

Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Policy 2016-2017



St Aloysius' College

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Person responsible	Bill Lawrence
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Aims and Values

This policy aims to ensure that St Aloysius College is an educationally inclusive school where the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and the well-being of every pupil matter. It is fundamental to St Aloysius' that each child is valued equally and accepted as a unique being with his or her distinctive qualities and aptitudes.

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of St Aloysius College. We welcome applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world.

We concentrate on educating the individual, to provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can flourish. St Aloysius College is committed to equal treatment for all, irrespective of academic ability or any particular physical or emotional attributes, gender or cultural, religious, ethnic, racial or socio-economic background.

Equality of opportunity at St Aloysius College is about providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community – Pupils, Staff, Governors, Parents and Stakeholders.

Incidents of racial, religious, gender, disability or other discrimination including related bullying are recorded and dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with our ethos, policy guidance and statutory requirements. Sanctions and remedies arising from serious or repeated incidents may include advice or counselling, disciplinary measures and, if necessary, the temporary or permanent removal of 'offenders' from the class or from the school.

Legal Framework

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and replaced existing legislation (such as the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and ensures consistency in terms of making the workplace a fair environment and to ensure compliance with the law. The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 covers the same groups that were protected by existing equality legislation – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. These are now called 'protected characteristics'. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty; the general duty came into force on 5th April 2011. A public body must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty.



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School Exceptions: General

- **Single Sex Schools:** Single sex schools are able to refuse to admit pupils of the opposite sex. They are not prevented from admitting a small number of pupils of the opposite sex on an exceptional basis or in relation to particular courses or classes only. Other forms of sex discrimination against those opposite-sex pupils would be unlawful e.g. not allowing them access to school facilities.
- **Religion or Belief:** The Equalities Act 2010 provides an exception from the prohibition on religion and belief discrimination in the provision of services in schools. For all schools the areas covered by the exception are the curriculum, collective worship, school transport and the establishment, alteration and closure of schools. For schools with a religious character the exceptions also apply to anything done in connection with admissions or in relation to the responsible body of such schools i.e. for Catholic schools the school's governing body.
- **Acts of worship:** The Equalities Act 2010 contains a general exception to the religion or belief provisions which allows all schools to have acts of worship or other forms of collective religious observance. The daily act of collective worship is not covered by the religion or belief provisions, which means that schools will not be acting unlawfully if they do not provide an equivalent act of worship for other faiths. For maintained schools a daily act of collective worship remains a mandatory requirement. It continues to be the case that in any maintained school collective worship is to be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' except where a determination otherwise has been successfully obtained.

A school must of course comply with any request by a parent for a pupil to be wholly or partly excused from attending RE. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship and sixth form pupils have the right to withdraw themselves. The character and content of collective worship in a voluntary aided school continues to be determined by the governing body and for a VA school with a religious character will be in accordance with the school's trust deed or in accordance with the beliefs of the religion or denomination specified for the school. For Catholic schools this will be in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Schools are also free to celebrate religious festivals and would not be discriminating against children of other faiths e.g. putting on a nativity play.

- **Uniforms:** The Act does not deal specifically with school uniform or appearance but the general requirement not to discriminate would apply. Governing bodies must also have regard to their obligations under the **Human Rights Act 1998**. It is for the governing body to decide matters relating to uniform and appearance. The DfE guidance on school uniform policy advises that schools should be sensitive to the needs of different cultures, races and religions and that the Department would expect schools, where possible, to act reasonably in accommodating these needs, within a general uniform policy, without compromising important school policies, such as school safety or discipline.

Exceptions for Schools with a Religious Character

- **Admissions:** Priority may be given on the basis of faith criteria in cases of where schools are oversubscribed in accordance with admissions law and the provisions of the School Admissions Code. Schools designated as having a religious character **must** have regard to any guidance from the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination when constructing faith-based oversubscription criteria and must also consult that body or person when deciding how membership or practice of the faith is to be demonstrated.



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Catholic schools must therefore have regard to diocesan guidance and consult with their diocese. This applies to **all** Catholic schools, including schools which are under the trusteeship of a religious order.

- **Benefits, facilities and services:** Exceptions are provided for schools with a religious character in relation to how education is provided and access to aspects of school life. Catholic schools will still be able to mark or celebrate events specific to their religion and ethos. Parents, guardians or carers will not be able to claim that their children have been discriminated against simply because an equivalent celebration of events of significance to their particular religion is not arranged. Schools will also still be able to organise trips to a local church and will not have to organise visits to accommodate children of other faiths within the school. The DfE guidance also states as an example that a child of a different faith could not claim that they were being treated less favourably because objects symbolic of a school's faith, such as the Bible, were given a special status on the school.
- **Employment:** The Act provides that for schools with a religious character it will not be unlawful discrimination to do certain things permitted by the **School Standards and Framework Act 1998** ("the SSFA").

This means that for Catholic schools, in common with other voluntary aided schools, preference may be given in connection with the appointment, remuneration or promotion of teachers, to those whose religious beliefs or religious practice is in accordance with the tenets of the school's religion or religious denomination or who give or are willing to give religious education in accordance with the tenets of the faith. Conduct that is incompatible with the precepts of the Church, or which fails to uphold its tenets, may be taken into consideration in determining whether the teacher's employment should be terminated.

Independent schools with a religious character may also take into account religious considerations. Academies, although publicly funded, are independent schools. The Act contains equivalent provisions for Catholic independent schools as apply to Catholic voluntary aided schools. **The exceptions which apply to Catholic Academies following conversion will therefore remain unchanged.**

The exceptions were extended in England (not Wales) to remove the provision that no person shall be disqualified by reason of his religious opinions, or of his attending or omitting to attend religious worship, from being employed or engaged for the purposes of a school otherwise than as a teacher. This meant that preference could be given to practising Catholics in non-teaching posts where there was a genuine occupational requirement, which would previously not have been permissible. The Act provides for occupational requirements⁵. Of particular relevance are the provisions which provide that where an employer has an ethos based on religion or belief they do not contravene the Act by applying a requirement to be of a particular religion or belief if, having regard to the nature of the work, it is an occupational requirement and is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The importance of the role of the teaching staff is acknowledged by the Bishops collectively. The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales has set out its requirement to its schools as follows:

"The preservation and development of the quality and distinctive nature of Catholic schools depend on the faith, practice and commitment of the teachers in the schools, working with their governing bodies"



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The Bishops' Memorandum:

<http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/index.php/schools/recruitment/item/1000002-memorandum-on-appointment-of-teachers-to-catholic-schools>

refers to the employment of Catholic teachers as a high priority, whilst at the same time recognising the contribution of teachers of other Christian Churches, other faiths and other teachers.

The Memorandum also requires that for the most senior roles i.e. the posts of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head or Co-ordinator of Religious Education the post must be filled by a baptised and practising Catholic. For other leadership posts that directly affect the Catholic Mission of the school they should, wherever possible, be staffed by skilled practitioners who are committed Catholics.

Leadership and Management and Governance

The Governing Body maintains an overview of implantation of the Policy and race equality is a regular item at Governors' meetings. Responsibilities are clearly identified and understood.

All school policies at St Aloysius College reflect a commitment to equal opportunities, including race equality. The Governing Body and School Management set a clear ethos which reflects the school's commitment to equality. St Aloysius College promotes a proactive approach to valuing and respecting diversity. All staff contributes to the formulation, development and review of policy documents. The school ensures the involvement of Governors and, where appropriate, takes steps to enable the contribution of all Stakeholders.

Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of all pupils and appropriate breadth of content. Additional grants and resources (such as those provided for minority ethnic pupils) are appropriately targeted and monitored.

Policy Planning, Review and Implementation.

All policies, functions and strategies will be regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated for their effectiveness in:

- Eliminating racial discrimination
- Promoting racial equality,
- Promoting good race relations.

Outcomes of monitoring and assessment will be reported to the Governing Body and the LEA. Members of the school community will also be kept informed, ensuring that no individual can be identified.

Implementing the Policy

- Admission decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. The selection procedures are reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving our objectives and for avoiding unlawful discrimination.
- We also welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our policy covering Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND).



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- In accordance with recommended practice the ethnic and religious composition of all pupils and applicants will be monitored, anonymised where possible.
- Appropriate training will be provided to enable staff to implement and uphold our commitment to equality of opportunity. The aims not to discriminate against a person either directly or indirectly.
- The aims not to discriminate on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief in affording terms of education and providing benefits, facilities and services for pupils.
- Where possible, the will aim to allow pupils to observe prayer times and specific religious events.

Admissions, Transitions and Attendance

Our admissions policy is based on a fair system. We advertise our services widely and encourage maximum participation of all community groups. We do not discriminate against any child and will make reasonable adjustment to facilitate places for all children. We aim to fully support all transition phases and understand that different children and their families will need different levels of support to achieve smooth transitions between schools.

The admission process is monitored to ensure that it is administered fairly and equitably to all pupils. Comprehensive information about pupils' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet, etc. is included in all admissions forms. The school and families are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to pupil attendance and absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel who are aware of community issues.

There are strategies to reintegrate long term truants and excluded pupils, which address the needs of all pupils.

Provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance, which also includes staff.

Attainment, Progress and Assessment

St Aloysius College has high expectations of all pupils and they continually challenge them to reach higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement.

The monitoring and analysing of pupil performance by gender, ethnicity and background enables the identification of groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. The school ensures that action is taken to counter this.

All pupils achieve the highest standards. Baseline assessment is used appropriately for all pupils. The school ensures, where possible, that assessment is free of gender, cultural and social bias. Self-assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress. All pupils have full opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do and, therefore, to benefit from assessment. Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupil progress.



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Strategies for Ensuring Progress and Continuity

Planning for equal opportunities is a process in which all teachers are involved. At St Aloysius College, the SLT monitor policy development and the production of schemes of work across the curriculum ensuring progression and continuity in equal opportunities throughout the school. They will support colleagues in their planning and in the implementation of the various schemes of work, and will take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for equal opportunities. They will keep up to date with developments in equal opportunities and disseminate information to all staff as appropriate.

Acquisition of skills and attitudes necessary to create equality of opportunity is difficult to assess formally but the power of strategies to influence opinions and promote awareness of choices will be regularly monitored and revised where necessary. It is important to eliminate bias, in content, resources or attitude, which could disadvantage pupils or staff and inhibit their full development. Feedback to pupils about their own progress in equal opportunities matters is achieved through the marking of work and individual or group discussions, as appropriate.

Daily Procedures

- Teaching materials and other forms of communication are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Positive action, especially by pupils, will continue to be reviewed and made known to the wider school community.
- Assembly times will reinforce good behaviour in the area of Equal Opportunities.
- Staff meetings will include Equal Opportunities issues, with particular reference to this policy and its inclusion in curriculum policy.
- Clear and constant messages will be given regarding the School's values and disciplinary procedures – in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Practice around the School

- All pupils should have work displayed at some time during the school year
- Pupils with SEND must be given equal access to the curriculum
- All pupils should have equal access to extra-curricular activities
- All staff need to have an awareness of the demands of each individual, and should endeavour to give equal attention and speak in the same manner to all pupils, avoiding bias when praising or disciplining pupils.
- Resources and displays reflect the experience and backgrounds of pupils, promote diversity and challenge stereotypes in all curriculum areas. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school.



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The Curriculum

All pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum and curriculum planning takes account of the ethnicity, backgrounds and needs of all pupils. The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- Pupils learning English as an additional language.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- Pupils who are gifted and talented.
- Pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

St Aloysius College monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds. Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity and encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

Extra-curricular activities and special events, e.g., school productions, cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture.

Classroom Practice

Staff should:

- Ensure that all pupils are involved equally in classroom tasks and decision making.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to raise and debate equality issues.
- Work towards a collaborative framework where pupils learn from and with each other and acquire mutual respect for each other's point of view.
- Enable pupils to experience a full range of teaching styles commensurate with their needs and abilities and to take on different roles in a variety of learning situations.
- Should lead by example in promoting language which is free of gender, racial or other biased attitudes
- Ensure that resources used should reflect all groups in society in a positive way
- Ensure that all individuals have equal access to resources, space and teacher time.
- Allow pupils to experiment and take risks in a safe and caring environment.
- Create awareness that people's occupations, interests and attitudes are not pre-determined, (e.g. by race, gender, disability or class) but are a matter of individual choice.
- Impress on pupils that it is unjust to make assumptions based solely upon considerations of race, gender, disability or class.



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Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusion

St Aloysius' procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all. It is recognised that cultural background may affect behaviour. The school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and discipline.

Exclusions and attendance are monitored and action is taken in order to reduce gaps between different groups of pupils. Pupils, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any minority group is always unacceptable. Even taking into account the particular needs and difficulties of St Aloysius pupils.

Personal Development and Pastoral Care

The pastoral support system takes account of religious and ethnic differences and the experiences and needs of refugee and asylum seeker children. St Aloysius provides appropriate support for EAL pupils and encourages them to use their home and community languages. The school takes account of and meets the needs of Traveller pupils, when appropriate.

All pupils are provided with appropriate career advice and guidance.

Work experience providers are asked to demonstrate their commitment to Equal Opportunities and all Placements are monitored.

Narrowing The Gap

We aim to identify the vulnerable and underachieving groups within our setting and include strategies to close the gap in achievement between underachieving groups. SEND is a recognised vulnerable group – in our setting we understand the need for early identification and assessment, we work closely with parents to adopt strategies to support the individual child. We adhere to the Code of Practice for SEN 2001 (Graduated Response to SEN – Early Years Action, Action Plus or Statement of Special Educational Needs) we seek further support via a Family Common Assessment Framework where appropriate.

The Prevent Duty

The Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (HMG 2015) came into force on 1 July 2015. The Prevent Duty sets out the need for 'British Values' to help everyone live in safe and welcoming communities where they feel they belong. It places duties on schools and registered childcare providers around keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. In particular, the Prevent Duty requires providers to *'have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'*.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2014)

Part 3 of the Children and Families Act, published in 2014, relates to provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities. These provisions were outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, which came into effect on 1 September 2014.



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At the heart of the reform is the aspiration for the equal participation of children, young people and their parents in decisions being made about local services, and a focus on improving education and outcomes for children and young people. The Code (5.1) states that:

“all children are entitled to an education that enables them to: achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes”.

It is the responsibility of the SEND to ensure that the School follows the SEND Code of Practice. Details of the School’s implementation of the SEND Code of Practice are available in the School’s SEND Policy.

Training and Development

We ensure that all staff, including support staff and those involved in governance, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices. We ensure that staff are confident and fully trained to meet the individual needs of children.

Communication and Information

We value and respect all communication, with children, parents/carers, staff and other professionals. We endeavour to listen and schedule meetings at accessible and convenient times. We aim to make information accessible to families using a range of formats including verbal and visual information, clear written information (including electronic) and translated materials where appropriate.

We aim to ensure that all staff, parents, carers and children (where appropriate) know the content of this policy. We provide a complaints procedure and a complaints summary record for parents.

Staffing: Recruitment and Professional Development

St Aloysius College adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and in line with statutory duties and Local Authority guidelines. Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria. Applicants are welcomed from all backgrounds and we aim for staffing to represent the diversity of the community.

Steps are taken to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school and to ensure that everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this Policy.

New staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their induction programme. At St Aloysius College; the skills of all staff, including non-teaching and part-time staff are recognised and valued. All staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge.

Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support and develop their practice in relation to this Policy.

Addressing Prejudice-Related Incidents

At St Aloysius College, we are opposed to all forms of prejudice and will take action against discriminatory behaviour (including that of staff, parents/carers, children and any visitors to our



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setting). We aim to foster a culture where prejudice related incidents are proactively dealt with and reported.

Meeting the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010

We acknowledge our commitment to the specific duties under the Equality Act 2010. We publish equalities information about our School on our website:

<http://www.sta.islington.sch.uk/>

Conclusion

At St Aloysius College our commitment to educational inclusion will be an integral part of every aspect of the school's life and work. It will be marked by the child centred approach to all we do, to ensure that the needs of each individual are met.

Definitions

Equality: A revised term for 'equal opportunities'. It is based on the legal obligation to comply with antidiscrimination legislation. Equality protects people from being discriminated against and gives people fair access to opportunities, for example, all pupils have the same right of access to services and resources to meet their specific needs. To ensure equality of opportunity some individuals and/or groups may be treated differently in order to meet their different needs.

Diversity: The range of visible and non-visible differences that exist between people. Managing diversity effectively recognises, celebrates, and takes into account individuals' different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences to create a productive educational community, in which everybody feels valued and talents are fully utilised.

Inclusion: The overarching context encompassing equality, diversity and human rights which focuses positively on enabling access to and engaging individuals and/or groups with opportunities, services and facilities. An inclusive ethos is one which encourages full participation to ensure that there is no place in the community where people feel uncomfortable, excluded or not valued.

Protected Characteristics: These are aspects of individuals' and groups' identities which are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in employment, education, training, and in the provision of goods and services. For example, age, disability, gender.

Direct Discrimination: Treating a person less favourably than another in comparable circumstances because of a protected characteristic. In the case of pregnancy and maternity direct discrimination can occur if a person has the protected characteristic without needing to compare treatment to someone else.

Discrimination by Association: Direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person with a protected characteristic. This may include, for example, carers of disabled people and elderly relatives, or someone with a partner from another country. Discrimination by Association does not apply to marriage/civil partnerships and pregnancy and maternity leave.

Discrimination by Perception: Direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic (even if they do not). For example, someone is treated unfairly as they are assumed to be gay.



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Indirect Discrimination: Putting in place a policy or practice that has a differential (positive or negative) impact on someone with a protected characteristic compared to someone without one, when this cannot be objectively and legitimately justified.

Discrimination arising from disability: Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be objectively justified. For example, prohibiting an employee from taking time off for medical treatment.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments: Employers and service providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and service users to enable fair access. This duty is anticipatory and must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure adjustments made are appropriate. Failing to do so is direct disability discrimination.

Harassment: Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which is hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to someone with a protected characteristic. The Equality Act offers protection to people who do not have a "protected characteristic" but find behaviour offensive, even if not directed at them.

Victimisation: Treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under the Equality Act or are supporting someone who is doing so.