



# **OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL** **AND** **SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

**With delegated responsibility from the**  
**Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust**

## **SCHOOL EQUALITY POLICY**

<b>APPROVED BY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY</b>	<b>March 2023</b>
<b>SCRUTINISED BY ETHOS AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>February 2023</b>
<b>DATE LAST REVIEWED</b>	<b>February 2023</b>
<b>MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>Director of Business and Finance</b>
<b>STATUTORY / NON-STATUTORY</b>	<b>Statutory</b>



Community

Unity



Opportunity

## Policy Amendments

Version Date	Section / Page	Amendments
February 2023	1.1 / Page 2	Equality Act 2010 hyperlink added
	2.2 / Page 2	Education and Inspections Act 2006 hyperlink added
	2.3 / Page 2	Addition of hyperlinks
	3.2 / Page 3	Updated pupil/student numbers
	4.1.8 / Page 4	Addition of hyperlink
March 2020	3.2 / Page 2	Update to Number on Roll

***'Then Peter began to speak: I now realise how true it is that God does not show any partiality'***

*Acts 10:34*

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Governing Body of Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College welcome our duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) as both a provider of education and as an employer.
- 1.2 We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together – our pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.
- 1.3 This document outlines the principles which will guide our approach to working in the Oaklands community and enabling an open culture.
- 1.4 For staff and prospective staff, this policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Employment Equality Policy.

## **2.0 National and Legal Context**

- 2.1 We recognise that we have duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the school community to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (applicable only to staff), disability, race, gender (including issues of transgender), maternity and pregnancy, religion and belief, sexual orientation and marital status (applicable only to staff).
- 2.2 We also recognise that we have a duty under the [Education & Inspections Act 2006](#) to promote community cohesion, i.e. developing good relations across different cultures and groups.
- 2.3 We also appreciate that these duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the [UN Convention on Rights of the Child](#), the [UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities](#), and the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).

## **3.0 School Context**

- 3.1 Oaklands is a Catholic Academy taking in boys and girls from 11-18, which has been established by the Diocese of Portsmouth for the education of Catholic children who live within the designated parish catchment area allocated to the school. In addition, Oaklands also takes in a number of children from other Christian denominations and other faiths whose parents have specifically requested a Catholic education at the school, provided that they satisfy the criteria laid down in the Governors' Admissions Policy. This results in Oaklands being a truly diverse community with pupils drawn from the full range of ethnic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

- 3.2 Oaklands has over 1,400 students on roll, including a Sixth Form College of 220 students. It is an established comprehensive school, which is well supported by parents and highly respected in the community.
- 3.3 The aims of the school emphasise the importance of each student as an individual and the need to focus on and promote the spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical, social, personal and cultural development of each person entrusted to our care. It is important that this mission is not allowed to drift as a result of the school's business function.
- 3.4 To this end, the community endeavour to create a Christ centred learning community whose primary aim is to ignite a passion for faith and learning. At Oaklands we recognise that students have special and different gifts, we aim to develop them in a climate where they can be shared and personal achievement can be maximised, where difference is not just tolerated but celebrated.
- 3.5 Students need to work within an environment where they can develop their unique God given gifts and feel lovable, loved, capable and valued members of the community. This occurs within a warm and caring safe and open environment in which all children can grow in confidence and trust, and achieve their true all round potential.

## **4.0 Principles**

- 4.1 To fulfil our legal obligations, we are guided by a number of principles.

### **4.1.1 All pupils, families and staff are of equal value**

We see all pupils, potential pupils, their parents and carers, and staff as of equal value:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- Whatever their gender and gender identity
- Whatever their religious and non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their marital status
- Whether they are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- Whatever their age

We are also cognisant of the fact that a number of our Pupils do not have English as their first language. We also have a good proportion of our pupils who have a connection with the Armed Forces community.

### **4.1.2 We recognise and respect difference**

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of diversity and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents/carers or pupils may face in relation to their protected characteristics:

- Disability – we understand that reasonable adjustments may need to be made
- Gender (including transgender) – we recognise that girls and boys, men and women have different needs
- Religion and belief – we acknowledge that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we appreciate that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds

- Age – we value the diversity in age of staff, parents and carers
- Sexual orientation – we respect that individuals have the right to determine their own sexual identity and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of their preference
- Marital status – we recognise that our staff, parents and carers may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff, pupils, parents and carers should not experience any unfair disadvantage as a result of pregnancy or having recently given birth

#### **4.1.3 We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging**

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

- positive attitudes and interaction between groups and communities different from each other
- an absence of harassment, victimisation and discrimination in relation to any protected characteristics

#### **4.1.4 We observe good equalities practice in relation to staff**

We ensure that our policies and practices for all staff and potential staff throughout the employment lifecycle, i.e. from recruitment through to the cessation of employment and beyond, are applied fairly and consistently across all groups with full respect for legal rights, taking into account aspects applicable to particular groups (e.g. duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff).

#### **4.1.5 We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist**

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities avoid or minimise any possible negative impacts and we aim to reduce inequalities that exist between groups and communities different from each other.

#### **4.1.6 We consult and involve to ensure views are heard**

In our development of policies, we engage with groups and individuals, including pupils who are affected by a policy or activity to ensure that their views are taken into account. For policies and activities affecting pupils, we will take account of views expressed at school council; for parents, through parent governor representation and for staff, through staff governor representation. Where necessary, we will consult more widely with specific groups.

#### **4.1.7 We aim to foster greater community cohesion**

We intend that our policies, activities and curriculum offer foster greater social cohesion and provide for an equal opportunity to participate in public life irrespective of the protected characteristics of individuals and groups.

#### **4.1.8 We base our practices on sound evidence**

We maintain and publish information annually to show our compliance with the public sector equality duty, set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our current equality information can be found in our [Equality Information and Objectives Document](#) on the School's website under Statutory Information.

#### **4.1.9 We set ourselves specific and measurable equality objectives**

We develop and publish specific and measurable objectives every four years based on the evidence that we have gathered (see principle 4.1.8 above) and the engagement we have been involved in (see principle 7 above).

- 4.2 The objectives can be found in our Equality Information and Objectives Document on the School's website under Statutory Information and take into account both national and school level priorities.
- 4.3 We will set ourselves new objectives every four years, but keep them under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

### **5.0 Application of the Principles within this Policy Statement**

5.1 The principles outlined in the policy statement will be applied and reflected in:

- The delivery of the school curriculum
- The teaching and learning within the school
- Our practice in relation to pupil progress, attainment and achievement
- Our teaching styles and strategies
- Our policies and practice in relation to admissions and attendance
- Our policies and practice in relation to staff
- Our care, guidance and support to pupils, their families and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to pupil behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Our partnership working with parents and carers
- Our contact with the wider school community

### **6.0 Addressing Prejudice and Prejudice-related Bullying**

6.1 The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice including, but not limited to prejudice related to protected characteristics. We will ensure that prejudice-related incidents in relation to staff and pupils are recorded and dealt with appropriately.

### **7.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

- 7.1 The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented and that arrangements are in place to deal with any concerns or unlawful action that arises.
- 7.2 The Headteacher is responsible for implementation of this policy, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- 7.3 All staff are expected to work in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy to:
- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their practice
  - deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
  - plan and deliver curricula and lessons
  - support pupils in their class who have additional needs