

1. Equal Opportunities Policy

St. Philomena's is fully committed to providing equality of access and opportunity for all children in the school.

The school's admission policy is to give preference to:

- Baptised Roman Catholics,
- Siblings of pupils already enrolled in the school,
- Committed Christians of other denominations.

Thereafter admission is based on a first come first served basis. Admission is not based on ability, background, ethnicity, gender or competence in English.

All pupils will be given equal opportunity to learn and make progress regardless of the points mentioned above.

1) Aims and objectives

1.1 We do not discriminate against any member of the school community, on the grounds of their sex, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins. This is a fundamental part of our Mission Statement. It is in line with the 2010 Equality Act and covers both direct, indirect discrimination and any protected characteristic.

1.2 We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school.

1.3 We strive to ensure that our pupils are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and enabling them to have optimum life chances.

1.3 We ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities we provide.

1.4 We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning.

1.5 We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.

1.6 We challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.

1.7 Whilst we celebrate cultural diversity, we do recognise that our school community offers very little direct experience of this. We therefore, look for opportunities to address this through the range of experiences we offer to pupils.

1.8 We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all. We strive to ensure that children are not discriminated against.

2) Anti-racism

2.1 It is the right of all pupils to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident in line with school policies.

2.2 We aim to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of different cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

2.3 Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So for example, in religious education our other faith topics ensure that the children study e.g. the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

2.4 Should anyone at our school be a victim of racism, we will do all we can to support that person in overcoming any difficulties they may have. We aim to be aware of local community tensions, events affecting country or region of origin, alienation from UK values, having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination. This school is a safe place in which children can understand and discuss sensitive topics including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of the terrorist ideology and learn how to challenge these ideas. (*Prevent Strategy, KCSIE July 2015*)

3) The role of governors

3.1 The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy statement, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated fairly and with equality. As a Catholic School we believe this is very important.

3.2 The governing body applies a non-discriminatory process when applying for jobs at our school. The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities.

3.3 The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or disability a child may have.

3.4 The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their sex, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum. If a child's religion affects the school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

4) The role of the headteacher

4.1 It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's equal opportunities policy and she is supported by the governing body in so doing.

4.2 It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

4.3 The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.

4.4 The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays shown around the school.

4.5 The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and incidents of discrimination in one with school policies.

5) The role of the class teacher

5.1 The class teacher ensures that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child. We pride ourselves on the inclusive nature of our School and see this is fundamental in our Catholic school.

5.2 When selecting classroom material, teachers pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.

5.3 When designing schemes of work, we use this policy to guide us, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues.

5.4 All our teachers challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We would record any serious incidents in the school log book, and report to the headteacher. Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in any occurrence of discrimination.

6) Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this Equal Opportunities policy. The governing body does this by:

- monitoring the progress of pupils of all groups;
- monitoring the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- requiring the headteacher to report to governors on an annual basis on the effectiveness of this policy;
- taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or pupils;
- monitoring the school behaviour and exclusions policy so no pupil is unfairly treated

(October 2018 - to be reviewed October 2021)