



# **SINGLE EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY**

**Mount St Mary's Catholic High School Single Equality & Diversity Policy**

Adopted by Mount St Marys' Governing Body on 22 November 2022

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire E. M. S.', is written over a faint horizontal line.

Chair of Governors

Review date: 22 November 2025

## **Introduction**

The Mount St Mary's Catholic High School Governors welcome their legal obligation, duties and responsibilities as reflected in their Single Equality and Diversity policy.

## **Equality Act 2010 outline**

The Equality Act came into force from October 2010 providing a modern, single legal framework with clear, streamlined law to more effectively tackle disadvantage and discrimination. The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises the current legislation to provide Britain with a new discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

Many pieces of legislation were merged into this one act, including the former Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The Equality Act aims to:

- Strengthen disabled people's protection from discrimination.
- Protect people from discrimination by association and perception.
- Promote Positive Action in recruitment and promotion which gives greater scope to address deficits in the workforce.
- Strengthen the powers of employment tribunals.
- Strengthen the protection for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers.
- Ban discrimination in private members' clubs.
- Operate a Single Public Sector Equality Duty covering 8 protected characteristics which are:
  - Age.
  - Disability - applies to a person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Qualification does not require proof that their impairment affects a particular capacity.
  - Gender reassignment - applies to a person proposing to undergo or who has undergone a process to change their sex. Qualification does not require proof that they are under medical supervision.
  - Pregnancy and maternity.
  - Race.
  - Religion and belief.
  - Sex.
  - Sexual orientation.

## **General duties**

The Equality Act General Duties were created from the Equality Act 2010 and replaces the race, disability and gender equality duties. The general duty regulations came into force in April 2011. The Equality General Duties are set out in section 149 of the Equality Act.

Those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard of the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard of the above 3 aims involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

## **Specific duties**

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 came into force on 10 September 2011.

The specific duties require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with the Equality Duty, and to set equality objectives.

## **Accessibility Plan**

MSM is committed to providing premises that are suitable and sufficient for all educational purposes and give access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all students, irrespective of special need or disability. MSM's Governing Body supports the principles and aims of the LA's Access Strategy for Schools and Colleges and will work jointly with the LA to implement agreed objectives to meet the county's targets for improving access to schools and colleges.

There are 3 points of focus for this plan:

- Ensure that all existing MSM students, regardless of their educational needs or barriers to learning, can access the full curriculum equally by making all appropriate and reasonable provisions as, when and where required
- Ensure that MSM has done everything reasonable and appropriate to the MSM site and environment to enable access to all existing members of the MSM community and those visiting it
- MSM strives to make reasonable provisions to meet all requirements of the existing MSM community members with regard to information produced by MSM for them. This is extended to any other interested parties that have a right to access any MSM produced information.

This Plan, as part of the Single Equality and Diversity Policy, operates alongside the MSM SEND Policy and is consistent with it in terms of principles and approaches to resourcing.

The provisions made with regard to the three focus points will be reviewed and updated as needs are identified and addressed. An annual audit of accessibility provision will be conducted in the summer term to evaluate the level of preparation for the new intake.

In satisfying the demands of our undertaking outlined in the Accessibility Plan, we hope to establish a culture of mutual trust and respect between all members of the MSM community and to build a community that respects the celebration of achievement at all levels.

For any questions regarding the Accessibility Plan, please contact the MSM SENDCO Mr Nick O'Brien on: 0113 2455248 extension 280.

## **Mount St Mary's Catholic High School in Context**

Mount St Mary's Catholic High School (MSM) has a history of over 160 years, beginning as a convent, becoming an orphanage, a girls' school and is now a VA, 11-16 mixed comprehensive school. MSM has a 9 form intake and a current roll of 945 with an almost equal gender balance and the year populations range from 184 to 197.

The school site is located in Richmond Hill Ward. MSM does outreach work and liaises with many of the local primary schools, in a variety of subjects, reflecting its commitment to the local community. MSM is also part of the Catholic Partnership in Leeds. The area is characterised by poverty, crime, drugs and low levels of adult numeracy and literacy. Few adults progress to higher education and expectations are low. Leeds is in the lowest 10% of areas of deprivation nationally, and the school is surrounded by areas in the lowest 10% of Leeds areas of deprivation.

MSM's Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility figure of 38.52% well above the national average being 22.5%, and Pupil Premium (PP) figure of 45.5% are well above the national average of 27.6%. MSM is culturally very diverse with 78.84% of students being other than white-British or white-Irish, 57.04% of students having English as an additional language (EAL) and there are

approximately 50 different languages among the school population. There are 24 staff of 151 that are other than white-British or white-Irish, 11 of which are teaching staff.

At the date of reviewing this policy, MSM's proportion of students with learning difficulties or barriers to learning categorising them as SEND is 14.18%, which is above the national average of 11.9%. With support, all of our SEND students are able to access the full school curriculum. The 14.18% accounts for 134 students, 1 of whom have an EHCP, 9 are recorded as having sensory or physical disabilities and 14 are recorded as having Social, Emotional and Mental Health issues. There are a number of other students that receive support including EAL, but are not categorised as SEND.

### **School Ethos, Vision and Values**

MSM Vision Statement:

The community of Mount St Mary's Catholic High School is called to develop the full potential of each community member spiritually, academically, socially and physically and to create a safe, happy and caring school where all community members are valued highly and equally, remembering that we are stronger together. It is our profound hope that departing community members carry this ethos with them wherever they may go in their life after Mount St Mary's to positively affect all they may meet.

This statement is punctuated by the core principles:

- The development of spiritual growth and an understanding of Christian values.
- The provision of a broad, balanced and, where possible, individually appropriate education, which is rooted in Catholic values and principles.
- The recognition of the unique talents and value of each individual, so that everyone can experience the success which promotes self-confidence and a positive self-image.
- The establishment and maintenance of an environment in which care and mutual respect is clearly evident.
- The raising of awareness of the value of people of other faiths, backgrounds and ages, and the encouragement of respect for them.

Pastorally, each year group has a Year Leader on reduced timetables of 16 teaching hours, a Pastoral Support Officer and a Student Advocate. There is a chapel for individual reflection and contemplation. Catholic and LA sector agencies are also involved.

Ofsted and Section 48 Inspections always rate MSM highly with regard to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, reflected in a number of annual charity and community based activities such as the Annual Christmas Party for approximately 100 of the community's pensioners, organised by staff and students, and carol singing in Leeds city centre to raise money for St Gemma's Hospice.

At Mount St Mary's Catholic High School we are committed to ensuring the equality of education and opportunity, the removal of any barriers to access, participation, attainment and achievement for all students, staff and all those receiving services from the school, regardless of any perceived differences between any of them. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose, with complete confidence, any differences they believe they have from anyone else without fear of discrimination, prejudice or judgement, and to participate fully in school life. Ultimately, our objective is to equip every member of our community with the skills they may need to progress successfully in life outside and beyond Mount St Mary's Catholic High School. Our admissions policy does not discriminate against anyone.

To meet the general duties in the Equality Act 2010, MSM aims to:

- Provide a secure environment in which all our students can flourish and achieve all five outcomes of Every Child Matters (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and enjoy economic well-being).
- Where identified or perceived, make reasonable adjustments to eliminate any direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment of current, prospective and in

some limited circumstances former students, be it unlawful or otherwise; this also applies to anyone making complaints or claims on someone else's behalf under the Act.

- Promote positive attitudes towards people with perceived differences.
- Encourage participation by all the school population in public life.
- Prepare students for participation in Britain's multi-ethnic, diverse society.
- Help all students develop a sense of personal and cultural identity that is confident and open to change.
- Acknowledge the existence of racism and take any steps necessary to prevent it, and in doing so oppose all forms of racism, xenophobia, racial prejudice and racial harassment.
- Work with parents and the wider school community to promote equality of opportunity for all.

To achieve these aims we will:

- Promote community cohesion at school through lessons' and assemblies' content, on national and global levels and implement all necessary actions in relation to ethnicity, religion or belief, and socio-economic background.
- Involve stakeholders, where appropriate, in the development and review of policy relating to Equality and Diversity.
- Publish and share our policy with the school and wider community.
- Continue our use of student language ambassadors to help inform parents and carers, and other visitors whose English skills might be weak, at parents' evenings, open days and whenever else it might be appropriate.
- Collect and analyse data to ensure all groups are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage.
- Use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for all, respond to students' diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning.
- Have high expectations of behaviour which demonstrates respect to others.
- Continue to adapt the curriculum to best suit the needs of the students.
- Take positive action as opposed to positive discrimination as described in the Act.
- Continue with our policy of early feeder school liaison.

### **Mount St Mary's Catholic High School Equality Policy**

This policy is written in the context of:

- The National Curriculum 2000
- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Part 5A of The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)2005
- The Children Act 2004
- Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice 2007
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 1986
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Every Child Matters Green Paper 2003
- National Healthy Schools Programme 1999
- The Equality Act 2010
- Schools Admissions Codes
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999

## **Responsibilities**

### **The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- The school's compliance with Equality and Diversity legislation.
- The school's implementation of an admissions policy which is fair and equitable in its treatment of all groups to ensure students are admitted without regard to ability, disability, gender or ethnic group.
- Being involved, as appropriate, in dealing with serious breaches of the policy.

### **The Headteacher**

It is the Headteacher's responsibility, in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team, to:

- Implement the policy and its strategies and procedures.
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate and relevant Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice.
- Deal with any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with guidance.
- Report annually to the Governing Body on the school's compliance with the Equality and Diversity Policy.

### **All staff**

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of harassment and bullying.
- Deal effectively with all incidents of victimisation caused by perceived differences.
- Promote an inclusive curriculum and whole school ethos which reflects our diverse society and challenges bias and stereotyping.
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on grounds of age, gender, race, colour, religion, disability or sexual orientation.
- Keep up to date with equality legislation, development and issues by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.