Equal Opportunities Policy

Approved by the Headteacher and Governing Body on 21.09.2026

Reviewed: 09.26
To be reviewed: 09.28

St Vincent's is committed to work to eradicate discrimination and prejudice and to create equality of opportunity for every member of the school community. We recognise and promote an individual's qualities irrespective of age, marital status, gender, disability, race, religion, cultural belief and sexual orientation.

Governors, staff, parents/carers and children make up the school community and it is expected that all members will accept personal responsibility in the practical application of the Equal Opportunities policy. Opportunities will be created to raise awareness and value the contribution of everyone.

Key Objectives

- To promote equality of opportunity
- To promote good relations between people with diverse backgrounds and needs
- To eliminate harassment, unlawful and institutional discrimination and victimisation

We recognise that institutional structures, practices and procedures can be discriminatory. The School is committed to complying with all United Kingdom anti-discriminatory legislation, which can help the fight against disadvantage and discrimination.

Non Discriminatory Language

Discussion on the use of language can be trivialised. However, it is widely accepted that the language we use can reinforce prejudice. Everyday words and phrases can help to form and perpetuate discrimination.

The school requires that language is used appropriately and with sensitivity in order to maintain an environment which is welcoming, non-discriminatory and safe for all people. We will take steps to eradicate language and behaviour which deliberately offends the school and its community.

School Organisation

Race equality is a fundamental part of our whole school community. All subjects and practical activities can be areas enabling staff to explore concepts such as race, racism, discrimination and prejudice.

Respect is shown for all pupils and staff. In all aspects of culture and diversity our school community acknowledges and celebrates all faith traditions and cultures through recognition of festivals and important traditions thereby increasing understanding and respect.

Fair Recruitment Selection Procedures

Recruitment and selection is crucial to the School's commitment to equal opportunities and relevant safeguarding processes. Therefore the school has adopted the following principles:

- Recruitment must result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in respect of experience, qualifications, ability and aptitude. Age, marital status, gender, disability, race, religious and cultural beliefs and sexual orientation will not be considerations.
- Details of vacancies will be published to encourage applications from a range of suitably qualified people.
- Interviews are to be conducted by those with relevant experience/training and questions will be relevant to the job description and job/person specification.

Harassment, Discrimination, Bullying and Victimisation

The school has formal procedures for dealing with complaints regarding acts of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Definitions

The School derives the following definitions that appear in its policy statement from the relevant equal opportunities legislation:

- **Harassment:** is unlawful. It is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can include behaviour that is offensive. It may be intentional bullying which is obvious or violent, but it can also be unintentional or subtle and insidious.
- **Direct discrimination**; is unlawful. It occurs when a person is treated less favourably directly on grounds of for example, race, gender, disability, religion or age.
- **Indirect discrimination**: is unlawful. It occurs where a criterion, policy, procedure, practice or condition which applies equally to everyone has the effect of disadvantaging people on the grounds of, for example, race, gender, disability, religion or age and which cannot be justified.
- **Institutional discrimination**: is where, for example, an organisation's processes, procedures, attitudes, behaviours or organisational structures, through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping, amount to less favourable treatment. Institutional discrimination is unlawful.
- **Bullying** – persistent actions, criticism or personal abuse, either in public or private, which humiliates, intimidates, undermines or demeans an individual.
- **Victimisation:** is unlawful and occurs when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

Promoting Race Equality

- It is the aim of this school community to ensure that all members, irrespective of their racial origin, are allowed to achieve the level of success and self-respect that they deserve.
- It is our statutory duty to provide our pupils and staff an environment in which racist assumptions, attitudes and behaviour are constantly challenged.
- In order to maintain a sense of security within the school environment, all members of the school community must know and fully understand our consistent opposition to racism.

- All staff will seek to ensure that pupils and staff of all races are secure in a sense of trust that any concerns will be taken seriously; to be complacent or remain uninvolved simply perpetuates racism.

Procedures for Dealing with Racist Incidents

The school will keep a written record of all racist incidents on CPOMS. This will record the nature of the incident as well as the action taken and will be reported to the Governing Body as appropriate.

Ongoing Development

To continuously update curriculum materials to promote tolerance and respect for all, through Citizenship, RSE, PSHEE and annual consultation with pupils.

Disability Equality Scheme

The school will implement its Disability Equality Duty to:

- promote equality of opportunity for disabled people and other people;
- prevent unlawful discrimination;
- prevent harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage disabled people to participate in public life
- take account of a person's disabilities.

Curriculum

Pupils in this school have special educational needs due to levels of visual and sensory impairment, sometimes together with other physical disability and/or associated learning difficulties. They have the right to obtain the maximum benefit possible from the curriculum.

The school, therefore, has a duty to ensure that its teachers have the training, expertise, support and resources necessary to relate to the special needs of all pupils. Consequently, flexibility in organisation of resources and teaching style is required to supply a range of learning strategies to suit individual special needs.

The issue of Equal Opportunities will permeate aspects of the curriculum where appropriate.

Education in this school is concerned with the whole child and pupils will be valued as individuals.

Governors are charged by the 1988 Education Reform Act, in respect of pupils attending their school to ensure there is no discrimination. Under the Act, Governing Bodies have a duty to secure a curriculum which:

> ***"promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development"*** of all pupils and ensure the curriculum prepares them "***for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life"***

These legal responsibilities mean that the Governors of this school will ensure that the curriculum which is offered to, and experienced by, each pupil is both accessible and appropriate.

Learning Provision for Equal Opportunities - Checklist:

We will:

- actively challenge stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination,
- be willing to take on controversial issues, including racism and sexism,
- use families from a variety of different backgrounds when choosing examples,
- value the social background and identity of the children in the classroom,
- value the language diversity of children in the classroom.

Religious Education

- The school has a Roman Catholic Foundation and Catholic pupils are taught in accordance with the principles and practice of this faith.
- Pupils of other faiths are equally respected and, where possible, provision is made for the practice of those faiths.
- All faiths are valued and respected.
- Pupils with no religious belief will not be required to participate in any forms of religious worship.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from lessons in religious education.
- The school follows a balanced Religious Education programme that caters for moral dimensions and awareness of various world religions and their practices.

- The same programme covers many aspects of Personal and Social Education and particularly examines the concepts of race and gender as social categories and shows how both racism and sexism are features of society that can be overcome.

Cultural Awareness

Cultural and religious requirements are supported through the following areas:

- Medical
- Culinary – menu choices
- Religious education and requirements, withdrawal from RE lessons or collective worship, prayer room available with nearby washing facilities
- Social
- Adaptations to school uniform

Other requirements are welcome from parental and pupil requests.

The school's programme of Collective Worship celebrates the cultural and religious mix within the school. The majority of collective worship sessions (assemblies) follow Catholic and the broader Christian teaching. Celebrations from other Faiths throughout the year include stories from:

- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism