

Equality of Opportunities

This policy is written in the light of St Paul's School Mission Statement which believes that every person is created in God's image, is equally important and therefore entitled to be treated with respect and justice.

We:

- Consider equality of opportunity is the right of all members of the school; it involves giving everybody the opportunity to develop their full potential.
- Acknowledge that ensuring everybody has the right to equal opportunities is not about 'treating everybody the same' it means actively promoting the opportunity to enhance the self esteem of pupils as individuals and as members of groups.
- Should take positive action to support all individuals fairly and fully in order to enable them to achieve their potential.

Legal framework

- We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual identity.
- We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
- We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.

Guiding Principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual identity.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate

St Paul's School for Girls

but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual identity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, and girls and boys.

St Paul's School for Girls

- gay people as well as straight.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, girls and boys
- gay people as well as straight.

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender.

Principle 9: Objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement in which we have been involved (principle 7), in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender.

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.

Every three years, accordingly, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

There are some limited exceptions to this.

- Single sex schools may of course discriminate on grounds of sex with regard to admissions, and schools with a religious character may give priority in admissions to applicants who are of their faith.
- School curriculum and collective worship are not covered by the requirements on schools not to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief.
- With regard to disability, schools must make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent disabled pupils being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled, even if it means treating them more favourably.

The curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that

St Paul's School for Girls

teaching and learning reflect the seven principles set out in paragraph 4 above.

Ethos and organisation

We ensure the principles listed in paragraph 4 above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1–3:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

There is guidance of school policies which are listed in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with, these are **reported in** a report.

Duty to Promote Equality

Our policy with regard to RACE EQUALITY is:

- I. To encourage, within the school community, opposition to all forms of prejudice and racial discriminations by challenging and using appropriate sanctions.
- II. To ensure within each department that materials should reflect and recognise the multi-cultural society in which we live.
- III. To recognise that there is equal worth in all cultures and that they all have made a positive contribution to the development of our society so as to promote good relations between different ethnic groups.
- IV. To speak respectfully of all people and take the bias out of language used.
- V. To meet the needs of all pupils and encourage them to achieve their full potential.
- VI. To record racist, bullying and homophobic incidents and to report them to the LA on a regular basis.
- VII. To encourage community cohesion as seen in our school policy on social cohesion.

Our policy with regard to DISABILITY is:

St Paul's School for Girls

- I. To promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other people.
- II. To promote a greater understanding of disability and a positive attitude to disabled people.
- III. To recognise the positive contribution that can be made by people with physical disability within our community.
- IV. This policy will be reflected in our curriculum policies.
- V. That pupils with disabilities can be gifted and talented.
- VI. To take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

St Paul's has a disability equality scheme and an accessibility plan.

Our policy on GENDER is:

- I. To ensure that equal access be available to all in every aspect of school life both curricular and extra-curricular and continued professional development.
- II. To raise awareness of achievement in whatever form and to recognise it in a practical way.
- III. To work towards a lack of bias in spoken and written language with no one gender being given priority.
- IV. No discrimination in terms of employment of staff.

Our policy with regard to SOCIAL CLASS is:

- I. To continue to make available equal access to the school for all, irrespective of social background or status, such as looked after children, travellers, asylum seekers and refugees.
- II. To encourage the acceptance of the relevance of worth and tolerance of difference of social background.
- III. To recognise and value the culture, customs and traditional way of speaking of pupils from all social backgrounds.

Promotion and Monitoring of Policy

Examine and monitor statistics regarding the pupils and staff in the following areas:

- Admissions and transfer procedures
- External examination results
- Assessment grades at KS3
- Numbers on SEND register
- Numbers of Most **Able, Pupil Premium, EAL**
- Curriculum and extra curricular activities
- Pupils on report
- Parental involvement
- Staff recruitment and development
- Behaviour
- Language and cultural issues
- Resource allocation
- Attendance
- Pupils' discipline and exclusion
- Inset provision for differentiation and under achievement and the more able
- Ethnic monitoring as to the above areas
- Bullying incidents

St Paul's School for Girls

- Racism and racial harassment incidents sent to LA termly
- Membership of the Governing Body

Roles and responsibilities

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

A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher 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.

A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles in paragraph 4 above
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Religious observance

We are a Catholic school and we respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and governing body.

Monitoring and evaluation

St Paul's School for Girls

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

In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

All leadership teachers should make reference to their own Equality Scheme in their own departmental documentation and monitor its own practice.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for knowing and following our Equality Scheme.

Date approved by the Governing Body:

January 2012

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED GUIDANCE

Equality Act 2010
DfE www.education.gov.uk

Gender (sex)

- The Equal Opportunities Commission – advice on the Gender Equality Duty
- The Women and Equality Unit

Gender reassignment

- A Guide to the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

Race

- Commission for Racial Equality – guidance for schools on the race equality duty
- Recording and Reporting Racist Incidents Guidance

Disability

- Promoting Disability Equality in Schools
- Disability Rights Commission

Sexual Orientation

- Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)

Religion or belief

- Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)

Age

- Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)
- Age Positive

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOLS' RESPONSIBILITIES

	Illegal: discrimination harassment victimisation	Duty to promote	Applies to:			Duty to monitor	
			Staff	Pupils	Curriculum	Overall	Specific incidents
Gender (sex)	✓ Since 1975	✓	✓	✓	✓		X
Gender (reassignment)	✓ Covered by 1975 Act	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Race	✓ Since 1976	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disability	✓ Since 1995	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X (except bullying incidents)
Sexual orientation	✓ Since 2003	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Religion or belief	✓ Since 2003	X	✓	✓	X	X	X
Age	✓ Since 2006	X	✓ Unless 'objectively justified'	X	X	X	X
Gifted and Talented	N/A	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X