ST. THOMAS AQUINAS RC SECONDARY SCHOOL

EQUALITY POLICY

Last Updated: August 2021
Next Review: August 2022

◼ RATIONALE

Glasgow City Council (GCC) Education Services and St. Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary school is committed to equality and fairness. This includes our legal duties, obligations and associated responsibilities within the Equality Act 2010, and applies across all GCC schools and early years establishments. We want to ensure that equality is embedded in all our establishments and that our values and cultures promote equalities. We want all of our young people, staff, families and partners to feel highly valued and be treated fairly. We strive towards creating learning environments that reflect the diversity of the school community both within the curriculum and in our workforce. We want everyone to have positive experiences and opportunities; we want to recognise their contribution as global citizens in a world free from discrimination and one that promotes justice for all.

Our Equality Policy seeks to ensure that everyone regularly thinks about how they are taking forward equality in their roles/settings, as a catalyst for positive change, equality and fairness. It will encourage all to reflect on their commitment, activities and culture and to adapt to a continually changing and rapidly evolving society.

Our Equality Policy ensures we are continuing to support the aim of creating a nurturing school within a nurturing city, where children and young people feel respected and included.

We want to continue to celebrate the diversity of community within our city, to challenge ourselves and each other, and consider our actions and impact across all the protected characteristics. Fundamentally, we support Glasgow's vision of a world class city with a thriving and inclusive economy where everyone can flourish.

■ A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

At the heart of our Catholic secondary school are the Gospel values which underpin everything we do. How we treat each other must have the Gospel values at heart, irrespective of: age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and gender reassignment.

Gospel values include: **love, compassion, kindness, integrity, respect and forgiveness.**

■ INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary's approach to promoting equality, as defined within the Equality Act (2010). It covers age*, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies including the 📄 Revised Anti Bullying Strategy 2019 [2Mb]. Our policy will set out how the school aims to remove barriers to learning for children and young people as individuals or groups.

St. Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary will adhere to the technical guidance on how to apply the Equality Act 2010 in Scottish schools as outlined in the following link; https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/technical-guidance-schools-scotland

◼ OUR SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary school is a Roman Catholic, co-educational mainstream secondary school situated in the North West area of Glasgow. Our school has the largest catchment area of any school within Glasgow City Council, ranging from the city centre to Drumchapel.

Children and Young People	1068 pupils	August 2021
Sex		
Male	583	55%
Female	485	45%
Ethnicity/Race		
White British/Scottish	603	56%
White other	94	9%
Black and Minority Ethnic	279	26%
Not known/disclosed	68	6%
Additional Support Needs		
EAL	473	44%
Disability	33	3%
Looked After/ Care Experienced	53	5%
SIMD 1&2	797	75%

◾ AIMS AND VAULES

SCHOOL VISION, VALUES AND AIMS

Our Equality policy is driven by our school Vision:

> *We are a culturally inclusive Roman Catholic school where there is a deep commitment to each young person in our care. Every person in our community – pupils, staff, parents/carers & partners – is listened to, included and valued. By honouring the teachings of Christ, we will ensure that all our young people are witnesses who are equipped to promote healthy mental and physical well-being whilst developing their spirituality and discovering and exploiting their God-given talents to achieve excellence emotionally, morally and intellectually.*

Our Values and Aims underpin all of our work at St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary. Our Values and Aims are:

OUR VALUES

OUR AIMS

TO SUPPORT

TO TEACH

TO ACHIEVE

TO SERVE

◼ POLICY AIMS

Our Equality Policy provides a framework to pursue its equality duties as outlined in the 2010 Equality Act. We will strive to take all reasonable steps to;

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations and positive attitudes between all characteristics and different groups

Through the Equality Policy, the school will seek to ensure that no young people, staff, parents / carers or any other person receives less favourable treatment through their contact with the school. This includes the protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act (2010) i.e. age*, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy, undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment. This does not mean that all learners should be treated in exactly the same way: it means that we may need to deliver learning in a range of ways to meet the differing needs of people so that all receive the same standard of education as others as far as this is possible.

*(NB 'age' is a protected characteristic but not in relation to pupils of any age in a school).
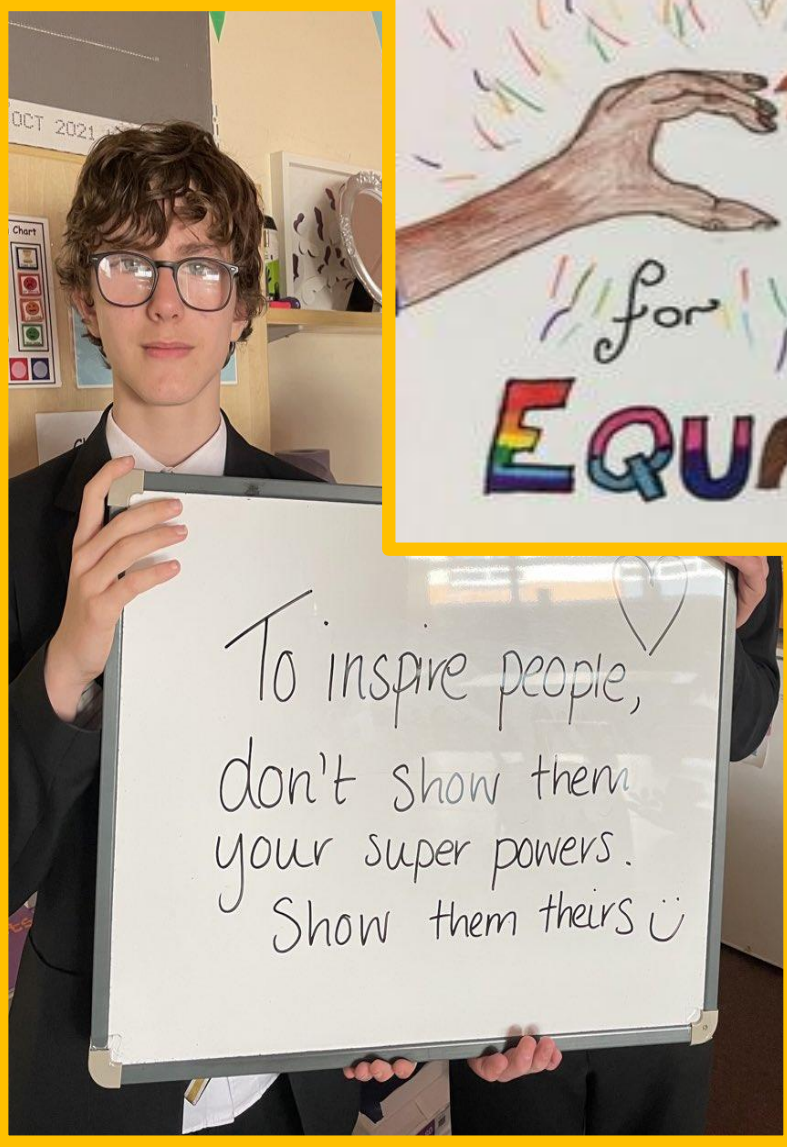

At St. Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary, we seek to:

- promote understanding and engagement of and with our community
- provide opportunities to engage our community
- encourage all children and families to feel part of the wider community
- understand and respond to the needs and hopes of our community
- tackle discrimination and inequality
- increase life opportunities for all
- ensure that learning, teaching and the curriculum explore and address issues of equality and social justice

We should be committed to promoting and teaching about young people's rights especially with Scotland incorporating the UNCRC into law.

Some examples of our actions to date include:

- An Equalities Calendar to highlight pertinent dates / celebrations of groups within our school community e.g. EID celebrations
- Whole school focus on Black History Month
- All S6 pupils are trained in MVP
- Appointing a Principal Teacher of Learner Participation and Representation
- Establishing Equalities Captains within our Student Leadership Team
- Exploring equality and representation within the wider curriculum through our Equalities Curriculum Group
- Use of the S1 – S6 PSHE curriculum
- Linking up with partners who tackle discrimination and provide opportunities for young people to achieve positive sustained leaver destinations
- Family learning events to promote equality activities
- Staff CLPL opportunities relating to equalities and inclusion

◼ ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

HEAD TEACHER

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring*:*

- the policy is readily available and that, staff, children and young people and their parents/carers know about it
- its procedures are followed
- regular up to date information and data is uploaded to the establishment Education Perspective Report, annually
- all staff know their responsibilities, including the Headteacher as leader of learning, and receive training and support in carrying these out
- the school takes appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination towards learners and staff and follows appropriate procedures. For learners these are outlined in Chapter 7 of Glasgow's revised Anti-Bullying Strategy. 📄 Revised Anti Bullying Strategy 2019 [2Mb]. For staff the procedures are outlined in the employees Bullying and Harassment policy
- the school has appropriate channels and processes in place to encourage all voices to be listened to so that we can support children and young people's confidence in reporting bullying incidents.

All school staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality and a collaborative ethos in the classroom/playroom
- developing school/class rules which challenge discriminatory behaviour
- modelling good practice and being positive role models
- proactively supporting learners if they face discrimination or inequalities linked to a protected characteristic
- reporting discriminatory incidents following recording and reporting procedures as outlined in Chapter 7 of 📄 Revised Anti Bullying Strategy 2019 [2Mb]
- recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- promote equality and social justice
- undertake CLPL opportunities to keep up to date with the law and practice on equality

All young people are responsible for:

- supporting the school's equality ethos
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- supporting students who being treated unfairly, bullied and disrespected
- sharing concerns or issues with a member of staff

StThomasAquinasRE
@AquinasRe

Our chaplaincy youth ambassadors have been absolute superstars at todays social justice conference. Mega proud of you both gals! 🙏🥰
@StThomasAqSec
@MrsFarrell82

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- supporting the school's equality ethos
- sharing concerns or issues with senior staff
- encouraging their children to uphold equality values and principles outside of the school environment

Partners and visitors are responsible for:

- supporting the school's equality ethos
- sharing concerns or issues with senior staff

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school lies with the Head Teacher

Responsibilities include:
- co-ordinating and monitoring work on equality issues
- dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents) through SEEMIS. For more details on how to take this forward please to refer to Education Services Anti-Bullying policy which is available at Glasgow Online
- monitoring the progress and attainment of children and young people with protected characteristics
- monitoring exclusions

(Feedback from pupil survey, 2020)

"The main thing that makes me happy when I'm at school is the environment. In school I always feel respected by my peers and my teachers, and they accept me as who I am."

■ MONITORING, REVIEWING AND ASSESSING IMPACT

- St. Thomas Aquinas' Equality Policy can be supported by actions in the School Improvement Plan.
- The policy will be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated by all stakeholders 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. To support this, we use the GCC 'Equalities Self-Evaluation Tool'
- Any pattern of inequality found as a result of self-evaluation will be used to inform future planning and decision-making
- Progress in improving equalities in the school will be reported on in the school's Standards and Quality Report
- This policy links to other policies and in general the principles of equality will apply to all other school policies.
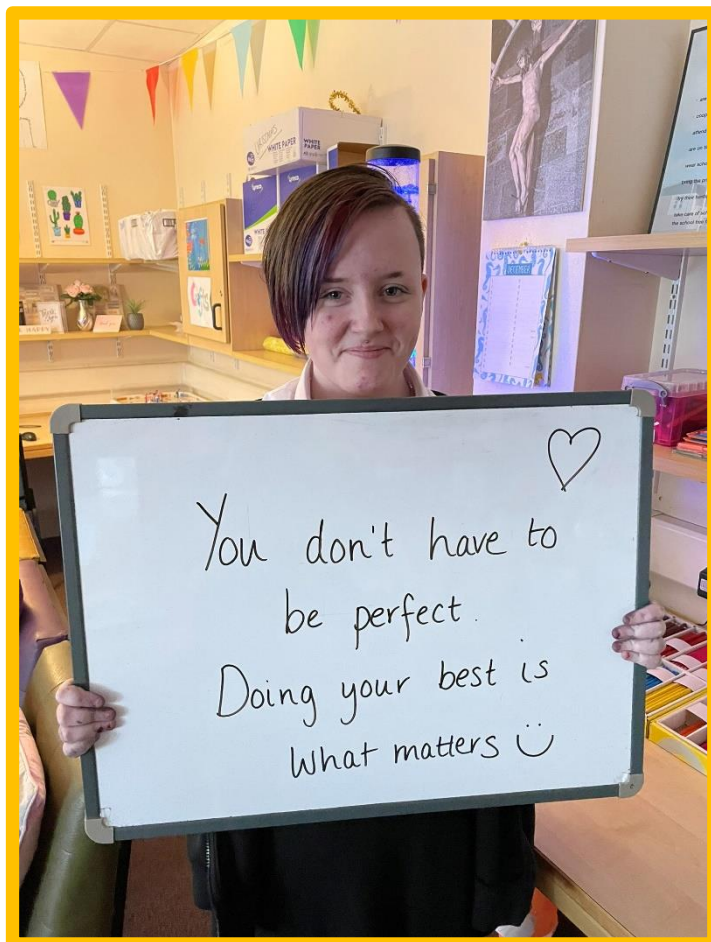
■ APPENDIX 1

This information is collated and updated annually so that we can have a clear picture of the context of the school population. This will be used to contextualise our policy and ensure that it reflects the diversity of our school community.

School Context

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SIMD 1&2	797	75%

🟨 APPENDIX 2

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/technical-guidance-schools-scotland

📄 Revised Anti Bullying Strategy 2019 [2Mb].

www.crer.scot — Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights

www.stephenlawrenceday.org — Stephen Lawrence Foundation website

www.respectme.org.uk — Anti-bullying service

www.gda.scot — Glasgow based charity run by and for disabled people

www.enableglasgow.org.uk — Works with people in Glasgow with disabilities and their carers

www.glasgowwomensaid.org.uk — Supporting women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse

We will continue to add to this list over time.