St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Diocesan Multi Academy Trust

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Equalities and Accessibility Policy and Plan

Adopted: November 2023 Review date: Autumn 2026

1. Introduction

At St Mary's C of E Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At St Mary's, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

As a Church school, our curriculum places an emphasis on spiritual, moral, cultural, social and emotional development. Differences and diversity are celebrated. We promote tolerance and respect for others through our Christian values, Worship, curriculum and school rules. St Mary's is a welcoming, inclusive school, in which we ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to participate and succeed.

The Equalities and Accessibility Policy and Plan includes Equality Objectives (Appendix 1) that inform school development planning and must be reviewed every three years. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's policies for Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Recruitment and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

2. School Vision

The school's Equalities Policy reflects our Christian vision:
"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34
Unconditional love underpins all we do at St Mary's Church of England Primary School. We value and embrace the individuality of every child as they discover, learn and flourish in a place of security and love. We are an inclusive school, welcoming all children with respect, understanding and dignity. We have a duty of care to the children and will demonstrate the compassion and understanding that allows all children to flourish. In the context of the Equalities Policy, the primary message of the school's vision is that we must treat all members of the school community with the dignity and respect that will allow them to flourish.

3. Principles

The policy outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors to promote equality. This involves tackling the barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for identified groups of pupils in school, ensuring there is equality of access and celebrating and valuing the heritage and strengths of groups within the school community.

We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Therefore, the principle of equality for all is evident in all our policies and practice rather than just this document.

Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. At St Mary's school, equality is a key principle for treating all people the same irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs/faith tradition, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

4. Equalities and the Law

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation. It put in place a number of duties to ensure public bodies and schools have due regard to certain 'protected' groups. The protected groups are: age, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and pregnancy / maternity.

The general duty is set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In summary, all public bodies and schools must have due regard to the need to:
1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Schools have a legal requirement to prepare and publish one or more specific equality objectives which will help them to further the three aims of the Equality Duty. The school's three-year rolling action plan (Appendix 1) is reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and informs school development planning.

5. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation of the Equalities and Accessibility Policy and action plan. The Headteacher will evaluate the effectiveness and impact of actions taken. The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Providing updates on equalities legislation and the school's responsibilities in this regard;
- Working with the designated governor responsible for equality;
- Supporting positively the evaluation activities that monitor the impact and success of the policy on pupils from different groups, e.g. SEN, Children in Care, Minority Ethnic including Traveller and EAL pupils and Free School Meals, in the following areas:
    - Pupils' progress and attainment
    - Learning and teaching
    - Behaviour discipline and exclusions
    - Attendance
    - Admissions
    - Incidents of prejudice related bullying and all forms of bullying
    - Parental involvement
    - Participation in extra-curricular and extended school activities
    - Staff recruitment and retention
    - Visits and visitors

6. Policy Commitments

Promoting Equality: Curriculum

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To achieve this, we will ensure:

- Curriculum planning reflects a commitment to equality;
- The curriculum prepares pupils for life in a diverse society and uses opportunities to reflect the background and experience of pupils and families in the school;
- There will be opportunities in the curriculum to explore concepts and issues related to identity and equality;

- The promotion of attitudes and values that challenge discriminatory behaviour and language;
- There is a range of literature in the school library that reflects the diversity in society and will appeal to all pupils;
- The use of non-stereotyped materials which reflect accurately a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles.

Promoting Equality: Achievement

There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, social background and religion. To secure the best possible outcomes we recognise that:

- Adults in the school will be expected to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity;
- It is important to identify the particular needs of individuals and groups within the school through monitoring achievement/progress data by ethnicity, gender and disability;
- Targeted interventions must be used to narrow gaps in achievement;
- We must take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- It is important to place a high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability;
- A range of teaching methods need to be used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils and that to promote pupil engagement pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in their own learning.

Promoting Equality: Ethos and Atmosphere

- At St Mary's School, we are aware that those involved in the leadership of the school community are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community;
- There should be a feeling of openness and tolerance which welcomes everyone to the school;
- The children are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect;
- The displays around the school are of a high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality and are frequently monitored;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure access for pupils and visitors (including parents) with disabilities;
- Provision is made to cater for the cultural, moral and spiritual needs of all children through planning of assemblies and classroom based and off-site activities;

- Pupils are given an effective voice, for example through the School Council and through pupil perception surveys which regularly seek their views;
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils can see themselves reflected in the school community.

Promoting Equality: Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

- The school has a separate policy for Recruitment, which includes consideration of equalities;
- Class Teacher posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants;
- Advertising is carefully worded in order to avoid discrimination;
- The Headteacher is aware of what should be done to avoid discrimination and ensure good equality practice through the recruitment and selection process. The Headteacher guides recruitment, selection and interview panels to ensure good equality practice;
- Steps are taken to encourage all parents, including those from under-represented groups, to play an active role in school life, such as requesting voluntary support and inviting all parents to attend face-to-face events, such as 'learning cafes' and meetings of the 'Friends of St Mary's School';
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored for all staff members;
- Equalities policy and practice is covered in staff inductions;
- Supply staff and other external agencies are made aware of equalities policy and practice;
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and impact.

Promoting Equality: Countering and Challenging Harassment and Bullying

- The school counters and challenges all types of discriminatory behaviour and this is made clear to staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- The school has a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with prejudice related bullying incidents and has a nominated member of staff responsible for recording and monitoring incidents;
- The school reports the number of prejudice related incidents recorded in the school to Governors every term and to the LA on request.

Promoting Equality: Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

St Mary's School aims to work in partnership with parents/carers. We:

- Take action to ensure parents/carers from all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in the full life of the school;

- Ensure that there are good channels of communication, including parent forums and surveys, to ensure parents' views are captured and acted upon;
- Encourage members of the local community to join in school activities and celebrations;
- Ensure that the parents/carers of all newly arrived pupils are made to feel welcome.

7. Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors. Our admissions arrangements are published annually by the LA.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy.

8. Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff members are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Prejudice-related incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and prejudice-related incidents are reported to the governing body on a termly basis. These incidents are reported to the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust and the Local Authority on request.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of discriminatory incident

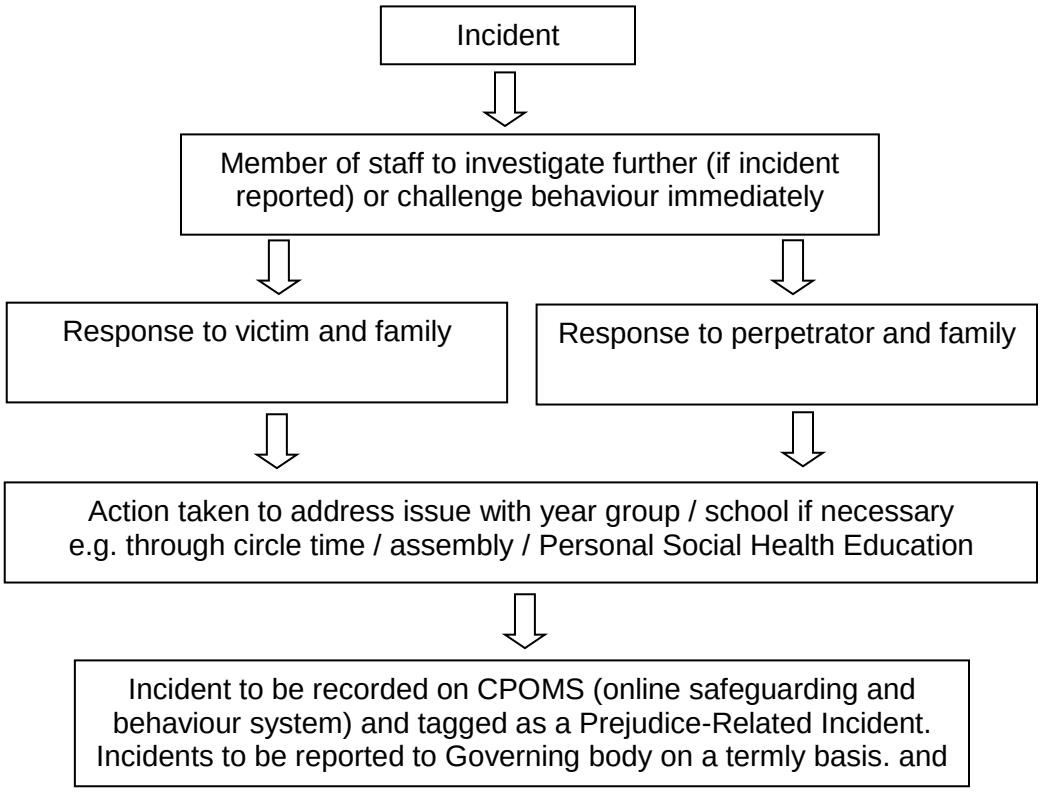
Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and reporting incidents

All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school. It is essential that prejudice-related incidents are reported and recorded clearly. All staff members are made aware of this policy and should be confident in tackling incidents of discrimination.

A procedure for responding and reporting is outlined below:



8. Disability and Accessibility

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.

Definition of disability

Disability discrimination laws developed in the 1990s when it became more widely recognised that disabled people were facing discrimination. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) originally came in force in 1995 and it was significantly amended and extended over the following 15 years, gradually bringing more protection for pupils with a disability.

The Equality Act has now taken over from the DDA. As well as supporting the rights of pupils with a disability by giving greater legal protection against discrimination, it emphasises the legal duty on education providers, employers and service providers to make reasonable adjustments so people with a disability can take part in education, use services and work.

The legal definition of disability in the Equalities Act 2010 is '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'.

The definition is designed to be as broad as possible and there are a wide variety of conditions and impairments that will be covered. Some impairments automatically meet the definition from the point of diagnosis, such as cancer, HIV and Multiple Sclerosis. People registered as blind or partially sighted are also automatically regarded as disabled under the Act.

Physical or mental impairment can include:

- physical impairments, such as mobility difficulties;
- sensory impairments, for example visual or hearing impairments;
- learning difficulties, including people with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia;
- mental health conditions which have a long-term effect;
- genetic and progressive conditions, if the condition affects your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;
- conditions which are characterised by a number of cumulative effects such as pain or fatigue;

- hidden impairments such as asthma or diabetes, if these have an effect on your day-to-day activities.

Legal duties

The Equality Act harmonises the three previous duties on disability, race and gender into one single, general Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This came into force in April 2011 and it requires public authorities, including schools, to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity;
- Foster good relations.

The Equality Act emphasises the legal duty on schools to make **reasonable adjustments** so all people can take part in education, use services and work.

'Adjustments' are changes to policies and procedures or changes to buildings to make them physically accessible. 'Adjustments' can also mean providing equipment and human support. The aim is to prevent people from a protected group, such as disability, being disadvantaged compared to people who are not from that group. Adjustments could include:

- Applying for special arrangements for examinations, such as ordering large print versions of tests for pupils with visual impairments;
- Ensuring that students with Special Educational Needs have access to appropriate resources to support their learning, such as sloping desks;
- Providing adult support for pupils with particular needs, such as learning intervention programmes.

There is no justification for failing to make a **reasonable** adjustment. However, some adjustments may not be reasonable and factors to consider include:

- The effectiveness of making the adjustment and whether it is practical to do so;
- The financial resources of the school;
- Health and safety requirements;
- The relevant interests of other people – for example if the adjustment results in significant disadvantage for other pupils.

As well as a legal obligation, complying with the general equality duty is good practice and reinforces the values and ethos of St Mary's C of E Primary School. The school aims to meet the diverse needs of our school community consistently. This results in better informed decision-making and policy development and has a positive impact on the achievement of all pupils.

9. Community cohesion

Schools have a duty to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths / beliefs, social groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

10. Responsibility for the Policy

In our school, all members of the school community have a responsibility for the promotion of equalities.

The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring that:

- The school complies with all equalities legislation relevant to the school community;
- The school's equality policy is maintained and updated regularly; and that equality schemes are easily identifiable (these may be included within the School Improvement Plan, the school's Equalities and Accessibility Objectives or may be stand alone documents);
- The actions, procedures and strategies related to the policy are implemented;
- The named Equalities Governor will have an overview, on behalf of the governing body, on all prejudice-related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to these incidents.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team has responsibility for:

- In partnership with the Governing body, providing leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- Overseeing the implementation of the Equality and Accessibility Policy;
- Co-ordinating the activities related to equality and evaluating impact;
- Ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are aware of, and comply with, the Equalities and Accessibility Policy;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support;
- Making this policy available on the school's website and on request;
- Taking appropriate action in response to racist incidents, discrimination against persons with a disability and sexual harassment and discrimination.

All school staff members have responsibility for:

- The implementation of the school equalities policy and schemes;
- Dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- Ensuring they do not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity and culture, disability, sexual orientation or other equality issues;
- Keeping up to date with equalities legislation by attending training events organised by the school or Local Authority.

Measuring the Impact of the Policy

This policy and all other relevant policies will be evaluated and monitored for their equality impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school. The school will monitor the achievement and participation of pupils from protected groups and such monitoring will feed into policy reviews.

St Mary's C of E Primary School Equality Objectives 2023-2026

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation. It put in place a number of duties to ensure public bodies and schools have due regard to certain 'protected' groups. The protected groups are: age, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and pregnancy / maternity.
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1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
Schools have a legal requirement to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives which will help them to further the three aims of the Equality Duty. The four-year rolling action plan below is reviewed each year. Further information about equality issues can be found in the school's Equality Policy.

Objective	Equality Duty	Success Criteria	Lead Person	Resources	Monitoring	Timescale
To ensure that all members of the school community feel included in school life	Advance equality of opportunity Foster good relations	• Annual review of Anti-bullying and Behaviour Policies • Review and refresh induction procedures for new children, particularly in-year moves involving mobile children • Pastoral and TA support staff to be available for 1:1 and small group support to aid transition of new pupils – surveys show they settle well • Use nurture group support at lunch time to aid transition of new pupils – surveys show they settle in well • Ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND through reasonable adjustments whenever possible, are supported to access the curriculum: o Additional adult support to access swimming and other PE lessons o Use of specialist resources as required and advised to help pupils access learning, e.g. pencil grips, fidget toys, chew toys, wobble cushions, sloping boards, coloured overlays, visual timetables etc. o Update pupils' medical information annually or sooner as required o Adapt teaching and learning to ensure, where reasonable, all pupils can access the learning / activity • Termly reviews of support plans for pupils with SEND and ongoing communication with parents • To use any opportunities to expand diversity in school leadership (e.g. governance) and be open to diverse applicants • Review and refresh recruitment and induction procedures for new staff, through review of Recruitment Policy • Include a statement about equality in advertisements for new staff • Review the Staff Handbook, used for staff and volunteer induction • When requested and it can be considered a reasonable adjustment, ensure written materials for parents are provided in accessible formats	Head School Council PSW & Thrive Practitioner SENDCo Class teachers and support staff Governors Admin staff	Pastoral & TA support staff	Personnel Committee	Policy reviews annually Review pupil induction 2024-25 Support / diversity ongoing Review recruitment and induction annually

To raise awareness of equality and diversity through training	Eliminate discrimination Foster good relations	• Ensure staff training covers equality, diversity, dealing with prejudice, role models and social action • Ensure induction covers equality issues with a statement about equality in the Staff Handbook, used for staff and volunteer induction	Head teacher	Training cost / time	Personnel Committee	Staff training 2024-25 Annual review of Staff Handbook
To ensure the curriculum promotes tolerance and reflects diversity	Advance equality of opportunity Foster good relations	• Ensure that diversity and equality are embedded into the curriculum so that these are learned routinely across the school • Leaders to monitor the effectiveness of learning about diversity and equality across the curriculum, as they review each subject, and ensure that there are successful opportunities to celebrate diverse role models • Complement embedded curriculum learning with further opportunities (e.g. national / international events such as Black History Month) to raise awareness and celebrate diverse role models	Subject leaders	Cost of leadership release built into budget	Head Teacher Standards Committee	Ongoing curriculum monitoring and implementation
To identify pupils vulnerable to under-achievement and provide additional support to close gaps	Advance equality of opportunity	• Identify pupils vulnerable to underachievement, including pupils with SEND. Small group / 1:1 intervention used to address gaps in learning. • Targeted pupils to make expected progress in Target Tracker.	Head teacher SENDCo	Tuition £1000	Standards Committee	Ongoing