

Saint Matthew's Academy

Equalities Policy

Rationale

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: “Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God’s design.”

In Saint Matthew's Academy we believe that all people are created in the image and likeness of God. By recognising the equal dignity of all, we celebrate difference and strive to create an inclusive, tolerant and welcoming ethos where each individual has the opportunity and support to participate fully in our community.

As a Catholic school, we work to ensure that the whole school curriculum offers role models and opportunities to learn how to interact with others, to share their experiences, respect each others differences and grow into caring, confident, self-motivated adults, treating all those they meet with dignity and in a fair and just manner.

Legal Framework

Saint Matthew's Academy recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations to the nine characteristics protected by law:

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Gender reassignment
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or belief

In addition, we include economic disadvantage within this policy, recognising that this has one of the most significant impacts for achieving equality for all our young people.

We welcome and actively engage with the statutory requirements and codes of practice. Our staff, learners, parents and partners know what is expected in these areas and are involved in fulfilling statutory duties to improve outcomes for children and young people.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Guiding Principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

- All people are made in the image and likeness of God and are deserving of dignity and respect.
- All members of our community are of equal value.
- We recognise and respect difference.
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.
- We aim to consult and involve widely.
- Society as a whole should benefit from our school policies.
- We base our practices on sound evidence.
- Objectives.

The Curriculum

All learning and teaching within Saint Matthew's Academy is rooted in the teaching of the Church. As part of our work to promote equality, we aim to ensure that within our educational provision children are offered opportunities to develop their understanding of faith in practice and to:

- Understand and celebrate diversity in all its forms;
- Learning about equality and inclusion in a variety of curriculum areas (e.g. PSE, Science, RE, Social Subjects and English);
- Develop and understanding of global citizenship;
- Understand the power of language particularly relating to verbal abuse due to race, disability, sexual orientation or social standing;
- Develop and understanding of their rights, the rights of others, and their responsibilities to each other;
- Develop and understanding and appreciation of other religious beliefs and cultures;
- Recognise and challenge prejudice and discriminatory attitudes and behaviour;
- Develop emotionally and intellectually with the personal qualities and attributes required to make a successful life in a diverse society.

Ethos and Organisation

We ensure the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' progress, attainment and achievement;
- Pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being;
- Teaching styles and strategies;
- Admissions and attendance;
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development;
- Care, guidance and support;
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions.

Addressing Prejudice and Prejudice-related Bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice, discrimination and intolerance which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to above:

- Prejudices around disability and special educational needs;
- Prejudices around racism and xenophobia;
- Prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents in line with North Ayrshire Council expectations.

Roles and Responsibilities

North Ayrshire Council is responsible for ensuring that Saint Matthew's Academy complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

Our designated Head of Service, currently Andrew McClelland, has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The Head Teacher, currently Stephen Colligan, is responsible for the implementation of the policy, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support, and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for:

- Coordinating equality work within staff teams;
- Dealing with reported incidents of racism or harassment and reporting these in detail to the Head Teacher;
- Monitoring the progress of minority group young people, including those on free school meals and from less economically affluent families;
- Allocating resources fairly and equitably, including recognising that some children may require more than others for an equal and fair chance to enjoy and achieve.

All staff are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom;
- Deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur;
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles above;
- Support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language;
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Visitors and external partners are expected to be aware of, and comply with, the school's equality policy.

Information and Resources

We will ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff members and, as

appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff members have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Staff Development and Training

We will ensure that all staff, including support and administration staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of Policy

We will consider every breach of the policy in the light of the particular circumstances and, if pupils are involved take into account their age and the nature of the breach. We will call on support from North Ayrshire Council, the Police or other agencies as appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to free school meals, disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

The Head Teacher, in collaboration with North Ayrshire Council will endeavour to ensure that all relevant policies reflect the school's commitment to the principles of equality and that this commitment is reflected clearly in all its work.

All policies, functions and strategies are regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting equality.

As further equality requirements come into force policies, functions and strategies will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in fulfilling the requirements of new legislation.

Outcomes of monitoring and assessment will be reported to the governing body and other key partners. Members of the school community will be kept informed of Equality and Diversity initiatives being undertaken.

The policy will be reviewed annually, more often should legislation or circumstances require it. Next review date – May 2023