



St Augustine's Federated Schools

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Equal Opportunities Policy

St Augustine's has a distinctive Christian ethos, believing every member of the school's community should be treated equally and with respect ensuring no employee, job applicant, student or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, marital and civil partnership, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, disability, gender (including gender reassignment), domestic circumstances, carer responsibilities, socio-economic background, fixed term or part time status, trade union membership, religion or belief.

Approved by:	<u>Governing Body</u>	Date: <u>March 2025</u>
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St Augustine's Federated Schools have consciously considered how this policy may affect people who share protected characteristics and have due regard for those whose identity is protected under the Equality Act 2010.

The Governing Body and School is committed to a policy of equality and aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, student or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, marital and civil partnership, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, disability, gender (including gender reassignment), domestic circumstances, carer responsibilities, socio-economic background, fixed term or part time status, trade union membership, religion or belief.

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. We aim to provide equal access to high quality educational opportunities and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to provide a safe and happy and inclusive environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

We aim to empower our students to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the school's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the policy.

All members of the school community, including governors, staff, students, parent/carers, volunteers, contractors etc are responsible for promoting the School's Equal Opportunities Policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for students and staff with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Aims and Objectives

This Policy accords with legislation and consolidates into one policy all the following Acts and amendments. The Equality Act 2010 provides a single source of discrimination law. It simplifies the law, and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas.

- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

The Governing Body and School, through its adopted Equalities policy, aims to:

- carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation (including The Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Employment Equality Regulations)
- reinforce the school's position as a provider of high-quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities
- ensure that equality remains high on the school's strategic agenda
- establish good people management practice and to set out a proactive agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response
- achieve a staffing composition that reflects the composition of the wider community
- ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every student
- ensure that students and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals

- ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the school's equalities policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated either under the disciplinary, grievance or anti-harassment procedure as appropriate). All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.

Racial equality

- The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins
- At St Augustine's CE High School, we make sure that students of all races are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other students. We monitor that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of such students.

In our school, we will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups.

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 deal with it robustly in accordance with school procedures.

Disability non-discrimination

- The overriding principle of equality legislation is generally one of equal treatment. However, the provisions relating to disability discrimination are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a person who is not disabled and may have to make changes to your practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what you offer to the same extent that a person without that disability can.
- Some students in our school have disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of these students, as we are to meeting the needs of all within the school. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled students.
- The school is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled students full access to all areas of learning.
- Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for students with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, or modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities where students are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.
- Some staff in our school have disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of these staff. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that provision is made to support staff in the school.

Gender equality

- At school, we make sure that students of one sex are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other students. We check that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of boys or girls.
- We realise that although gender can be one of the key factors affecting educational performance, it affects different sub-groups of boys and girls in different ways. Social class, ethnic origin and local context are all strongly linked to performance. We also seek to ensure that policies designed to improve the attainment of one gender group do not do so at the expense of achievement of the other

Policy and planning

Equalities implications, including race equality, will be considered and recorded whenever school policies are developed or reviewed. All policies will be regularly reviewed to provide a comprehensive and consistent process of monitoring and evaluation.

Employment matters

Recruitment & Selection:

- Our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion is essential to enable access to a wider and more diverse talent pool which will ultimately drive our success.
- Appointments: in all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria.
- All advertisements will state that the Federation values equality and diversity. Selection will be based on objective and job-related criteria, free from bias, and the successful candidate will be chosen on his/her merits and abilities.
- Applicants will be asked to submit Equality monitoring information as part of their application. This information will be used for monitoring purposes only and will play no part in the selection process.
- Our recruitment and selection practices comply with all appropriate employment law legislation and will be amended to reflect any subsequent legislative changes.
- Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006:
- To comply with the provisions of this Act, we will take steps to ensure all staff are eligible to work in the United Kingdom. Successful candidates will be asked to produce original and specified documents(s) before a confirmed offer of employment is provided.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006:

- To safeguard and protect the welfare of all the students in our care, we will ensure safe recruitment practices are followed. As such, all employees, agency workers, contractors, volunteers, casual and supply staff will be required to provide relevant information for the Federation's safeguarding register to confirm their suitability to work with children.

Pay and Conditions of Service:

- The Federation seeks to ensure all employees are remunerated fairly and that our terms and conditions of employment are monitored to ensure that they are consistent with the equality and diversity statement.

HR Policies and Procedures:

- HR policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to improve, amend or adapt current practices to promote equality and diversity at the Federation.
- Human Resources Policies will be applied consistently and fairly to all staff.
- The Federation has a range of policies which are designed to support and encourage flexibility and diversity in the workplace and maximise staff engagement, health and wellbeing.

Family-friendly policies:

The Governing Body/school is a family-friendly employer and will do its best to respond to the changing needs of all staff by publicising existing schemes designed to support employees in combining work and other responsibilities (parental leave arrangements, job share opportunities, flexitime where appropriate, carers' leave provision).

Transsexual employees and gender reassignment:

The Sex Discrimination Act now expressly covers discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment. Harassment or bullying on grounds of gender reassignment is unlawful discrimination. It is also unlawful to victimise someone because they have supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. We follow the Westminster gender reassignment code of practice.

Training and development

The success of the Equalities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training. Governors will be encouraged to take up all relevant opportunities provided by the Local Authority's Governors Training Programme along with LDBS training and support.

The school will endeavour to:

- Enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status
- Provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all staff, including part time, on the basis of their assessed training needs
- Promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution which staff, governors, parents/guardians and students can make
- Equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions, to promote anti-discriminatory behaviour generally.

Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation. The school places great importance on the relationship between team leaders and their teams and will ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of the school's performance management system.

Inclusive Leadership

The Federation recognises that inclusive leadership encourages continuous innovation, growth, creativity and inspiration. Our leaders will be expected to inspire colleagues at all levels, foster inclusion, promote a supportive and respectful work environment where the dignity of individuals is maintained, and ensure their decision making is fair, just and free from bias.

St. Augustine's will publish this statement, equality information and equality objectives as required by the 2010 Act on the school website.

Ethos

We will strive for the school to:

- Protect and safeguard students
- Be welcoming, secure and comfortable for all members and visitors
- Challenge the notion of fixed abilities and promote the development of the untapped potential of all
- Celebrate the achievement of all students
- Understand the significance of progress from starting points as key performance indicators
- Display the work of students of varying aptitudes and backgrounds
- Promote the equal opportunities policy in assemblies, meetings and displays
- Create a sense of belonging and involvement for all students, parents/carers, adult workers and community partners

Deploy resources to secure equality of opportunity.

Students and the curriculum

The school follows the Governing Body student admission policies that do not permit sex, race, or disability to be used as criteria for admission. The school's aim is to provide for all students according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin.

The Education Reform Act 1988 stated that 'the school curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse

society to which pupils belong and of which they will become adult members.' Students should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which avoids stereotypes and provides good role models for all students.

Curriculum

- We believe that all students have the potential to achieve highly and learn effectively. This confidence in the learning capacity of all students will be reflected in curriculum design and delivery.
- The curriculum will be both broad and balanced. A range of core learning will be experienced by all students. Students also can select some areas of study according to their individual learning needs and interests. In this way students will experience a personalised curriculum.
- The curriculum will, through its range of experiences, promote respect and understanding of diverse and different cultures and religions.
- The St. Augustine's curriculum is inclusive. The school will provide support, within the resources that it possesses, to:
 - Ensure access and achievement in core and personalised learning for students who have Special Educational Needs or find difficulty with certain aspects of their learning programmes
 - Provide language development tuition for those students who have English as an Additional Language. These students will access the full school curriculum on a staged basis commensurate with their capacity to learn effectively in English
 - Ensure that gifted and talented students are challenged in lessons, experience curriculum enrichment and, like all our students, have their particular attainment monitored on a regular basis
 - Support the progress of vulnerable students with cognisance of the particular needs of students who are; looked after, asylum seekers, young carers, from a background of social deprivation.

Challenging prejudice, discrimination and harassment

- Equality issues will be raised in a clear and consistent way with students enabling them to challenge prejudiced attitudes and behaviour.
- The pastoral needs of all sections of the school community will be understood and responded to.
- Clear procedures will be implemented to deal with racial, sexual or other harassment or bullying.
- Incidents will be recorded and monitored to ensure and continually improve the effectiveness of action
- These procedures will be informed by and inform school behaviour and anti-bullying policies.
- Staff will strive for consistency in handling both the promotion of positive behaviour and responding to abusive behaviour.
- Challenging discrimination and harassment will, when appropriate, include sensitive discussion addressing of deep-rooted prejudices of perpetrators.

Students and parents

The school will strive to:

- Develop a strong sense of self-esteem and robust self confidence in all students
- Recognise and celebrate the achievement of all students
- Promote understanding of value added and positive methods for evaluating achievement
- Promote students' and parents' understanding of our equality policies and practices and secure their commitment to them
- Disseminate our equal opportunities philosophy to parents
- Promote parental/carers involvement in their children's education and encourage their regular participation of all parents/carers in celebratory, consultative, information gathering and social events
- Develop and implement a range of methods to gather student and parent opinion and take serious consideration of the trends and ideas expressed

Staff

- The Head of School and senior leaders will promote key messages to staff, parents and students about

equality, what is expected of them and can be expected from the school

- The Headteacher will ensure that the whole school community receives adequate training to meet the needs of delivering equality
- The school's appointment and human resource procedures will implement all aspects of good practice in equal opportunities and safeguarding
- There will be particular attention paid to ensure that all candidates for positions have equal access to selection criteria and to ensure useful post-hoc feedback for all candidates who desire it
- The Headteacher and governors will monitor the school's current staffing profile with regards to ethnicity, gender and disability
- All staff are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the principles and implementation of the school's equality policy. This includes a responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents. This may be probed in the staff selection process.

Governors

The governing body:

- Has overall responsibility for implementation of all policies through the offices of the Head of School and staff
- Will involve and engage the whole school community in identifying and understanding equality barriers and setting objectives to address these
- Supports and monitors the school's contribution to the development of community cohesion
- Should monitor the diversity of its own composition and consider action to ensure it reflects the diversity of the local community
- Should ensure its involvement in school self-evaluation, the school development plan and vision for the future
- Will ensure its sub committees incorporate equal opportunities priorities into their work
- Should ensure regular liaison between themselves and all groups in the school who are addressing or should address equal opportunities concerns
- Holds responsibility for the school's compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (as it did for the, replaced, Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act) and should ensure, through monitoring, that this is the case.
- The governing body collects, analyses and evaluates a range of school data. They check that all students are making the best possible progress, and that no group of pupils is underachieving. To do this, they monitor:
 - Admissions
 - Attainment
 - Exclusions
 - Rewards and sanctions
 - Students' and pupils' questionnaires.

Complaints

Any breaches of the policy should be reported in the first instance to the Head of School, who will carry out a full investigation or delegate this to another designated member of staff in line with the schools relevant policies.

Appendix A: Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Discrimination on grounds of sex, race, marital and civil partnership, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, disability, gender reassignment, or religion or belief is illegal. However, for the school community, discrimination is also unacceptable on any of the other grounds referred to in this policy statement. Failure to comply with the policy will be fully and promptly investigated using the appropriate procedures.

There are four ways in which discrimination may occur:

1. Direct discrimination: This means treating someone less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex etc
2. Indirect discrimination: This means applying a requirement or condition which cannot be justified to all groups, but which has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group because the proportion of that group which can comply is smaller than the proportion of the group(s) which can comply with it
3. Victimisation: This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other persons would be treated because that person has done a 'protected act' under the Equal Pay Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act or Employment Equality Regulations, for example, by bringing forward proceedings or giving evidence or information.
4. Harassment: Harassment can take many forms, from the most obvious abusive remarks to extremely subtle use of power. As with unfair or unlawful discrimination, harassment can be intentional or unintentional. However, the key issue is not simply the intention of the offender but the impact of the behaviour on the person receiving it.

Harassment may involve any of the following:

- physical contact or violence;
- offensive humiliating and intimidating remarks or actions;
- exclusion from participation in job-related or classroom-related discussions, training or social or other events;
- unfair work allocation;
- unjust or excessive or humiliating criticism of performance;
- offensive signs or notices;
- graffiti;
- repeated demands or requests for sexual favours.