



# Saint Robert Lawrence Catholic Academy Trust

## Equality Policy Statement

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy held at Academy Trust level has replaced the separate policies held by the academies within the Trust. Objectives will be reported on and published for each academy at the end of the academic year.

### 2. Legal Duties

2.1 We welcome our duties under the Race Relations 1976 as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000; the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005; and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 as amended by the Equality Act 2006 and by the Equality Act 2010.

2.2 We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

2.3 We recognise that these duties are essential for achieving the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework and that they 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.

2.4 We recognise the protected characteristics under the Equality Act:

1. Race
2. Disability
3. Sex
4. Age
5. Religion or belief
6. Sexual orientation
7. Pregnancy and maternity
8. Gender reassignment

### **3. Guiding Principles**

In fulfilling the legal duties we are guided by seven key principles:

#### **Principle 1: All learners are of equal value**

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

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whichever their gender.

#### **Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity**

3.2 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, 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, women and men are recognised.

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

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

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and nondisabled 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, women and men, and an absence of sexual harassment

#### **Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development**

3.4 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
- whichever their gender.

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

3.5 In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, 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 widely**

3.6 People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We 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.

#### **Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit**

3.7 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
- women and men, girls and boys.

#### **4. The Guiding Principles in Action**

All our policies and practices will reflect the seven guiding principles particularly in respect of:

##### **4.1 Ethos and Religious Observance**

4.1.1 As a Catholic community we strive to create an ethos which reflects Christian values and these are evident throughout each academy in our daily Acts of Worship and in displays and on our websites. We will continue to promote and express these values. However, we respect the views and practices of other beliefs and religions and allow for expression of these views, including time off to celebrate key religious festivals and wearing of items which are essential to a religion where these do not present a health and safety risk.

##### **4.2 Curriculum and Learning & Teaching**

4.2.1 We keep each curriculum area or subject under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the seven principles. Our teaching resources are scrutinised as part of departmental review. Our teaching seeks to challenge stereotypes by providing positive role models and appropriate teaching materials. We recognise that treating everyone equally does not mean treating everyone in the same way and we differentiate teaching materials to give all pupils equal access.

##### **4.3 Teaching of Religious Education**

4.3.1 Religious Education is taught from a Christian perspective with particular emphasis on the teachings of the Catholic Church. However, the curriculum for religious education is broad and balanced and allows for the exploration and understanding of other cultures and beliefs.

##### **4.4 Admissions**

4.4.1 We recognise that a significant proportion of our intake will be Catholic students and this is reflected in our Admissions Policies and Oversubscription Criteria which are fully compliant with the Admissions Code. Decisions relating to admissions are made solely on the basis of the agreed Admissions Policies which are published in advance on the academy websites. Children with a statement of special educational needs, where parents name one of our academies, are given priority for admission under the Admissions Policy.

##### **4.5 Accessibility**

4.5.1 We have a policy in place which looks specifically at accessibility for all students. Pupils with additional needs constitute a very diverse group: they include pupils with physical, emotional, behavioural, sensory or learning needs. We acknowledge that gifted and talented students have additional needs too. We seek assistance from a wide range of agencies where appropriate: for example speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, medical practitioners, social workers and psychologists. We try to ensure that pupils with additional needs are facilitated in participating in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities to the fullest possible extent. The academies work in close collaboration to ensure that the transition between phases is as smooth as possible for students.

#### **4.6 Responsibility to our Wider Community**

4.6.1 We strive as a Catholic community to develop responsible citizens with a strong sense of moral purpose. This is achieved through the many cross curricular projects and activities taking place, through our links with local parishes and through our charity fund raising to support local causes.

#### **4.7 Positive Behaviour Strategy**

4.7.1 We operate a positive behaviour strategy which rewards appropriate behaviour based on our values and sets clear expectations relating to unacceptable behaviour, in particular any form of prejudice:

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

Each academy has age appropriate behaviour policies in place to ensure that prejudice of any kind is challenged.

4.7.2 Staff follow guidance on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

4.7.3 We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents that arise in our academies and how they were dealt with.

#### **4.8 Recruitment and Selection**

4.8.1 Our policy on recruitment and selection follows model policy guidelines and ACAS best practice. Appointments are made based on merit, matching knowledge, skills and attributes to the essential and desirable criteria for the post. Our selection procedures are fair, transparent and recorded. Selection panels include at least one member trained in safer recruitment. Where employees have a disability then we will make every effort to provide reasonable adjustments to the working environment.

#### **4.9 Staff Development and Training**

4.9.1 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. Priorities for training are identified in the relevant Improvement Plan for each academy.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

- 5.1 The Academy Trust together with the relevant Local Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that each academy complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- 5.2 The Chair of Governors in each academy will monitor progress against the implementation of this policy.
- 5.3 The Headteacher at each academy 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.
- 5.4 All staff are expected to:
- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
  - deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
  - identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
  - support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
  - keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.
- 5.5 All pupils are expected to:
- comply with the classroom codes appropriate to them and work with others in their classroom
  - report any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
  - behave appropriately at all times in line with their academy behaviour policy

## **6. Information and resources**

- 6.1 We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff, Directors and Governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and parents via our websites.
- 6.2 All staff, Directors and Governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

## **7. Breaches of the policy**

- 7.1 Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other academy trust policies are dealt with, as determined by the relevant Headteacher and Local Governing Body in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

## **8. Monitoring and evaluation**

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy are what make a difference.

- 8.1 Each year each academy draws up a school improvement plan, setting out the specific objectives and projects we shall undertake to address the outcomes of our monitoring.
- 8.2 We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.
- 8.3 In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to attainment, broken down as appropriate according to various groups such as, gender, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, pupils with English as an additional language, those who are Looked After by the Local Authority or adopted from care and those disadvantaged or vulnerable students. Progress towards their targets is monitored from when they join the academy trust to when they leave and reports made to Local Governing Bodies. We aim to give all students every opportunity to make progress relative to their starting points. A full analysis of examination results is available annually as part of the RaiseOnline statistical report.