BEECHWOOD
Sacred Heart School

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

This policy has been drawn up with reference to the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975; the Race Relations Act 1976; the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001.

At Beechwood Sacred Heart we are opposed to all forms of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation as stipulated in the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to the promotion of tolerance and understanding and to the eradication of prejudice. We aim to equip our pupils with an awareness of our diverse society and an appreciation of the value of difference.

The School acknowledges that pupils come from diverse cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds and we endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help to promote a School and a society in which there is social, religious and racial harmony. Consideration is given to dietary requirements and the observance of religious worship and festivals. Every member of Beechwood Sacred Heart is regarded to be of equal worth and importance, irrespective of creed, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality and/or disability sexual orientation and in the case of adult members of the School Community marital or civil partnership status or age.

Although the School is founded on the principles of the Roman Catholic Christian faith, we seek to promote an ethos of tolerance based on understanding of and respect for the beliefs and practices of others.

Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- ☐ communicate the commitment of the School to the promotion of equal opportunities;
- ☐ promote equal treatment within the School for **all** members of the School Community, e.g., pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, governors and visitors.
- ☐ create and maintain an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination;
- ☐ foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School;
- ☐ be alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties, and respond as appropriate;
- ☐ remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist;
- ☐ ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against any person on any ground listed below:

- ☐ make it clear that, and ensure, that all discriminatory words, behaviour and images are treated as unacceptable;

- ☐ take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled people at a substantial disadvantage. (See the *Disability and Equal Access Policy this includes a three year accessibility plan as required by Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Disabled pupils for the purpose of this access plan can also include those children with health issues, including mental health or learning disabilities if they meet the legal definition of 'disability'.*)

- ☐ ensure that pupils and staff recognise that discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, origin, sex or ability is not acceptable;
- ☐ make sure that specific dietary requirements are catered for;
- ☐ make sure that pupils and staff have access to a quiet, private space for worship;
- ☐ adapt the school uniform in line with religious beliefs and cultural differences if necessary;

- ☐ that pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals;

- ☐ that all pupils and staff feel safe and confident enough to express and question views;

- ☐ that pupils are seen and valued as individuals and each pupil's education and care is developed in direct relation to their needs and abilities;

- ☐ that all staff feel valued and supported equally and have appropriate advice and encouragement for professional development;

The aims above are achieved by the application of the following principles:

- ☐ The School does not permit race, nationality or religion, disability , gender or sexual orientation to be used as criteria for pupil admission;
- ☐ In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed, based on strict professional criteria only, as specified in a separate document on staff selection;
- ☐ All forms of discrimination by any person within the School's responsibility will be treated seriously to ensure that such behaviour is seen to be unacceptable
- ☐ Any cases of discrimination or prejudice that may occur will be dealt with, as appropriate, according to existing disciplinary procedures.

Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination

If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Headmaster.

If you believe that you have received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed in above, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to your detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter first through the Headmaster; or if necessary through the School's formal *Grievance/Raising Concerns Procedure* as found in the Electronic Handbook.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordingly.

Reviewed Sep 2016 DHM. To be reviewed Sep 2017.