

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR PUPILS (including EYFS)

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of St Mary's School. We concentrate on educating the individual, to provide a welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can flourish under a St Mary's education. This commitment is shared by pupils, staff and governors.

St Mary's School is committed to equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of age, race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity ('Protected Characteristics').

We welcome applications from pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and refer parents to our policies covering Admissions and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and to our Accessibility Plan in response to the Equality Act 2010. These are available on the school website.

The bursary scheme makes it possible for pupils who meet the school's admission criteria to attend St Mary's School. (Details of our provision for bursaries can be obtained from the Head of Finance and Operations or the Registrar. Applications are means tested.)

The aims of this policy and the School's ethos as a whole is to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the School community
- Comply with the School's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.

All parents are expected to support the aims of this policy and the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

Admission

The School treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. The School accepts applications from, and admits, all prospective pupils irrespective of their Protected Characteristics or special educational needs ('SEN'). (Regarding SEN, please see admissions policy).

Parents must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School.

Education Services

The School affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities, irrespective of any Protected Characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The School will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any Protected Characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

At St Mary's we will:

- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any Protected Characteristics
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and pastoral support
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices
- Use the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE to:
 - Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the Protected Characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
 - Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.

The School recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies.

Religious Belief

Although the School's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, St Mary's is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or with no religion or faith) subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of the School community.

The governing body, through the senior leadership team, actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Dress Code

All pupils are required to wear a uniform until Year 11. The Principal will consider requests from parents and pupils for variations in the uniform for reasons related to disability, gender reassignment and/or on religious grounds provided they are consistent with the School's policy on health and safety and it is reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The Principal will normally arrange to meet with parents to discuss the implications of such a request.

Food

At St Mary's we work in partnership with families to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of the pupils are met. We encourage the pupils to learn about a range of food and cultural approaches to mealtimes and to respect the differences among them.

Reasonable Adjustments for Pupils with Disability

St Mary's has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils.

Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The School will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School. Further information on the School's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the School's SEN and Disability Policy.

The School has an Accessibility Plan in place and a hard copy can be made available upon request. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Responsibilities

The governors' responsibility is to ensure that the school complies with the legislation and that this policy, and its related procedures and strategies are implemented, in order to do this the policy should be reviewed regularly.

The Principal is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities by presenting all staff with the updated policy.

Breach of the Policy

Pupils who are in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the School's Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Fixed period and Permanent Exclusion Policies.

Reviewed/Approved: October 2024
Next review: Autumn 2025