

Equality Policy, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Published: Spring 2025

Review Date: Spring 2026

Committee Responsible: Full Governors

1. Introduction

At St James C of E Primary School we believe that people are individuals and therefore different. They have different needs and different contributions to make within the life of our school and of the community. Equal opportunities is not about treating everybody the same. It is about meeting people's individual needs and appreciating their individual strengths and gifts. We are all different and should all be equally valued.

This policy aims to promote community cohesion, avoid discrimination and promote equality for pupils, staff and others using our school's facilities. Taking a single equality policy approach recognises that people often share more than one aspect of their identity in relation to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At St James we believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

St James C of E Primary School is committed to creating a culture in which:

- Equality, diversity, and inclusion are actively promoted for the benefit of all staff, whether temporary, part-time or full-time, and prospective employees
- Provides equality, fairness, and respect for all in our employment
- Unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment is eliminated, this includes the areas of recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline, and selection for redundancy
- Diversity and inclusion are embedded throughout the employment lifecycle. This includes recruitment practices, pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, decision making within formal procedures including but not limited to grievances, conduct, performance, attendance, absence, selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

This policy is intended as a statement of our aims, commitments, and responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities in employment. These have been integrated into HR policies which provide the detail of operational practices and procedures.

St James C of E Primary School recognises that the experiences and needs of all staff and workers are unique and will respect and value the diversity of its employees, workers, suppliers, third-party contractors, parents, and the public.

St James CofE Primary School believes that a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion not only benefits but supports wellbeing and enables people to work better because they can be themselves in the workplace and feel that they belong.

St James CofE Primary School is committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust, and respect, and one that is free from all kinds of discrimination.

2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

St James C of E Primary School aims to provide equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards. We strive to be an inclusive school, providing equal opportunities for all pupils and staff. We value the diverse backgrounds of our pupils, staff and community and encourage all pupils and staff to reach their potential. We aim to help our pupils in the early stages of learning to become responsible members of the community.

This policy is based on our core vision and values of inclusivity and equality of opportunity for all, within our community which includes everyone and celebrates their differences and achievements. We nurture a culture of respect for others, recognising and celebrating the differences between people within our diverse society. The school believes in the equal value of each of its pupils and employees and strives to ensure that all are treated with equal respect and opportunity in all levels of school activity and employment.

The overall objective of our Equality Policy is to provide a framework for St James C of E Primary School to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, promote equality of opportunity, and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

Through the Equality Policy, we seek to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents, guardians or carers or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief, gender and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, disability, age, responsibility for children or other dependents, trade union or political activities, social class, where the person lives or spent convictions.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community, pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

3. The Law

3.1 Introduction

The Single Equality Scheme requires schools to consider the 'General' and 'Specific' duties in promoting equality across the full range of protected characteristics, namely:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy or Maternity
- Age
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

Schools should consider age as a relevant characteristic in their role as employers, but not in relation to pupils.

The General Duty

Public bodies have a 'General Duty' to:

- Eliminate conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act (2010);
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Specific Duties

- Publish information showing that they have complied with the General Duty;
- Publish evidence of the equality analysis undertaken;
- Set and publish Equality Objectives.

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status or because someone is in a civil partnership. These are known as “protected characteristics”. These are defined in detail in **Appendix 1** of this policy. Discrimination after employment has ended can also be unlawful, for example in relation to the provision of an employment reference.

It is unlawful to treat part-time workers less favourably than a comparable full-time worker (unless the treatment can be objectively justified).

3.2 Types of Discrimination

There are a number of different types of discrimination – these are defined in more detail in **Appendix 2** of this policy.

- **Direct discrimination**
- **Indirect discrimination**
- **Harassment**
- **Associative discrimination**
- **Perceptive discrimination**
- **Victimisation**
- **A failure to make reasonable adjustments**

4. Our Approach: A Cohesive Community

We have a responsibility to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across different cultures, ethnic, religious and non-religious and socioeconomic groups. We have incorporated our priorities into our Equality Scheme and Action Plan to make it easier to monitor our progress and performance in meeting our objectives.

Our contribution to community cohesion includes:

- **Teaching, learning and curriculum** – to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- **Equality and excellence** – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.
- **Engagement and ethos** – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally (including communities of interest, i.e. environmental groups, faith groups, ethnic or language groups), across the country and internationally.

In order to achieve a cohesive community, St James C of E Primary School:

- Promotes understanding and engagement between communities
- Encourages all children and families to feel part of the wider community
- Understands and responds to the needs and hopes of all our communities
- Tackles discrimination
- Increases life opportunities for all
- Ensures teaching and the curriculum explores and addresses issues of diversity

5. Responsibilities of Employees

Every employee is expected to assist St James CofE Primary School to meet its obligations in relation to the provision of equal opportunities in employment, eliminate unlawful discrimination and support diversity and inclusion. This includes:

- Encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.
- Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- Conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination.
- Reporting any instances of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, suppliers, visitors, the public, and any others in the course of the school's work activities.
- Being mindful of their actions and behaviours whilst representing St James CofE Primary School both within and outside of their working time.
- Being mindful of their actions and behaviours, including those on social media and similar, where the employee/worker has clearly associated themselves with St James CofE Primary School.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the employer for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimisation against employees or other individuals are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice. Whilst all employees have a responsibility for supporting our commitments in relation to equality, managers have particular responsibilities because they are in a position to make or influence employment decisions. Managers are therefore expected to be accountable for the provision of equal opportunities through the actions that they take, and to monitor and review practices within their sphere of responsibility.

5.1 Responsibilities of SLT

In addition to these commitments, the Senior Leadership Team are committed to:

- Adhering to our recruitment and selection policy in relation to all new appointments and promotions - this means that essential criteria on person specifications will be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job.
- Assessing candidates for employment or promotion objectively against the requirements for the job, taking into account any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability
- Making opportunities for training, development, and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation
- Making all decisions relating to appointment, promotion, or access to training based on merit, job needs or other relevant job-related criteria (apart from any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- To foster a workplace culture in which individuals are respected, diversity is valued, and employees are encouraged to report any behaviour which causes them concern

- Considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of the practice in question where employees seek a variation to standard working practice, requests will be refused only where there are sound organisational reasons for doing so, unrelated to any protected characteristic.
- Making reasonable adjustments to standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability
- Take seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, suppliers, visitors, the public, and any others in the course of the school's work activities.

5.2 Responsibilities of the Governing Body

In addition to the commitments detailed in Section 5 The Governing Body commits to:

- Reviewing on an annual basis the need for training in equal opportunities for managers and others involved in recruitment or other decisions relating to employment, as well as reviewing the need for training for existing and new employees, volunteers and other workers to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.
- Reviewing employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and to also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitoring the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Where problems are identified, senior management will consider whether appropriate action can be taken to address these.

6. Raising Concerns

There are a number of informal ways that concerns about discrimination can be brought to the attention of St James CofE Primary School. These include:

- An employee raising the matter directly with the person if they feel comfortable to do so
- An employee raising the matter directly with their line manager or any member of the Senior Leadership Team
 - An employee raising the matter directly through another contact such as their Union Representative or a work colleague
 - A member of staff observing behaviour of an employee or worker that concerns them and telling a member of the Senior Leadership Team
 - A line manager or member of the senior leadership team observing behaviour of an employee or worker that concerns them taking the appropriate action (e.g., talking with the employee concerned or ensuring the correct procedure is followed)

There are ways of dealing with formal complaints which do not involve moving straight into a formal approach, such as the informal stages of the grievance procedure. These include informal discussions and mediation.

7. Complaints about Discrimination

If any concerns or complaints cannot be dealt with on a more informal basis, it would be appropriate to use one of the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Procedures for Allegations Against Adults

Details of St James CofE Primary School policies and procedures can be found at <https://www.stjames-veybridge.surrey.sch.uk/policies/>. This includes information on who formal complaints can be made to.

Any complaint will be taken seriously and all managers are expected to seek to resolve any grievance that is deemed to be well-founded. An employee will not be penalised for raising a grievance providing the concerns are put forward in good faith.

Use of the grievance procedure does not affect an employee's right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months of the act of discrimination complained of.

8. Information and Support

Guidance and support will be offered to employees throughout any informal or formal process. This may take the form of signposting to available support as well as offering pastoral support and regular updates on timescales.

Support may include:

- Trade Union representative - If you are a union member, you can contact your staff representative for advice and support
- Employee Assistance Programme - An independent, free, and confidential advice service
- Occupational Health - Our occupational health service and wellbeing programme promotes physical and psychological wellbeing

9. Data Protection

St James C of E Primary School treats personal data collected for reviewing equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection in accordance with its data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the job applicant privacy notice.

10. Monitoring, Reviewing and Assessing impact

The policy will be reviewed regularly by staff and governors in line with the school development plan cycle. This is to ensure that it is effective in eliminating discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

We recognise that all school policies need to take the equality policy into account.

Any reported breach of this policy will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken in cases of harassment or discrimination.

11. Links with other policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use policies
- RSHE/PSHE Policy
- Complaints Policy

Useful Links

[Equality Act 2010: guidance – GOV.UK](#)

APPENDIX 1 - Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the term 'protected characteristics'.

This appendix describes the 9 protected characteristics and gives examples of what is meant by them.

Protected Characteristic	Example
Age	Where you may be referred to as belonging to a particular age group, e.g., 49–55- year-olds and treated differently as a result. e.g., using ageist language
Disability	If you have a disability this may be a physical, mental impairment or long-term health condition which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis would be considered a disability, and therefore a protected characteristic, at the point of diagnosis. If you have a disability your manager will work with you to establish reasonable adjustments to help you perform your role to your full potential.
Gender Reassignment	The process of transitioning from one gender to another, e.g., from a female to a male, or a male to female.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	If you are married or in a civil partnership, you cannot be treated differently to a colleague who is single or divorced.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant. Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth, which reflects the period of ordinary maternity leave entitlement in the employment context.
Race	Race is defined as Nationality, National Origin, Ethnicity, Race and Colour. It can mean your ethnic or national origins, may not be the same as your current nationality, e.g., you may have Chinese national origins and be living in Britain with a British passport. Race also covers ethnic and racial groups. This means a group of people who all share the same protected characteristic of ethnicity or race. A racial group can be made up of 2 or more distinct racial groups, for example Black British, British Asians, British Sikhs, British Jews, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers. You may be discriminated against because of your race, for example, people born in Britain to Jewish parents could be discriminated against because of their Jewish heritage.
Religion and Belief	(1) Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion. (2) Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief. (3) In relation to the protected characteristic of religion or belief— (a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular religion or belief; (b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are of the same religion or belief.
Sex	Under the Equality Act 2010, you are defined by law as being either a man or a woman. This is determined at birth; however, gender is broadly to denote a range of identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female.
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the other sex or to both sexes, and not to any at all (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, etc.).

Appendix 2 – Definitions

Term	Explanation
Equality	Equality is the legal framework that in the workplace means equal job opportunities and fairness for employees and job applicants. You must not treat people unfairly because of reasons protected by The Equality Act 2010. ('protected characteristics'), e.g., because of a person's sex, age or race.
Diversity	Diversity is the range of people in the workplace. This might mean people with different ages, religions, ethnicities, people with disabilities, and genders/gender. It also means valuing those differences.
Inclusion	An inclusive workplace means that you feel valued at work. It lets you feel safe to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • come up with different ideas • raise issues and suggestions to managers, knowing this is encouraged • try doing things differently to how they have been done before, with management approval • ability to feel safe and comfortable in your working environment, free from discrimination'
Discrimination	This can be described as the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, on the grounds of one of the protected characteristics.
Direct Discrimination	Direct discrimination is the legal term that applies if you treat someone less favourably than someone else has been treated (or would be treated) because the person belongs to one of the protected groups.
Indirect Discrimination	Indirect discrimination is when there is a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way, however there is a disproportionate and adverse effect on one group with a relevant protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 when compared to other groups.
Associative discrimination	This occurs where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for associating with another individual who has a protected characteristic. This might occur, for example, where a mother of a disabled child is treated less favourably as a result of her child's disability.
Perceptive discrimination	This occurs where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she in fact does not have that protected characteristic. This might occur, for example, where an employee is subjected to homophobic bullying based on a perception that he/she is homosexual.
Bullying and Harassment	Bullying and harassment are terms that are often used interchangeably, however, legally, harassment usually has a specific meaning. Under the Equality Act 2010 harassment is defined as 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'. Harassment which does not relate to a protected characteristic is not covered by the Equality Act 2010. Bullying is not specifically defined in UK law, however ACAS guidance on bullying 'may be characterised as: Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient'. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Victimisation	Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion, because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he/she is suspected of doing so. An employee is not, however, protected from victimisation if he/she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.
Reasonable adjustments	<p>A failure to make reasonable adjustments may occur where a physical feature or a requirement, condition or practice puts a disabled person, as defined under the Equality Act 2010, at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.</p> <p>If you have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010, you are entitled to have reasonable adjustments made in your workplace. Occupational Health Referrals may suggest reasonable adjustments as advised from a Health Care Professional.</p> <p>Examples of reasonable adjustments may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptions to the recruitment process. e.g. The right to a guaranteed interview if you meet essential criteria on the JD, virtual interview, interpreter, support for accessibility if deaf/blind • making physical changes to the workplace, like installing a ramp for you if you are wheelchair user or an audio-visual fire alarm for you if you are a deaf person • letting a disabled person work somewhere else, such as on the ground floor if you are a wheelchair user • Providing specialist equipment e.g. a special keyboard if you have arthritis • if you become disabled allowing you to make a phased return to work, including flexible hours or part-time working