

# St Alban's C of E Academy



## Equality and Diversity Policy

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## **Rationale**

At St Albans Academy, all staff and Governors are committed to providing all pupils with a curriculum which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination.

We are committed to overcoming sexist, racist and classist attitudes with an approach which seeks to raise consciousness and develop positive attitudes.

## **Aims and Expectations**

At St Albans Academy, we do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff or pupil, on the grounds of their sex, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins. We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school.

We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education we provide and ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.

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

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

We challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.

We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups.

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.

## **Equality and the Law**

The Equality Act 2010 has replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It also provides some changes that schools need to be aware of.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

As far as schools are concerned, for the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment. However, schools that are already complying with the law should not find major differences in what they need to do.

The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools that existed under previous legislation such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to singlesex schools and schools of a religious character, are all replicated in the new act. However, there are some changes that will have an impact on schools as follows: It is now unlawful for employers to ask health-related questions of applicants before job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work. This means that schools should no longer, as a matter of course, require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. Schools are advised to review their existing practices to ensure they are complying with both the Health Standards Regulations and Section 60 of the Equality Act.

The Single Equality Act reflects the Government's commitment, 'to narrowing gaps, and to tackling the barriers to equal opportunities and social mobility which hold individuals back, and bring heavy social and economic costs. Equality is central to building a strong economy and fairer society. It underpins the Coalition's guiding principles of freedom, fairness and responsibility'.

The Government believes that they need to reform education to tackle educational inequality, which has widened in recent years. They believe, 'that too many children are held back by disadvantage and discrimination. We want to build a fair society where social mobility is unlocked; where everyone, regardless of background, has the chance to succeed. We welcome the fact that the Equality Act gives us all an opportunity to do this in a more streamlined and effective way'.

### **Anti-Racism**

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.

We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. So, for example, we will immediately remove any offensive graffiti that we may find in school. 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.

Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So, for example, the history curriculum gives due emphasis to ancient African traditions and cultures in the work that the children do on the Ancient Egyptians. In the religious education curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children study the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

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.

Every pupil, regardless of race, is expected, and encouraged, to reach their potential by all staff. The expectations are underpinned by our monitoring of the performance of ethnic minority pupils to pinpoint and tackle underperformance.

### **Gender Equality**

We are committed to ensuring equal treatment of all our employed, pupils and visitors, regardless of gender, neither males, nor females, will be treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and aspects of school life.

At St Albans Academy, we will not tolerate harassment of people based on their gender or transgender status.

We will endeavour to use and display images which show positive images relating to gender. Staff at school will challenge gender stereotyping and promote positive role models. Social relationships between boys and girls will be developed and encouraged so that there is a mutual respect and understanding between both genders. This will often be explicit in PHSCE lessons and implicit across the curriculum.

The dignity and privacy of transgender people will be protected by our procedures and practices. For example, proof of identity does not rely solely on birth certificates; other proof, such as a passport, is acceptable.

### **Disability Equality**

We are committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its staff, pupils and visitors, with any form of disability and will ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and aspects of school life.

The Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommends that all pupils with SEN and those with long term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of the Act and for equality. This is in addition to all pupils with long term impairments, which have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities.

We recognise that disability is not caused by the individual(s), but by the physical, environmental and attitudinal barriers which exist in the education system and in society as a whole.

**Our school will actively seek to:**

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities

Social relationships between able and disabled pupils will be developed and encouraged so that there is a mutual respect and understanding between both groups. This will often be explicit in PHSCE lessons and implicit across the curriculum.

Every pupil, regardless of ability/disability, is expected and encouraged to reach their potential by staff in school. These expectations are underpinned by our monitoring of the achievement of pupils, according to ability/disability to pinpoint and tackle underperformance.

St Albans Academy will not tolerate harassment of disabled people with any form of impairment and will also consider pupils who are carers of disabled parents.

### **The Responsibilities of the Governors**

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.

The governing body seeks to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against 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.

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

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, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. 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.

### **The Responsibilities of the Headteacher**

It is the Headteacher's role to implement the school's equality and diversity policy and s/he is supported by the governing body in so doing.

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

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.

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.

The Headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness.

### **The Responsibilities of the Class Teacher and Support Staff**

The class teacher ensures that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child.

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.

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. So, for example, history topics in our school include examples of the significant contributions women have made to developments in this country's history. In geography topics the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.

All our teachers challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any serious incidents in the school log book, and draw them to the attention of the Headteacher.

Teachers support the work of support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.

### **Tackling Discrimination**

Bullying and harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation are unacceptable and are not tolerated within the school environment. Our school's abhorrence of such behaviours is communicated to pupils, parents and staff. For example, through the

curriculum, the Prospectus, newsletters and staff training. All parents of new pupils receive a summary of the schools behaviour expectations and anti-bullying policy as part of the inductions process.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur, they are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to the pupil's individual circumstances.

Racists and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a member of SLT, Head of School or Executive Headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis. All incidents are discussed with the Governor who takes a lead on safeguarding. Incidents are monitored to ensure they are dealt with effectively.

### **Training**

Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through St Albans Academy self-review process and staff appraisal.

### **Monitoring**

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor the effectiveness of this Equality and Diversity Policy. The Governing Body does this by:

- Monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school via a report from the Head of School/Executive Headteacher
- Monitoring the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against
- Taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents/carers, staff or pupils
- Monitoring the schools behaviour and exclusions policy, so that those from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

### **Links to other policies**

Accessibility plan  
Anti-racism Policy  
Anti-bullying Policy  
Behaviour Policy  
Safeguarding Policy  
Sex Education Policy

## Review

The governors reviews this policy annually. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.