



**St Mary's Catholic Nursery & Infant School
and
St Mary's Catholic Junior School**

Learning, playing and growing together in the love of Jesus

St Mary's Catholic Federation, Carshalton

**Equal Opportunities Policy
(Non- Statutory)
(Annual)**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies: Disability Equality Policy, Assessment, teaching and learning policy, Accessibility Plan, Admission Policy, Inclusion Policy, Clubs Policy

Author: Senior Leadership Team

Committee: Inclusion

Date Prepared: July 2017

Date Approved: October 2017

Date of Review: July 2018

Approved by Full Governing Body on Date:

Chair of Governors.....

St Mary's Catholic Federation, Carshalton

Safeguarding Statement

This school takes notice of and adheres to all the national and local policies and guidance in regard to Safeguarding Children and Young People.

Lead Safeguarding Person Junior School: Mrs G Owens

Lead Safeguarding Person Nursery & Infant School: Mrs M Quinn

Safeguarding Deputy: Mrs S Hulme

Governor designated safeguarding officer: Mr T Richmond



"St Mary's is committed to being a Rights Respecting School to inspire and support the children, parents and school governors in school and the wider community."

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

This policy is informed by St Mary's Mission Statement and is to be read in conjunction with our policy on Behaviour.

Equal Opportunities Statement

St Mary's Catholic Federation aims to offer equality of opportunity to all children regardless of gender, ability, colour, ethnic or national origin.

The school recognises the dignity of each member of the community within and outside the school as a unique human being made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore as a fundamental belief of the Catholic Church and through the school's Mission Statements we are committed to providing the best educational provision for all our pupils. Emphasis is also placed on the value of everyone's contribution regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity and an atmosphere of mutual respect and care is fostered to encourage the full participation of every child to progress to the best of their ability.

Broad Aims and Objectives

- To create an ethos in which there is respect for human dignity, where each person is recognised and valued as an individual
- To celebrate, in the formal and extended curriculum, the differing cultures which enrich the school
- To ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils
- To give pupils equal access to the curriculum
- To raise adult awareness of the equal opportunities within both the whole school environment and the outside world
- To vigorously oppose all racist and sexist attitudes
- To equip all pupils with the knowledge, understanding and independence to overcome prejudice and stereotyping

Implementing the School's Equal Opportunities Policy

The school's attitude and values will be seen most obviously in its planned curriculum. Assemblies are opportunities to celebrate God's love for each person, the shared sense of community and the value of everyone's contribution to the life of the school. Citizenship is also an integral part of the curriculum where themes like responsibility and equality are explored through other subjects.



"St Mary's is committed to being a Rights Respecting School to inspire and support the children, parents and school governors in school and the wider community."

Within the curriculum the schools will show their commitment to respect the gifts and provide for the needs of each individual.

Expectations

The schools will not have different expectations of its staff and pupils depending on their ethnic background, gender, religion, disability or class. The highest standards of work and behaviour are expected from all staff and pupils.

This policy has been agreed by all staff and Governors and it is the responsibility of everyone to ensure that it is carried out.

The Admissions Policy

Governors consider *all* completed application forms without regard to class, gender, ethnicity or ability.

Employment Policy

St Mary's aims to be an equal opportunity employer and has a policy for this purpose which covers aspects of employment including vacancy advertising, selection, recruitment and training and development, including conditions of service and reasons for termination of employment.

To ensure this operates effectively the school maintains records of employees' and applicants' racial origins, gender and disability. These are monitored to ensure equality of opportunity and to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination.

To this aim all vacancies are advertised internally and externally, and through communications media including local and national media. We also have strong links with our local community through our parishes, which enable us to reach a wide pool of potential applicants.

Selection criteria, job description and employer specification will be reviewed to ensure selection is on the effective performance of the job and on merit. Reasons for the rejection of any applicants are recorded, and professional feedback given.

The school also aims to involve voluntary helpers from all areas of the community, without regard to gender, ethnicity or disability.



"St Mary's is committed to being a Rights Respecting School to inspire and support the children, parents and school governors in school and the wider community."

Relationships between Pupils, Staff and Parents

The relationship between school and home and the way staff address each other, parents and children are strong influences on the children in our care. This 'hidden' curriculum should be acknowledged and given due consideration when considering equal opportunity issues.

The curriculum can be used as a vehicle for encouraging pupils to be aware of different cultural values, gender stereotyping and disability and of the problems, which they can cause. Clear procedures are in place to deal with discrimination as it occurs. In this way we are ready to support pupils and colleagues who are victims of discrimination and prejudice through actions or words of others.

Pupils or adults will be asked to reflect upon what they have done or said and be told that such behaviour is unacceptable in our school. Pupils are made aware of the sanctions that could be used if repetition of such behaviour occurs.

As part of our school community, parents, family and governors should all feel welcome and encouraged to participate in all school events. In this way, whilst we accept that differences are real and relevant, they should not be regarded as a source of division or friction. No member of our community should feel that they have to deny or renounce their distinctive culture or background in order to gain acceptance.

Multi-Cultural

Children should know that Britain has always been a mixed society, a nation peopled by migrants, from the Bronze Age to the present day and that the activities of individuals and groups from ethnic minorities have enriched life in Britain for us all, and are part of our heritage.

At St Mary's we aim to foster an awareness of all cultures so that both those represented within and outside our school community are examined and valued. It is important for each child to identify with their own culture, whilst at the same time having the opportunity to explore other societies.

Many opportunities arise for both incidental and planned discussion about other cultures. Acknowledgement of world festivals, assemblies and various curriculum work are examples, which enable children to begin to develop an awareness of each other's



"St Mary's is committed to being a Rights Respecting School to inspire and support the children, parents and school governors in school and the wider community."

customs, languages food, festivals, clothes, religions, climates and life styles. When choosing books staff include a selection of those with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which also avoid stereotyping. This broad balanced approach lays the foundations for more detailed study in specific areas such as geography, history, RE and citizenship.

It is to be remembered that multi-cultural education is not a subject, but an integrated part of the whole school curriculum.

Children for whom English is a second language are, where necessary, monitored and helped by the LEA's EAL services. The home language of these children is accepted and their bi-lingualism is celebrated.

Racist Behaviour

We recognise that racism would be a destructive influence in school and painful for anyone who experienced it. It would undermine the educational opportunities for the children of our school and would have a detrimental effect on the working environment. It would hinder the development of a truly Catholic Christian school and damage the school's contribution to a cohesive and multicultural society.

All staff employed by the school accept the responsibility for challenging racist behaviour in and around the premises, both in and out of teaching time.

Derogatory name-calling which refers to a racial group or nationality is unacceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated by our schools. All members of staff are asked to report any instances of unacceptable behaviour to the Headteacher. Any such incidents are reported separately in the class behaviour file.

Gender

Anti-sexist education, like anti-racism is the responsibility of everyone in all educational establishments. It concerns the self-esteem, aspirations and achievement of all our children, girls and boys.

As a staff we not only examine our attitudes to sex equality but are aware that we ourselves are role models in terms of our skills, interests and areas of responsibilities. We also seek to reinforce positive attitudes by giving all pupils the opportunity and encouragement to achieve across the whole range of skills.



"St Mary's is committed to being a Rights Respecting School to inspire and support the children, parents and school governors in school and the wider community."

Organisation and Ethos

At St Mary's we seek to emphasise common strengths, likenesses and weaknesses rather than differences based on gender. Girls and boys are not separated on registers, class lists or in lines. Tasks around the school are carried out by both boys and girls. Similarly clearing up in the classroom is a shared activity. Girls and boys share PE and other sports activities. The only exception is when the rules of national associations specify single-sex teams in competitive situations.

Within the classroom children are encouraged to work together co-operatively irrespective of gender. In class teaching situations staff are alerted to the need to elicit responses equally from both sexes and all abilities. Teachers aim to provide equal access to all equipment and activities so that children can make real choices. These choices should reflect their genuine interest and aptitude and not be unduly influenced by direct or indirect outside pressures.

There is sufficient playground space to enable a range of activities to take place. The same standards of behaviour are expected from boys and girls in school. Courteous behaviour by and towards both sexes is positively encouraged and disciplinary procedures are the same for girls and boys.

The Curriculum

We live in a society in which the process of sex-stereotyping can lead people to conform to gender roles which inhibit individuals abilities, preferences and aspirations. The effects of sexism impoverish both sexes by limiting horizons and restricting choices.

At St Mary's boys and girls are given equal opportunity to experience a wide range of subjects and skills e.g. PE, science, design and technology, computing, cooking and sewing. RE, PSHE and citizenship have valuable contributions to make in looking at values and the way in which we treat others.

A conscious effort is made to use language, which promotes a positive self-image of all pupils and staff. Gender stereotyped language is avoided and pupils are addressed similarly regardless of sex in terms of praise, compliments, reprimands and assessment.

When sexism is evident in books or other published materials the issue is discussed with the children. An example would be the almost inevitable use of male heroes in traditional stories.



"St Mary's is committed to being a Rights Respecting School to inspire and support the children, parents and school governors in school and the wider community."

One of the criteria for selecting books is to choose those with positive male and female images that avoid stereotyping.

Disabilities

Children with physical, language or learning disabilities are encouraged to participate to the fullest of their ability and special opportunities might need to be provided for this to happen. This applies also to bilingual children and those where English is a second language.

When planning activities within the curriculum teachers must be aware of possible inequalities due to previous experiences or present difficulties to ensure that work is differentiated either by context or presentation to enable all children to perform to the best of their ability.

Conclusion

Passive support for equal opportunities is not sufficient to challenge stereotyping and discrimination. At St Mary's we support the view that education is a powerful vehicle for transmitting values. It can also challenge them.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy is concerned with giving pupils access to all educational provision. It enables them to achieve their fullest potential, develops all their talents and ensures their contributions are equally valued. Finally, it helps them to learn how to live in harmony within a multi-cultural society.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the policy will take the form of studying any incidents of discrimination that have occurred to see if the school could have foreseen the events or need to alter procedures in the light of the outcomes. Any revisions will be discussed at staff and governing body meetings.



"St Mary's is committed to being a Rights Respecting School to inspire and support the children, parents and school governors in school and the wider community."