

THE SACRED HEART LANGUAGE COLLEGE



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

“Confident in God’s love for us, we commit ourselves to His service”

March 2022

Context

Our mission statement is encapsulated in our belief that 'Confident in God's Love for Us, we commit ourselves to his service'. At The Sacred Heart Language College we are committed to ensuring that all are of equal worth, secure in the knowledge that all are created in Christ's image. Our actions are governed by our living testament to the Gospel values of justice, fairness, respect and equality. These beliefs underpin our commitment to disability equality.

The Sacred Heart Language College believes that all students: should have the right to feel safe, secure and cared for, and should have access to appropriate support, care and education which includes the support to manage their emotions and their behaviour including taking account of, and for their responsibilities.

Policy Reviewed:

March 2022

Signature:



Maria Barrett, Chair of Governors

This policy should be viewed in conjunction with our Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Strategy. The strategy document is reviewed on an annual basis.

Policy Statement

As a Catholic girls' school The Sacred Heart Language College believes that "all men and women are of equal importance in the sight of God" *. We are therefore committed to promoting the academic progress and spiritual and moral well-being of all our students.

We are a multi-cultural school and firmly believe that the diversity of cultures in evidence that The Sacred Heart Language College enriches the total Catholic Community. Pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding and appreciation of different cultures as well as an awareness of the importance of social justice.

Perceptions of men's and women's roles in society will be explored so that students learn critically to examine gender issues. We believe that an awareness of class, race and gender issues will help students to become informed citizens, who are able to make reasoned decisions as young adults. If, however, racist or sexist attitudes are found to exist within the school we are committed to challenging them. Strategies used to challenge entrenched perceptions must be sensitive and reflective, as our aim must be to encourage individuals to re-evaluate prejudiced points of view.

(*Taken from the *Statement of the Bishops of the Diocese of Westminster to all governing bodies and teachers in Catholic Schools in the Diocese*)

PART 1: LEGAL DUTIES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Legal Duties

The school welcomes its duties under the Equalities Act of 2010 . We are committed to:

- promoting equality of opportunity;
- promoting good relations between members of different racial, cultural and religious groups and communities;
- eliminating unlawful discrimination.

2. Guiding Principles

Our Catholic faith gives us guiding principles and St. Paul when speaking to the Corinthians says:

“For just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one spirit we were all baptised into one body – Jesus or Greeks, slaves or free – and we are all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed the body does not consist of one member but many”.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-14.

Additionally, in fulfilling our legal duties listed above, we are guided by three essential principles:

- every pupil should have opportunities to achieve the highest possible standards, and the best possible qualifications for the next stages of her life and education.
- every pupil should be helped to develop a sense of personal and cultural identity that is confident and open to change, and that is receptive and respectful towards other identities.
- every pupil should develop the knowledge, understandings and skills that she needs in order to participate in Britain’s multi-ethnic society, and in the wider context of an interdependent world.

3. The Full Range of School Policies and Practice

We ensure that the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils’ progress, attainment and assessment
- behaviour management and exclusions
- pupils’ personal development and pastoral care
- teaching and learning
- admissions and attendance
- the content of the curriculum
- staff recruitment and professional development
- partnerships with parents and communities

PART II EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN PRACTICE

1. Equal Opportunities in the Curriculum

The right of all pupils to receive a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to their individual needs, is central to our philosophy. Curriculum objectives for equal opportunities focus on the key areas of:

- organisation
- resourcing
- teaching and learning
- monitoring and evaluation of progress

2. Race Equality and Cultural Diversity

As Christ's disciples our love for one another will ensure that all members of our community are held to be equal and treated with dignity and respect. Through challenge and guidance for our school, we aim to overcome bias and discrimination to develop a more equal and inclusive school community. We celebrate the diversity that enriches our community.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”

John 13. 35

(i) Addressing racism and xenophobia

The school is opposed to all forms of racism and xenophobia, including those forms that are directed towards religious groups and communities.

(ii) Responsibilities

The local governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

The head teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

All staff are expected to deal with racist incidents that may occur; to know how to identify and challenge racial and cultural bias and stereotyping; to support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language; and to incorporate principles of equality and diversity into all aspects of their work.

(iii) Information and resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors, and also, as appropriate, to all pupils and parents. We also keep records of any racist incidents.

(iv) Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents.

3. Gender & Sexuality

At the Sacred Heart we aim to:

- Challenge stereotypical images of girls and boys, and men and women.
- Ensure correct facts and information are taught and discussed with relation to LGBTQAI+ communities and we will support all students as they explore their sexuality and challenges they may face in doing this.
- Provide positive role models for our pupils via our staffing policy, the use of outside speakers and through access to a rich and varied programme of extra curriculum activities.

4. Class

We aim to:

- Combat underachievement which is related to social deprivation. Some methods used to counteract disadvantage include:
 - mentoring
 - access to extra tuition and resources where possible
 - liaison with external agencies e.g. the Access and Development team, the Westminster Catholic Counselling Service, Social Services and Professional Consultants.

5. Disability

The term 'disability' is used to denote a physical, sensory or intellectual impairment that may hinder the pupil from full access to the curriculum. These pupils should be seen as children first, with the same needs and feelings as all children, and not merely in terms of their disability.

The Sacred Heart Language College therefore seeks to:

- (i) acknowledge that our community is enriched by all our members.
- (ii) promote awareness about disability from an early age
- (iii) ensure that disability does not prevent pupils from having as full access as is possible to the range of activities offered by the curriculum
- (iv) ensure that staff have training and an awareness of the specific needs of the individual children

Monitoring Review and Evaluation

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Executive Head teacher and local governing body.