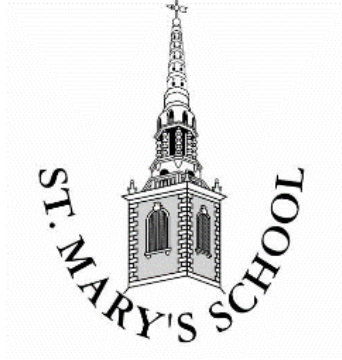




Equality, Race and Gender Policy

Policy Agreed: 23rd September 2026

Review date: Autumn 2027

(Interim) Executive Head Teacher: Anthony David

Chair of Governors: Rebecca Shilling

We believe that everyone is precious and loved by God. We aspire to let our light shine in all that we do. We nurture and empower one another to flourish. Together we shine in our world by showing compassion and by serving others. Let God's light shine through us.

Our calling

“So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

Every person who walks through the doors of St Mary's - every child, every parent, every member of staff, every visitor - is made in the image of God. That theological conviction is the substantive ground of our commitment to equality. It is also the reason we take complaint of discrimination seriously and the reason we hold ourselves to a high standard in fostering good relations across our diverse community.

Status of this document

This policy fulfils the school's statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to publish information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives. It is approved by the Governing Body and is published on the school website in the statutory information section. It applies to every member of the school community: pupils, parents, staff, governors, contractors, volunteers and visitors.

The title of this policy names race and gender alongside equality more broadly. This reflects our judgement that these are areas where particular care, clarity and commitment matter for our school community in 2026. The policy applies in the same way, with the same rigour, to every protected characteristic recognised under the Equality Act 2010.

1. Vision and Principles

St Mary's is a Church of England primary school. Our vision is rooted in the words of Jesus: “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). Our equality framework is grounded not only in law but in the Christian conviction that every person bears the image of God and is owed the dignity, respect, and care that conviction implies.

“Love your neighbour as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39)

This policy sets out how we comply with the Equality Act 2010 - including the Public Sector Equality Duty - and how we live the school's commitment to dignity for every member of the community. It addresses each of the protected characteristics recognised in law, with particular substantive sections on race and gender. It is read alongside our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, our PSHE/RSHE Policy, our SEND Policy, our Anti-Bullying Policy, our Behaviour Policy, our Staff Code of Conduct, our Safer Recruitment Policy, and the wider policy framework of the school.

1.1 Our seven principles

1. Every person bears the image of God.

Our equality commitment is not a matter of compliance alone; it is a theological conviction. Children, families and colleagues meet each other at St Mary's in the awareness that each one is precious.

2. The law is our floor, not our ceiling.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out what we must do. Our Christian vision invites us to do more - to actively foster good relations, to remove barriers, and to call out conduct that does not honour the dignity of any person.

3. Equality and equity both matter.

Treating every child the same is not the same as giving every child what they need. Some children require reasonable adjustments, additional support, or specific provision to enjoy equal access to the life of the school. We take that responsibility seriously.

4. We name what is not named generically.

We name race, sex and gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and the other protected characteristics. We name racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other forms of prejudice. Generic language about 'discrimination' alone is not enough.

5. We are honest about complexity.

Some questions in 2026 are genuinely contested. We engage with them honestly, in line with current statutory guidance, with care for the children, families and staff affected. We do not pretend questions are simple when they are not.

6. Reporting matters.

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation are reported, recorded, and addressed. We do not normalise, minimise, or look past prejudiced behaviour or language. Children learn that the adults take it seriously.

7. We learn and we change.

Our practice is reviewed regularly. Our equality objectives are evidence-based and meaningful. We listen to children, families and colleagues whose lived experience helps us see what we may otherwise miss.

2. Status, Scope and Related Documents

2.1 Status

This policy is approved by the Governing Body of St Mary's CofE Primary School. It fulfils the statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 to publish information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives. The policy is reviewed annually; the equality objectives are reviewed at least every four years and updated as required (Section 8 and Appendix A).

2.2 Who this policy applies to

- All pupils on roll at St Mary's, including pupils in our Reception classes and Key Stages 1 and 2
- All staff, including the Headteacher, teaching staff, support staff, office staff, premises staff, lunchtime supervisors, and any others working at the school
- All governors and trustees in their school-facing capacity
- All parents, carers, and family members in their interactions with the school
- All volunteers, contractors, supply staff and visitors
- All applicants for posts and for school places

2.3 Where this policy applies

- All school premises, school activities, school trips, and school-related events on and off site
- Online activity related to the school - including school systems, school-related social media, and conduct that engages the school's name or interests
- All decisions made by the school; admissions, curriculum, provision, behaviour, exclusion, recruitment, employment, services bought in by the school
- Conduct between members of the school community that is connected to the school

2.4 Related documents

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- PSHE / RSHE Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment in Education Policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Religious Education curriculum and Collective Worship policy
- DfE 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools' (departmental advice)
- EHRC: Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England
- Church of England: 'Valuing All God's Children' (2019)
- LDBS guidance for Voluntary Aided Church of England schools

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

3.1 Principal legislation

- Equality Act 2010 - the principal statute, including ss.4-12 (protected characteristics), Part 5 (work), Part 6 (education), s.149 (the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 - publication requirements
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 - positive duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees
- Education Act 2002, s.78 - duty to provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development
- Children Act 1989 and 2004 - the welfare framework
- Children and Families Act 2014 - SEND provisions
- Human Rights Act 1998 - ECHR rights, including freedom of religion and belief, expression, and private and family life
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) - see Section 7

3.2 Statutory and regulatory guidance

- DfE: 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools' - departmental advice
- EHRC: 'Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England'
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (statutory from 1 September 2026), particularly the provisions on safeguarding, online harms, and (paras 250-262) on gender-questioning children incorporating the Cass Review
- DfE: Statutory RSHE Guidance (revised July 2025; in force from 2026–27)
- DfE: Behaviour in Schools (current version)
- DfE: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance (August 2024)
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Cass Review (Final Report, April 2024) - as relevant to the school's safeguarding and welfare framework, integrated through KCSIE 2026
- Church of England: 'Valuing All God's Children' (2019)
- LDBS guidance for Voluntary Aided Church of England schools

4. The Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics. Seven of these apply directly to pupils in schools; all nine apply to staff, parents and other adults connected to the school.

Protected characteristic	Application at St Mary's
Race	All pupils, staff, families. Includes ethnic or national origin, colour, and nationality.
Sex	All pupils, staff, families. Refers to legal sex (male or female).
Disability	All pupils, staff, families. As defined in s.6 of the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and

	long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Religion or belief	All pupils, staff, families. Includes any religion, belief, or lack of religion / belief.
Sexual orientation	All pupils, staff, families.
Gender reassignment	All pupils, staff, families. The protected characteristic applies where a person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process to reassign their gender.
Pregnancy and maternity	Staff and families. (Does not apply to pupils as a school protected characteristic, but the school responds appropriately to any pregnancy of a pupil under safeguarding and pastoral arrangements.)
Age	Staff and adults connected to the school. (Does not apply to pupils as a school protected characteristic.)
Marriage and civil partnership	Staff. (Does not apply to pupils.)

5. Definitions

Term	Definition (drawn from the Equality Act 2010 and EHRC guidance)
Direct discrimination	Treating a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic than the school would treat someone without that characteristic.
Indirect discrimination	Applying a provision, criterion or practice that puts persons sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared to others, where this cannot be objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
Discrimination by association	Treating a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic of someone they are associated with (e.g. their child or their parent).
Discrimination by perception	Treating a person less favourably because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic, whether or not they actually do.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating the person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation	Treating a person less favourably because they have made (or supported) a complaint of discrimination, or because they may do so.
Reasonable adjustment	A change to the way things are normally done, to remove or reduce a substantial disadvantage faced by a disabled person. The duty applies in school admissions, education, and access to services and benefits provided by the school.
Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	The duty, under s.149 Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to the need to: (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; (b) advance equality of opportunity; (c) foster good relations between persons sharing a protected characteristic and those who do not.
Due regard	Active, conscious consideration. Not a tick-box exercise. The court tests this by what the decision-maker actually thought about, with evidence.
Positive action	Lawful steps taken to enable persons who share a protected characteristic and who are at a disadvantage, or who have particular needs, or whose participation is disproportionately low, to overcome that disadvantage - e.g. targeted study support.

6. What is Prohibited

6.1 The prohibitions

Under the Equality Act 2010, St Mary's does not, and will not:

- Discriminate directly or indirectly against any pupil, applicant, member of staff, or other person on the basis of a protected characteristic
- Harass any person on the basis of a protected characteristic
- Victimise any person who has raised, supported, or given evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination
- Discriminate by association - e.g. treating a child less favourably because of a parent's protected characteristic
- Discriminate by perception - e.g. treating a child less favourably because of an assumption about a protected characteristic
- Fail to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled pupil, parent, or member of staff
- Fail to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty

6.2 Lawful exceptions and tensions

Some areas of practice involve permissible distinctions or genuine tensions of rights. The school engages with these honestly, in line with statutory guidance:

- Religious education and collective worship at a Voluntary Aided Church of England school have specific statutory provisions; the school operates within those provisions while honouring the right of parents to withdraw

- Single-sex provisions in specific contexts (e.g. some sports activities for older primary pupils, single-sex changing arrangements at swimming) are permitted where the law allows
- Genuine occupational requirements may apply in certain employment contexts at a Church school
- Where rights tensions arise (e.g. between freedom of religion or belief and other protected characteristics), the school takes legal advice as needed and acts on a reasoned, evidence-informed basis with the welfare of the children as the paramount consideration

7. The Public Sector Equality Duty in Practice

7.1 The three limbs

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires us to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 What 'due regard' means

Due regard is active, conscious consideration. It cannot be inferred from generic policies or after-the-fact justifications. At St Mary's we discharge due regard by:

- Considering equality implications before, not after, decisions are made
- Recording the consideration where the decision is significant (the equality impact assessment process - see Section 19)
- Reviewing decisions and arrangements regularly to check that the equality position remains appropriate
- Listening to children, families, and colleagues whose lived experience may surface issues we would otherwise miss
- Acting promptly where we identify that an arrangement is having an unintended adverse equality effect

7.3 Advancing equality of opportunity

Advancing equality of opportunity means more than the absence of discrimination. It means actively:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages connected to a protected characteristic (e.g. additional reading support for pupils whose home language is not English)
- Meeting the particular needs of persons sharing a protected characteristic where these differ from the needs of others (e.g. specific sensory provision for autistic pupils)

- Encouraging persons sharing a protected characteristic to participate where their participation is disproportionately low (e.g. encouraging girls into specific STEM-related activities; encouraging boys into specific arts and pastoral roles)

7.4 Fostering good relations

Fostering good relations means actively:

- Tackling prejudice
- Promoting understanding
- Building a community in which difference is welcomed and not merely tolerated
- Through the curriculum, collective worship, the wider life of the school, and our own behaviour, modelling for our children what good relations look like

8. Equality Objectives

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require schools to publish equality objectives at least once every four years. St Mary's' current equality objectives are set out in Appendix A. They are:

- Specific, measurable, and time-bound
- Related to one or more of the protected characteristics
- Connected to one or more of the three limbs of the PSED
- Informed by evidence - the school's data, pupil voice, family feedback, staff voice, and external benchmarks
- Reviewed annually for progress and refreshed at least every four years

The objectives are agreed by the Governing Body, included in the School Improvement Plan, and reported on annually. Progress is published on the school website. Where an objective is not on track, the Governing Body considers whether the approach needs adjustment.

9. Race

9.1 Our commitment

What we are committed to

St Mary's is committed to being a school where every child, family and member of staff is welcome regardless of race, ethnicity, colour, nationality, or national origin. We name racism explicitly because generic anti-discrimination language sometimes does not name what is actually happening. Racism, in any of its forms, has no place in our school.

9.2 What this means in practice

- All pupils, regardless of race or ethnicity, are entitled to expect respect, fair treatment, and full access to the life of the school
- Racist language, conduct, or material is not tolerated - from pupils, staff, parents, or anyone else connected to the school. Incidents are recorded, addressed, and where appropriate reported to the LA

- Antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, and other forms of racial prejudice are explicitly named and addressed
- The curriculum reflects the diversity of the world and of our community - including in the texts pupils read, the histories they study, the artists, scientists and writers they encounter, and the people whose stories shape their understanding of human achievement
- RE and collective worship engage authentically and respectfully with the school's Christian foundation while welcoming the religious and cultural diversity of our pupils' lives
- Staff, governor and pupil bodies are recruited and built with attention to creating a school in which our pupils see themselves represented in the adults around them
- Pupil progress data is monitored by ethnicity, with action where any group is consistently underperforming or facing disproportionate exclusion or behaviour interventions
- The school engages with families on matters of culture, faith and identity - including names, dietary requirements, holy days, and dress - with respect
- Anti-racist education is part of how we form our pupils - grounded in age-appropriate teaching, and in the everyday practice of the school
- The Christian theological conviction that all humanity is made in the image of God is the substantive foundation of our anti-racism, not an alternative to it

9.3 Reporting and addressing racist incidents

Racist incidents - whether between pupils, between adults, or between pupil and adult - are taken seriously. The school:

- Records all racist incidents centrally, in line with LA reporting requirements
- Investigates promptly and proportionately
- Takes action under the Behaviour Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, the Anti-Bullying Policy, or the relevant procedure
- Supports the affected child, family or colleague pastorally
- Engages parents where their child has been affected, or where their child has been responsible
- Reflects on patterns over time and adjusts practice accordingly

9.4 Curriculum, history and diverse representation

Pupils at St Mary's encounter, through our curriculum, the breadth of the human story - including the contributions, struggles, and presence of people of many backgrounds in British and global history. We teach an honest curriculum, age-appropriate to primary children, that tells true stories. We do not romanticise, sanitise or omit difficult histories - including the histories of slavery, empire, migration and racism in this country. We do this in a way that is age-appropriate, accurate, and rooted in good educational practice.

9.5 Christian foundation and racial justice

As a Church of England school we draw on the Church's historic and present commitment to racial justice, including the work of the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce and the Diocesan

racial justice commitments. We hold these alongside other resources for our work in this area. The unifying theme - that every person bears the image of God - grounds our action.

10. Sex and Gender

10.1 Definitions used in this section

The Equality Act 2010 protects 'sex' (male or female, the legal sex of a person) and 'gender reassignment' (where a person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process to reassign their gender). This policy uses these terms in their statutory sense. Where the term 'gender' is used in this policy more generally, it is used in keeping with current statutory and educational usage.

10.2 Our commitment

What we are committed to

Every child at St Mary's, regardless of sex, is entitled to the full life of the school: the curriculum, the friendships, the opportunities, the leadership, the encouragement to flourish in any direction. Sexism, in any form, has no place in our school. We pay specific attention to ensuring that gendered assumptions - about ability, aspiration, behaviour, or interest - do not constrain any of our pupils.

10.3 What this means in practice

- All curriculum subjects, opportunities, clubs, and roles are open to all pupils regardless of sex
- Reading materials, displays, and the visible life of the school reflect a diverse range of girls' and boys' stories, achievements, and aspirations
- Sexist language and conduct are not tolerated, including casual sexism that might otherwise pass unremarked. Adults model the standard
- Particular attention is paid to gendered patterns in pupil progress, behaviour, exclusion, and engagement - with action where any pattern suggests intervention is needed
- Specific attention is paid to encouraging girls in mathematics, science, and technology, and boys in reading, the arts, and pastoral / caring roles, where data or pupil voice indicates this would be helpful
- Pupils are taught about respect between sexes through PSHE, RSHE, and the wider life of the school
- Sex-based provisions that are permitted by law (e.g. single-sex changing arrangements at swimming, certain single-sex provisions for older primary pupils where appropriate) are operated transparently and lawfully
- The school takes seriously its Worker Protection Act 2023 duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of staff (Section 14)

10.4 Curriculum and the wider life of the school

Our PSHE/RSHE curriculum (see PSHE/RSHE Policy) addresses healthy relationships, respect, consent (in age-appropriate forms), gender stereotypes, and the dignity of the body. The curriculum is delivered in line with the July 2025 statutory RSHE Guidance and our duty to balance teaching with parental rights. Collective worship and RE engage with the dignity of every person and the call to live with kindness toward all.

11. Gender-Questioning Children

This section addresses pupils who are exploring or questioning their gender identity. The legal and ethical landscape in 2026 is genuinely complex; the school engages with that complexity honestly, in line with current statutory guidance, with the welfare of the children as the paramount consideration.

11.1 The framework

Our approach to gender-questioning children is informed by:

- The statutory provisions on gender-questioning children in KCSIE 2026 (paras 250-262), in force from 1 September 2026
- The Cass Review (Final Report, April 2024) and its findings, which are integrated into KCSIE 2026
- The Equality Act 2010, including the protected characteristics of sex and gender reassignment
- The Church of England's commitment, set out in 'Valuing All God's Children' (2019), to the dignity of every child
- Our safeguarding duties under KCSIE 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Section 15 of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2026-27, which addresses this area in detail

11.2 Our posture

How we approach gender-questioning children

Where a pupil at St Mary's is exploring or questioning their gender, our posture is one of pastoral care, professional judgement, and adherence to current statutory guidance. We do not initiate action; we respond with care to the pupil and family. We do not promote particular pathways; we provide a safe, kind, school-appropriate space in which a child can be a child. We follow KCSIE 2026 in our specific decisions.

11.3 Specific provisions

Drawing from the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2026:

- Cautious, watchful, and exploratory approach - the school does not affirm without consideration, but neither does it dismiss
- Parental involvement is the default in all but the most exceptional safeguarding circumstances; KCSIE 2026 is explicit that involving parents is the default in "the vast majority of cases"

- Schools and colleges are not the lead clinical decision-maker; we work alongside families and clinicians where they are involved
- Safeguarding considerations are the determinant in any decision; the welfare of the child is paramount
- Single-sex spaces and single-sex sports follow current statutory guidance and are managed with sensitivity
- Bullying or harassment of any pupil on the basis of perceived or actual gender identity is taken seriously and is not tolerated, in line with this policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Where a child or family raises concerns or wishes to discuss arrangements, the school responds with care, with the DSL involved, and with appropriate documentation
- Staff do not take unilateral action; decisions involve the DSL and the Headteacher
- Confidentiality is observed appropriately, but cannot override safeguarding obligations

11.4 Christian framing

As a Church of England school, our engagement is grounded in the conviction that every child is precious, made in the image of God, and worthy of dignity and care. 'Valuing All God's Children' (2019) provides our framework for the pastoral and educational dimensions of this work. We hold the law, the statutory safeguarding guidance, and the Church's teaching together - not in tension, but each informing our practice.

11.5 Where we will not go

To be clear about what this section does not commit the school to:

- The school will not affirm, without proper consideration, a particular gender identity for a primary-age pupil
- The school will not exclude parents from significant decisions, except where a documented safeguarding risk (per KCSIE 2026) makes that necessary
- The school will not engage in clinical or quasi-clinical advice
- The school will not adopt language or practice that is not aligned with current statutory guidance
- Equally, the school will not bully, isolate, or fail in its safeguarding obligations to any pupil who is gender-questioning. Pastoral care is offered to every child

12. Disability and SEND

Disability is a protected characteristic. The school complies with the Equality Act 2010's provisions on disability, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments. Detailed provision for pupils with SEND is set out in the SEND Policy. In summary at St Mary's:

- We do not discriminate against any disabled pupil, parent or member of staff in admission, education, employment or any other school function
- We anticipate the needs of disabled pupils and make reasonable adjustments - to admissions arrangements, the curriculum, behaviour expectations, school trips, the physical environment, communications, and the wider life of the school

- We make reasonable adjustments for disabled members of staff, in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and our HR practice
- Auxiliary aids and services are provided where required, including through the SEN provision and beyond it
- Our Accessibility Plan (statutory under the Equality Act 2010 Schedule 10) addresses the physical environment, the curriculum, and the provision of information - reviewed every three years and published
- Bullying or harassment of any pupil because of disability is not tolerated and is recorded under the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Particular attention is paid to the multiple, and sometimes invisible, needs of pupils with SEND — including those with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, mental health needs, and physical or sensory disabilities

13. Religion and Belief

13.1 Our distinctive Christian foundation

St Mary's is a Church of England school. Our Christian foundation is the school's distinctive character: the curriculum, collective worship, RE, the school's ethos, the values pupils encounter daily. We welcome families of all faiths and of no faith, and our pupils come from many religious and non-religious backgrounds. We are a school in which the Christian foundation is honoured - and in which every pupil and family is honoured.

13.2 What this means in practice

- Religious Education at St Mary's is taught in line with the LDBS Diocesan syllabus and applicable statutory provisions
- Collective worship is daily and broadly Christian in character, in line with the school's designation
- Parents have the right to withdraw their child from RE and from collective worship; the school engages with such requests respectfully and provides appropriate alternative arrangements
- Pupils' religious identity is honoured - in dietary provision, in dress (in line with the Uniform Policy and reasonable accommodation for religious dress), in observance of holy days, and in the way their identity is reflected in school life
- Religious harassment including antisemitism and Islamophobia - is named, taken seriously, and addressed
- Pupils encounter, through RE and the wider curriculum, the major world religions and non-religious worldviews with respect, accuracy, and care
- Staff of all faiths and none are welcomed, and are expected to support and uphold the school's Christian ethos in their work, regardless of personal belief

13.3 Genuine occupational requirement

In a small number of senior posts at the school, the post-holder may be required to be a practising Christian - this is a genuine occupational requirement under Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010, applicable to certain roles in a Voluntary Aided Church of England school. Such requirements are stated openly in recruitment materials and operated lawfully (see the Safer Recruitment in Education Policy).

14. Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic. At St Mary's:

- We do not discriminate against any pupil, family or member of staff on the basis of sexual orientation
- Homophobic and biphobic language and conduct are not tolerated. Casual derogatory language (e.g. 'that's so gay') is challenged consistently
- The school engages, in age-appropriate ways through PSHE/RSHE and the wider life of the school, with the diversity of family forms in the modern world - including same-sex parented families. This is in line with the July 2025 statutory RSHE Guidance
- Pupils with same-sex parents are welcomed; communications, events and family-facing arrangements reflect this welcome
- Staff are welcomed regardless of sexual orientation and are valued for their professional contribution
- As a Church school, we recognise that the Christian community holds a range of views on questions of sexuality. We do not engage primary-age pupils in the contested aspects of this conversation. We do engage them in the unconditional principle that every person bears the image of God and is owed dignity - a principle on which the Church is unified
- 'Valuing All God's Children' (2019) provides our framework for inclusive practice on this and related areas

15. Other Protected Characteristics

15.1 Age (staff and adults)

Age is a protected characteristic in employment and in services. The school does not discriminate on the basis of age in recruitment, employment, or service to families. Age is not a protected characteristic for school pupils and so does not, as such, generate provisions in this policy in relation to admissions or daily school life (subject to safeguarding considerations regarding the appropriateness of provision for pupils' stage of development).

15.2 Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy and maternity are protected characteristics for staff and adult members of the community. The school:

- Does not discriminate against pregnant employees, employees on maternity leave, or those returning from maternity leave
- Provides health and safety risk assessment for pregnant employees
- Manages return from maternity leave with reasonable adjustments where needed and protected entitlements
- Welcomes pregnant parents and parents on maternity leave warmly into the life of the school
- Where (very unusually for a primary) a pupil were to become pregnant, this would be handled under safeguarding arrangements with appropriate medical, family and welfare support

15.3 Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage and civil partnership are protected characteristics in employment. The school does not discriminate against any employee on the basis of their marital or civil partnership status. The school welcomes families regardless of the marital status of parents.

16. Sexual Harassment - Worker Protection Act 2023

Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

The Act places a positive duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees. At St Mary's this is treated as a serious obligation - not a passive standard but an active commitment to a workplace in which no member of staff is subjected to unwanted sexual conduct, language or imagery.

In practice, the school discharges this duty by:

- Operating a clear Staff Code of Conduct that explicitly prohibits sexual harassment and other forms of harassment
- Operating clear reporting routes - including the Headteacher, Chair of Governors (where the Headteacher is implicated), the Whistleblowing Policy, and external routes including unions and the LA
- Acting promptly on any report, with proper investigation under the relevant procedure
- Providing training on harassment, dignity at work, and the Worker Protection Act
- Reviewing incidents and patterns, with action where any pattern emerges
- Taking equally seriously sexual harassment between members of staff, harassment by parents or third parties towards staff, and harassment by pupils towards staff (each handled with appropriate procedure)
- Supporting any member of staff affected, including with HR and union involvement, occupational health, and adjustments where appropriate
- Not retaliating against, and not permitting retaliation against, anyone who has raised a complaint in good faith

Sexual harassment of pupils is addressed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The duty under the Worker Protection Act 2023 specifically protects employees, but the school takes the same posture of zero tolerance across the community.

17. Bullying and Harassment

Detailed provision is in the Anti-Bullying Policy. In summary at St Mary's:

- Identity-based bullying - racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, ableist, religious, antisemitic, Islamophobic - is treated with particular seriousness, recorded with the relevant identity dimension noted, and addressed proportionately
- Pupils are taught what bullying is, how to report it, and that the adults will take it seriously

- Bullying between pupils, by pupils against staff, between staff, by parents or third parties towards staff, are each handled under the appropriate procedure
- The school maintains a central log of bullying incidents and reviews patterns regularly
- The Anti-Bullying Policy is reviewed annually and aligns with this Equality Policy

18. Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility

The school's duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled persons under the Equality Act 2010 is anticipatory - it applies in advance, not only in response to a specific request. We:

- Identify, anticipate and remove barriers in the physical environment, in the curriculum, and in our communications
- Maintain an Accessibility Plan reviewed every three years (statutory under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act)
- Engage families on individual reasonable adjustments - with the SENCO, the class teacher, the Headteacher, and (where applicable) external professionals
- Provide adjustments in school trips, school events, parents' evenings, and the wider life of the school
- Engage staff with disabilities through occupational health, HR, and the Equality Act's framework for reasonable adjustment
- Apply reasonable adjustments to the school's communications - including alternative formats, translation, and simplified language where useful

19. Equality Impact Assessment

Where the school is making a significant decision - a new policy, a substantial change to an existing policy, a major operational change, a recruitment process, a procurement decision - we consider the equality implications before the decision is made. This is the discharge of the 'due regard' duty in practice.

The equality impact assessment process at St Mary's involves:

1. Identifying the decision and the persons affected
2. Considering whether any protected characteristics are engaged - directly or by association
3. Considering whether the decision could create or reinforce disadvantage; could advance equality of opportunity; could affect good relations
4. Identifying mitigations or adjustments to address any adverse impact
5. Recording the consideration in the decision papers
6. Reviewing after implementation to see whether actual impact matched expected impact

The level of formality of this process is proportionate to the decision. Significant decisions (e.g. a major policy review, a structural change) require a formal written assessment; routine decisions are discharged through everyday consideration recorded in meeting notes or decision papers.

20. Curriculum, RE and Collective Worship

The school's commitment to equality is lived through the curriculum and the wider life of the school as well as through formal policy. In our curriculum:

- Pupils encounter the full diversity of human experience, age-appropriately
- They read, learn from, and are inspired by people from a range of backgrounds - including writers, scientists, artists, leaders, neighbours, faith figures, and ordinary people whose lives illuminate ours
- History is taught honestly - including difficult histories of slavery, empire, antisemitism, and racism in this country and around the world
- RE engages authentically with the school's Christian foundation while welcoming the religious and worldview diversity of our pupils
- PSHE/RSHE is delivered in line with the July 2025 statutory RSHE Guidance and addresses healthy relationships, dignity, respect, and difference
- Collective worship is broadly Christian and engages with values that resonate with our equality commitments - dignity, kindness, justice, mercy, hospitality
- Pupil voice is sought regularly - we ask our pupils what is working and what is not, and we listen
- Visible representation matters: the books in our library, the displays on our walls, the speakers we invite - these tell our pupils who belongs here, and the answer is everyone

21. Recruitment and Employment

Detail is in the Safer Recruitment in Education Policy. In summary at St Mary's:

- Job descriptions, person specifications and adverts are constructed without discriminatory language
- Genuine occupational requirements are stated openly where they apply (Section 13.3)
- Recruitment panels are trained on equality, including unconscious bias
- Reasonable adjustments are offered to applicants throughout the process
- Recruitment data is monitored at aggregate level for patterns
- Pay, progression, training opportunities, and employment terms do not discriminate
- Gender pay gap reporting is undertaken in line with statutory obligations where applicable
- Harassment of any form is prohibited and addressed under the Worker Protection duty (Section 16) and other applicable procedures

22. Data, Monitoring and Review

22.1 What we monitor

- Pupil progress data - by ethnicity, sex, disability / SEND status, EAL, FSM eligibility, looked after status
- Behaviour and exclusion data - by the same characteristics
- Attendance and persistent absence - by the same characteristics

- Bullying and incident logs - by characteristic, where the incident is identity-based
- Staff recruitment, retention, and progression - by characteristic where the data is collected with consent
- Family engagement and feedback
- Pupil voice - including specifically for pupils sharing protected characteristics
- Curriculum and resource diversity audits

22.2 Data protection

All data on protected characteristics is processed in line with the Data Protection Policy and the relevant Privacy Notices. Sensitive personal data (special category data under UK GDPR) is processed only with appropriate lawful basis, with proportionate retention, and with appropriate security.

22.3 Reporting

The Headteacher reports to the Governing Body annually on:

- Progress against the equality objectives
- Incident data and patterns
- Equality dimensions of pupil progress, behaviour, exclusion and attendance
- Recruitment and staffing equality
- Curriculum and resource diversity
- Family and pupil voice
- Action taken in response and intended action

23. Reporting and Addressing Concerns

23.1 How concerns are raised

Concerns about discrimination, harassment or victimisation may be raised by:

- Pupils - to any trusted adult; to a class teacher; to the DSL or Deputy DSL; through the school council; through pupil voice exercises
- Parents - to a class teacher; to the SLT; to the Headteacher; through the Complaints Procedure
- Staff - to a line manager; to the Headteacher; to the Chair of Governors (where appropriate); through the Whistleblowing Policy; through their union
- Any community member - directly to the Headteacher or in writing to the Chair of Governors

23.2 How concerns are addressed

- Promptly - we do not let concerns wait
- Proportionately - with the level of investigation and formality appropriate to the matter
- Confidentially - information is shared only with those who have a legitimate role
- Pastorally - the affected person is supported through the process
- Honestly - outcomes are communicated; learning is identified
- Without retaliation - anyone who raises a concern in good faith is protected

- Through the appropriate procedure - Behaviour Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Staff Disciplinary Procedure; Whistleblowing Policy; Complaints Procedure; or referral to external bodies (LADO, Ofsted, EHRC, ICO) where the matter requires

23.3 External routes

Where a complaint cannot be resolved internally, the complainant may seek redress externally through:

- The DfE / Education and Skills Funding Agency for procedural matters
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) for discrimination matters
- Ofsted, where there are concerns about the leadership and management of the school
- The LDBS, where the matter engages the school's Church school character
- LB Islington Children's Services / LADO, where safeguarding is engaged
- An employment tribunal, for matters of employment discrimination
- Judicial review, in extremis, for breach of the PSED

24. Roles and Responsibilities

24.1 The Governing Body

- Approves this policy and reviews it annually
- Approves the equality objectives and reviews progress annually
- Receives an annual equality report from the Headteacher
- Provides strategic challenge on equality matters
- Acts as the body of last resort for complaints that cannot be resolved by the Headteacher
- Ensures the school complies with the PSED and Specific Duties Regulations
- Includes an equality dimension in governor recruitment and training

24.2 The Headteacher

- Has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy
- Ensures equality considerations are embedded in school decision-making
- Reports to the Governing Body annually and on specific matters
- Leads the school's engagement with the LA, LDBS, EHRC and other external bodies on equality matters
- Acts on incidents and patterns
- Oversees recruitment, training, and curriculum from an equality perspective

24.3 The Senior Leadership Team and Curriculum Leaders

- Embed equality in the curriculum, the school's daily life, and operational practice
- Monitor data and pupil voice
- Lead on specific aspects of equality work - e.g. RSHE, RE, anti-bullying, SEND, pupil progress monitoring
- Support the Headteacher's reporting to the Governing Body

24.4 The SENCO and DSL

- SENCO leads on disability and SEND-related equality matters and ensures reasonable adjustments are made
- DSL ensures safeguarding considerations engage with equality - e.g. specific safeguarding vulnerabilities of children with protected characteristics
- Both contribute to the annual equality review

24.5 All staff

- Comply with this policy and the Staff Code of Conduct
- Treat every member of the community with dignity and respect
- Address discriminatory or prejudiced language and behaviour, including casual prejudice
- Report incidents and concerns through the appropriate routes
- Engage with training and development on equality
- Reflect on their own practice and be open to feedback

24.6 Pupils

- Treat each other and the adults of the school with dignity and respect
- Speak up about prejudice or unkindness when they see it
- Engage with the curriculum and the wider life of the school in the spirit of openness
- Know how to raise concerns and that the adults will take them seriously

24.7 Parents and the wider community

- Support the school's commitment to equality and the dignity of every member of the community
- Treat the school's staff and other parents with dignity and respect
- Engage the school constructively where they have concerns about equality matters
- Support their child's engagement with the curriculum and the school's ethos

25. Training and Professional Development

- Equality is a core element of staff induction. New staff are briefed on this policy, the Equality Act, the PSED, and the Worker Protection Act
- All staff receive periodic refresher training on equality, anti-racism, and harassment prevention
- Specific training is provided to those with specific responsibilities (DSL, SENCO, recruitment panels)
- Governors receive training on the PSED and on their oversight responsibilities
- Leaders receive training on equality impact assessment and the discharge of 'due regard'
- Pupils receive age-appropriate education on dignity, difference, kindness, and the standing-up-for-others ethic that the school encourages

- Training records are maintained as part of the school's wider CPD record

26. Review of this Policy

- Reviewed annually by the Governing Body
- Reviewed sooner where statutory or regulatory change requires
- Reviewed after any specific incident or pattern with lessons to be learned
- Equality objectives reviewed at least every four years (Specific Duties Regulations 2011)
- Reviewed in light of feedback from staff, pupils, families, governors and the LDBS
- Approved by the full Governing Body and published on the school website

Appendix A: Our Equality Objectives 2026–2030

Our current equality objectives, agreed by the Governing Body, are set out below. They are evidence-informed, time-bound, and connected to the three limbs of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Progress is reported annually.

Objective	PSED limb engaged	Measure / by when
Objective 1: Reduce the gap between the attainment of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and other pupils in reading and writing in KS2	Advance equality of opportunity (race / national origin)	Closing the gap to within 5 percentage points of school average by July 2028; tracked termly
Objective 2: Ensure no significant disparity in suspension or behaviour intervention rates between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds, including monitoring for any disparity affecting Black, mixed-	Eliminate discrimination; foster good relations (race)	Annual review by the Governing Body Behaviour and Equality oversight; action where any disparity emerges

heritage, and other minoritised pupils		
Objective 3: Increase visibility and representation of diverse contributors across the curriculum, including authors, scientists, historical figures and contemporary role models, with attention to race, sex, disability and faith	Foster good relations; advance equality of opportunity	Curriculum audit completed by July 2027; refreshed annually thereafter
Objective 4: Improve the engagement and progress of pupils with SEND, with particular attention to those with autism, ADHD and dyslexia	Advance equality of opportunity (disability)	Annual SEND review by Governing Body; SENCO termly reporting; specific cohort progress monitoring
Objective 5: Maintain and develop a school culture in which sexual harassment of staff is prevented through proactive measures, in line with the Worker Protection Act 2023	Eliminate discrimination (sex)	Annual review of training, reporting routes, and incident patterns; HT to Governing Body
Objective 6: Develop staff confidence and consistency in addressing prejudice-based language and behaviour at the point it occurs, particularly in the	Eliminate discrimination; foster good relations (all characteristics)	All staff training by December 2026; pupil voice exercise on perceived consistency by July 2027

playground and informal moments		
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Note

These objectives are illustrative for the purposes of a policy template. Final objectives are decided by the Governing Body in light of school data, family voice, staff input, and external benchmarks. Objectives are reviewed at least every four years and may be refreshed sooner where the evidence indicates.

Appendix B: Quick Reference for Staff

WHEN MAKING A DECISION

Ask: who is affected? Are any protected characteristics engaged? Could this decision create or reinforce disadvantage? Could it advance equality of opportunity? Could it affect good relations? What mitigations apply? Record the consideration.

WHEN YOU HEAR PREJUDICED LANGUAGE OR CONDUCT

Don't let it pass. Address it kindly, clearly, and proportionately. With pupils, name what was said and why it isn't acceptable. With colleagues or parents, address it through the appropriate procedure. With visitors or contractors, raise it with the Headteacher.

WHEN A PUPIL DISCLOSES BULLYING OR DISCRIMINATION

Listen. Take it seriously. Record on the relevant system. Inform the DSL where safeguarding is engaged. Follow the Anti-Bullying Policy. Update the affected pupil and family on the action taken.

WHEN A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT IS NEEDED

Engage the SENCO if the need is SEND-related. Engage the office and the family. Don't wait for someone else - the duty is anticipatory. Document the adjustment for continuity.

WHEN A GENDER-QUESTIONING PUPIL OR FAMILY APPROACHES YOU

Listen with care. Don't take unilateral action. Refer to the DSL the same day. Refer to Section 11 of this policy and Section 15 of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Parental involvement is the default. Welfare is paramount.

WHEN YOU ARE THE TARGET OF HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION

Speak to the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the Headteacher is involved). Use the Whistleblowing Policy if needed. You may bring a colleague or union representative. Retaliation against you is prohibited.

Appendix C: Christian Foundations of our Equality Commitment

As a Church of England primary school, our equality commitment is grounded in theological conviction. Some of the key resources we draw on:

“So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

Every human being bears the image of God. This is the foundation of our equality framework.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

The Christian community is called to overcome the divisions that have shaped human history. The school stands within this calling.

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40)

The Christian conviction is that the dignity we extend to one another, particularly the most vulnerable, is the dignity we extend to Christ.

Key Church of England documents informing this policy:

- ‘Valuing All God’s Children’ (2019) - the Church of England’s guidance for inclusive Christian schools, addressing identity-based bullying, dignity, and pastoral care
- Archbishops’ Anti-Racism Taskforce: ‘From Lament to Action’ (2021) and successor work
- ‘Living in Love and Faith’ - the Church’s ongoing engagement with questions of identity, sexuality and relationship
- LDBS guidance for Voluntary Aided Church of England schools

Appendix D: Key Roles and Contacts

Role / Body	Name and Contact
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Headteacher	[Name, contact]
Deputy Headteacher / Equality lead	[Name, contact]
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	[Name, contact]
SENCO	Lucy Courtney-Diggins, 020 7359 1870
Chair of Governors	[Name, contact]
Equality / Wellbeing Governor	[Name, contact]
Data Protection Officer	Claire Mahegan
School Business Manager	[Name, contact]
LADO (Islington)	[Contact]
LB Islington Children's Services	[Contact]
LDBS Schools Adviser	[Contact]
LDBS Safeguarding / inclusion lead	[Contact]
Equality and Human Rights Commission	0808 800 0082
Information Commissioner's Office	0303 123 1113

Appendix E: References and Related Guidance

- Equality Act 2010 - ss.4-12, Part 5, Part 6, s.149
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023
- Education Act 2002, s.78
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (statutory from 1 September 2026)
- DfE Statutory RSHE Guidance (revised July 2025)
- DfE: 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools' - departmental advice
- DfE: Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance (August 2024)
- EHRC: Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England
- Cass Review: Final Report (April 2024) and associated DfE / NHS guidance

- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- UK GDPR; Data Protection Act 2018; Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- LDBS guidance for Voluntary Aided Church of England schools
- Church of England: 'Valuing All God's Children' (2019)
- Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce: 'From Lament to Action' (2021)
- School policies as listed in Section 2.4

'Let your light shine before others.'

Every person who comes into our school bears the image of God. The dignity owed to that image is not a matter of optional kindness; it is the substance of who we are. This policy is a description of how we live that conviction in the daily life of our school.