the school community.

This means:

* We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet the needs of our pupils by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, enabling our pupils to take as full a part as possible in all the activities of the school. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment and its activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for pupils, staff and visitors to the school. We are also committed to ensuring staff with a disability have equality of opportunity.
* We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards pupils and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
* We will regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curriculum will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
* We will regularly consider the ways in which our teaching and the curriculum provision will support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and help students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
* We will monitor the progress and achievement of pupils by the relevant and appropriate protected characteristics. This information will help the school to ensure that individual pupils are achieving their potential, the school is being inclusive in practice, and trends are identified which inform the setting of our equality objectives in the school improvement plan.
* Alongside our HR department, we will collect and analyse information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities and promotions to ensure all staff have equality of opportunity. We will not ask health-related questions to job applicants before offering a job, unless it relates to an intrinsic function of the work they do. We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for our disabled staff.
* Staff will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those for whom English is not their first language. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided for them, where reasonable adjustments are required. By planning ahead, staff will ensure that all pupils are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and the school will monitor the uptake of these visits to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
* We will seek the views of advisory staff and outside agencies and partnerships with other schools where this is needed. In planning the curriculum and resources the school will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.
* Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents will be carefully monitored and dealt with effectively.
* We expect that all staff will be role-models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
* We will ensure pupil/parent/staff consultation is regularly sought in the

development and review of this policy.

* We will regularly seek the views of pupils, parents, advisory staff and visitors to the school, to ensure that the school environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all school users. We will regularly review our accessibility plans.
* The school welcomes a diverse range of candidates and encourages those who are currently under-represented to join.
* We will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different forms of discrimination and what ‘reasonable adjustments’ mean in practice.

**Part Two**

**Our Legal Duties**

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is laid out in the Equality Act 2010. This legislation covers employment (work), the provision of services and public functions, and education. Employers (schools) are liable for discriminatory acts of their employees if they did not take reasonable steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

**The ‘Protected Characteristics’ within equality law are:**

* **Age -** A person of a particular age (e.g. 32 year old) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 – 30 year olds). Age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
* **Disability -** A person has a disability if s/he has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions. HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.
* **Gender reassignment -** A person (usually with ‘gender dysphoria’) who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex, therefore changing from male to female, or female to male). ‘Trans’ is an umbrella term to describe people with this ‘Gender Identity’. ‘Intersex’ or ‘Third Sex’ is not covered by the Act but the school will treat Intersex children with the same degree of equality as children with gender dysphoria. Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in any school environment.
* **Marriage and civil partnership –** Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
* **Pregnancy and maternity -** Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including still births), which reflects the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.
* **Race -** A person’s colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes

Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people.

* **Religion and belief -** Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent a school from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum-based activities, but pupils may withdraw from acts of collective worship.
* **Sex -** A man or a woman.
* **Sexual orientation -** A person's sexual orientation towards the same sex (lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual).

**Guiding Principles**

In fulfilling the legal obligations and establishing our school ethos, we have taken a whole school approach. We have involved and listened to what they have to say, including people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities, taking account of all protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010. We are guided by 9 principles:

**Principle 1: All learners are of equal value**

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

* whether or not they are disabled;
* whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status;
* whatever their gender or gender identity;
* whatever their sexual identity.

**Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference**

Treating people equally (principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the

same. 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, women and men are recognised;
* sexual identity.

**Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging**

Policies, procedure and activities promote:

* positive attitudes and actions 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 race, 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, women and men and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

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

Policies and procedures 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 race, 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.

**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 racial, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
* girls and boys, women and men;
* homosexual people as well as heterosexual people.

**Principle 6: We consult and involve widely**

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new

policies and in the review of existing ones. Consultation involves:

* disabled and non-disabled people;
* people of different racial, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
* girls and boys, women and men;
* homosexual people as well as heterosexual people.

**Principle 7: We address prejudice and prejudice related bullying**

We oppose all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties listed

below:-

* prejudices around disability and special educational needs;
* prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed against

religious groups and communities, for example, anti–Semitism and Islamophobia, and those directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;

* prejudice reflecting sexism or homophobia.

**Principle 8: Society as a whole should benefit**

Policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally,

fostering greater social and community cohesion and greater participation in public life of:-

* disabled and non-disabled people;
* people of different racial, ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds;
* girls and boys, women and men;
* homosexual people as well as heterosexual people.

**Principle 9: Objectives**

Each year we formulate and publish specific and measurable equality objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published, in relation to:-

* disability;
* race, ethnicity, religion and culture;
* gender/ sexuality.

**‘Prohibited Conduct’ (acts that are unlawful):**

* **Direct discrimination** - Less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
* **Indirect discrimination** - A provision, criteria or practice that puts a person at a particular disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
* **Harassment** - Conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It includes harassment by a third party (e.g. customer or contractor) in the employment context.
* **Victimisation** - Subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with this Act.
* **Discrimination arising from disability** - Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work or medical conditions) **and failure to make reasonable adjustments.**
* **Gender re-assignment discrimination** - Not allowing reasonable absence from work for the purpose of gender-reassignment in line with normal provision such as sick leave).
* **Pregnancy/maternity related discrimination** - Unfavourable treatment because of pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a woman or girl because she is breastfeeding.
* **Discrimination by association or perception** - For example, discriminating against someone because they “look gay”, or because they have a gay brother; discriminating against someone because they care for a disabled relative. Schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities.

**Public Sector Duties (applies to schools):**

A school must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation to protected characteristics above):

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.

2. Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people’s needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).

3. Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding). In practice, ‘due regard’ means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty, so decision makers in schools must have due regard when making a decision, developing a policy or taking an action as to whether it may have implications for people because of their protected characteristics.

**Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Plans (Schedule 10)**

Schools are required to:

* Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria or practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature, for example steps and lifts.
* Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services.
* Provide information in an accessible format.
* Develop and implement (by allocating appropriate resources) Accessibility Plans which will:

1. Increase disabled pupils access to the school curriculum

2. Improve the physical environment

3. Improve provision of information.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that schools owe to disabled pupils generally, regardless of whether the school knows that a particular pupil is disabled or whether the school currently has disabled pupils. The school will need to plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments that it may need to make, working with the **relevant admissions authority** as appropriate.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion. Aspects of educational legislation have also promoted equal opportunities, for example the Education Act includes a duty for local authorities to educate children with special

educational needs in mainstream schools wherever possible.

**Responsibilities:**

**Governing Body**

* Ensure that the school complies with equality-related legislation.
* Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the Headteacher.
* Ensure all other school policies promote equality.
* Give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

**Headteacher**

* Implement the policy and its related procedures.
* Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
* Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
* Ensure that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff. It is unlawful for an employer to enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties. Schools should no longer require job applicants to complete a generic

health questionnaire. Neither should a school seek out past sickness records until they have made a job offer.

* Ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

**All staff**

* Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures, and their responsibilities associated with this policy.
* Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
* Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.
* Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality legislation.
* To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.
* Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect our guiding principles

**Pupils**

Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that

contravenes this policy.

**Visitors (e.g. parent helpers, contractors)**

* To be aware of, and comply with, the school‘s equality policy.
* To refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour (for example, racist language) on school premises.

**St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School**

**Equality Objectives 2024-2027**

1. To promote cultural understanding and awareness; valuing and celebrating various cultures and religious beliefs across our school community
2. To actively close gaps in attainment and achievement between pupils and all groups of pupils; especially boys, children eligible for free-school meals, children with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and pupils from minority ethnic groups.
3. To tackle prejudice and continue to develop understanding in relation to people with different characteristics, promoting inclusivity across the school and its community
4. To provide appropriate and early pastoral interventions for students to promote positive behaviour and inclusion.

**Appendix**

**Definitions**

**Equality** This is more clearly defined as equality of opportunity and

outcome, rather than equality of treatment. This means treating people fairly and according to their needs as some people may need to be treated differently in order to achieve an equal outcome.

**Inclusive** Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background or circumstances.

**Diversity** Recognising that we are all different. Diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

**Cohesion** People from different backgrounds getting on well together (good community relations). There is a shared vision and sense of purpose or belonging. Diversity is valued. Relationships are strong, supportive and sustainable. Cohesion is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

**Community** From the school’s perspective, the term “community” has a number of meanings: The school community – the students we serve, their families and the school‘s staff. The community within which the school is located – in its geographical community, and the people who live and/or work in that area. The community of Britain – all schools by definition are part of it.

The global community – formed by European and international links.

**Gender** **Dysphoria** Gender dysphoria is a recognised condition in which a person feels that there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. Biological sex is assigned at birth, depending on the appearance of the infant. Gender identity is the gender that a person “identifies” with, or feels themselves to be.

**REVIEW OF POLICY**

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and every three years by the Governing Body. If changes are made to the policy, the Governing Body will ratify amendments.

This policy was reviewed by governors: February 2024

Signed: J Holmes

Designation: Chair of Governors

Reviewed by SLT: January 2024