

ST MARGARET WARD CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Equal Opportunities Policy



Policy Adopted	Next Review	Author
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Equal Opportunities Policy

A Definition

- Equal opportunities with a school ensures that everybody has the right to learn, teach or work in a secure and supportive environment.
- All individuals feel valued and have the opportunity to develop to their full potential within a context of mutual respect, justice and fairness. There should be equal access by everyone and for everyone. This is only possible if there is collective responsibility to challenge all possible discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, class and age.

The Legal Framework

The Educational Reform Act (1988) includes the following issues of equal opportunities:

1. The curriculum should be broadly balanced, promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and within society.
2. The curriculum prepares children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Mission Statement

- At St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy, we are committed to supporting each other in a positive and fair learning environment.
- We will promote understanding and mutual respect of all members of our society, regardless of difference. This will improve the quality of life for everyone within our school and lead to the development of a more harmonious and equal society. Everyone within the school community should have the confidence to challenge any social divisions or prejudices that threatens that commitment. We accept that we are all learners, working in a team, where diversity is truly accepted and valued. Any member of our community who does not share our commitment to equal opportunities will be responded to honestly, sensitively and fairly in the spirit of this policy statement.

**As a member of the community of St Margaret Ward,
whether as a pupil or staff or visitor:**

I have a right:

- To be valued and respected
- To have the opportunity to learn and to do the best I can
- To receive help when I am in difficulty
- To be treated fairly. This means that no-one will treat me unfairly
- To be and to feel safe
- To be able to offer my feelings, experiences, talents and opinions when appropriate
- To work in a safe, healthy and clean environment
- To have access to all aspects of the learning environment where appropriate

I have a responsibility:

- To value and respect all members of the school community and its visitors
- To learn and allow others to learn
- To treat everyone as individuals. This means I will treat no one unfairly
- To allow other people to express their feelings, experiences, talents and opinions when appropriate
- To care for the school environment

These Rights and Responsibilities mean that careful consideration will need to be given to all aspects of our school life:

Pastoral Implications

- It is the responsibility of all staff to promote equality, whatever the gender, race or disability of the students. All staff should, for example, take positive action where incidents of racial abuse, sexism or insensitivity with regard to disability occur and show by their example that all students and cultures are valued.

Admissions

The school and particularly those responsible for the new intake, should ensure the following:

1. Adequate consultation with feeder primary schools
2. Careful consideration when placing students in classes or groups to ensure a fair and representative balance, which is especially important in a setting situation. In making these decisions, it should be borne in mind that, in case of a bi-lingual or a disabled student, a student's present attainment may conceal potential ability.
3. During Year 7, students' progress should be monitored regularly so that, when appropriate a student's set may be changed.

Names

- All staff should ensure that student's names are spelt correctly and pronounced properly. We need to be sensitive to different naming traditions and encourage students to respect and accept names from cultures other than their own. On entry the students' parents and guardians name must be correctly established and recorded with due regard to the appropriate ethnic or cultural origin; and there should be positive encouragement for students and staff to use the correct form of the name.

Disabilities

- All staff should ensure they are familiar with the nature of the disability and what is required to enable the student with the disability to have every opportunity to succeed. Where appropriate, professional help and assistance should be sought and used.

Contact with Parents

- All parents should be fully involved in the education of their children and in the life of the school. It is hoped that parents from all backgrounds are represented on such parent/teacher bodies as the Board of Governors and School Parent/Teacher Association (P.T.A).
- Communications to parents should be written in a language appropriate for the family concerned.

Awareness of Cultural Diversity, Gender and Disability

- All staff - but particularly Heads of Year and Form Tutors - should be aware of, and sensitive to, the cultural backgrounds and needs of their students, as well as seeing them as individuals. The school will seek to establish an ethos and atmosphere where the cultural diversity of its students is valued and seen as enriching.

Student Development

- The pastoral system should encourage all students to develop their abilities to the full. Students should be set positive goals, especially at those times in their life at school when key decisions are made and when guidance may therefore be essential to prevent under-achievement. External examination results will be monitored.

Extra-Curricular Activities

- All children should be encouraged to participate in the extra-curricular life of the school. No student should be effectively excluded or disadvantaged on the grounds of gender, race or disability.

Curriculum Implications

The curriculum, explicit and hidden, should aim (through the whole school policies, subject syllabuses, the tutorial programme and all curriculum planning) to promote racial equality by:

- creating an understanding of, and interest in, different environment, societies, systems and cultures across the world;
- ensuring that syllabuses and resources are reviewed to make them relevant to boys and girls in a multi-cultural society;
- giving a balanced view of other countries, so that the students' conceptions of them are not restricted to stereotypes, and so that they appreciate the strengths and values of ways of life different from their own;
- studying scientific achievements outside the western world; and finally,
- by providing positive role models for all students.

Each individual teacher should aim to teach his or her subject in such a way that:

- children from all backgrounds are equally motivated; and
- the subject matter of each lesson is made clearly accessible to all children, especially those for whom English is a second language.

Implementation

The school's commitment to Equal Opportunities will be implemented in the following manner:

The Principal and Vice Principal

Take overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Equal Opportunities Policy by:

- line managing by the Senior Management Team;
- allocating sufficient resources to meet equal opportunity priorities;
- communicating and liaising with the LEA over racist incidents (see Racial Equality Policy) and other issues;
- ensuring good communications and a high profile for equal opportunities issues by including them in Staff Bulletin, School Development Plan, reports to Governors and other Policies;
- ensuring that the recruitment and promotion of colleagues is handled fairly and appropriately;
- and supporting the development of positive links with the community.

Other members of the SLT

- Arrange INSET / Induction to ensure that all colleagues are aware of school policies, practices and relevant legal frameworks.
- Ensure there is an assembly programme that takes account of equal opportunities issues and racism.

- Ensure that the formal curriculum provides opportunities for students to explore race, gender and other issues.
- Support the Heads of Department in developing schemes of learning that identify issues of equal opportunity.
- Monitor display work around the school to ensure that it reflects and celebrates cultural and racial diversity.

Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated by Staff, Senior Leaders and the Governors in the Autumn Term 2020.