

Covenant Christian School

Equality and Diversity Policy

Statement of Intent

A recurrent theme in Christian thought is that all men and women are without exception made in God's image. This belief appears in the bible at the very beginning, Gen 1v26-27 in the Creation account. It follows that we are all without exception invested with a certain dignity, above that of the animals. We stand equally before God as we fulfill the cultural mandate and enjoy spiritual rights and privileges. This teaching is expressed for example in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10v25-37) and general attitude to women (e.g. Mark 14v3-9), in Peter's acceptance of the gentile, Cornelius as a member of the Kingdom of God (Acts10) and in Paul's inclusive attitude to all believers. (Gal 3v28).

Covenant Christian School is therefore committed to encouraging and developing every child to reach their full potential, nurtured and supported in a Christian community, which lives by the values of love, compassion and respect. Covenant Christian School has a distinctive Christian ethos which is at the heart of the school and provides an inclusive, caring and supportive environment where children learn and flourish in a setting shaped by Christian values.

- We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity as required by The Equality Act 2010 and tackling unlawful discrimination in all its forms whilst retaining our distinctive Christian ethos. We believe that unlawful discrimination is unacceptable.
- We are committed to fairness and justice and providing opportunities for everyone. All pupils who have been admitted to the school will have access to the whole curriculum and be able to take part fully in school life, regardless of disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Opportunities are offered for all to develop to their full potential and achieve success.
- We will also respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of our school community.
- As a distinctly Christian school our policies and practices with respect to admissions, the religious aspects of our curriculum and school life, and collective worship fall under the exceptions to The Equality Act 2010 detailed in Schedule 11 and Section 23 of the act. Therefore, we may lawfully allocate places on the basis of religious practice and plan our curriculum and school life to focus upon our religious beliefs and ethos. We may also lawfully take religion into account when appointing staff.
- We are opposed to and will challenge all forms of unlawful discriminatory language or behaviour.

Equalities Duties

We acknowledge our duties under the Equality Act 2010: to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and to foster good relations between those with and those without protected characteristics We also acknowledge our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Government's Counter Terrorism policy and in particular the Prevent element to promote community cohesion and proactively prevent radicalization laid out in our Prevention of Extremism policy. In the scriptures we are admonished to encourage a shared sense of cohesion and belonging (Eph 4v3) and to foster positive attitudes and relationships (Heb 12v14) and mutual respect between different groups.

The reference acts for this are:

- The Equality Act 2010 which consolidates prior legislation designed to protect specific minority groups and includes defines the following characteristics as protected characteristics
 - age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;
 - marriage and civil partnership;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race;
 - religion or belief;
 - sex;
 - sexual orientation.

- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005. With respect to provide specific measures for those with a disability (The Disability Equality Duty);our Disability Policy outlines our commitment to fulfill this requirement.

Reference may also be made to the school's Special Education Needs policy.

Responsibilities

The Management committee is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, that this policy and related policies, procedures and strategies are implemented and that the policy is reviewed every three years.

The head of school will be responsible for dealing with specific incidents relating to equality issues where support or guidance is required and for ensuring they are recorded in the serious indiscipline book.

The Special Needs Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and also those for whom English is an additional language are properly supported.

The Head teacher and Management Committee are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school's Equality and Diversity Policy and its procedures are followed;
- Ensuring that progress is monitored on a regular basis and that the policy is thoroughly reviewed every three years;
- Ensuring that the Equality and Diversity Policy, the Disability Policy and the Accessibility Plan are readily available and that all members of the school community know about them;
- Ensuring that all teachers know their responsibilities and receive appropriate training and support to carry these out effectively;
- Investigating all incidents of bullying and all reported incidents/complaints in which equality is an issue;
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and unlawful discrimination; and
- Ensuring teaching strategies are reviewed in relation to variations in learning and attainment and in the light of known good practice.

All members of the school community in positions of responsibility are responsible for:

- Being aware of the Equality policy and understanding and complying with the school's expectations in relation to the equalities duties;
- Dealing with any prejudice-related incidents through the routes outlined in the Behaviour and Discipline Policy;
- Recognising and challenging unlawful discrimination, harassment, bias and stereotyping;
- Dealing with specific incidents where support or guidance is required and ensuring they are recorded in the serious incident book and reported to the head teacher;
- Promoting inclusivity, equal opportunities and good relations and encouraging a collaborative ethos within the classroom;
- Supporting pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language;
- Selecting suitable resources which motivate and are sensitive to different groups, cultures and backgrounds;
- Appreciating the assumptions including their own that lie behind different attitudes towards different groups;
- Using teaching styles which engage all students;
- Keeping up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work; and
- Taking up training opportunities and evaluating the impact of this training.

All parents are expected to respect the school's Equality and Diversity Policy. They will be informed of any incidents involving their child related to this policy at the earliest opportunity.

All pupils will be taught to appreciate why diversity and equality should be respected. To support those who have needs because they are different and to act in accordance with this policy in and outside the school.

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