CORPUSCHRISTI
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

We are His body, living and learning as one.

EQUALITY POLICY



Document Record	
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Author	SHRO
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1. **Introduction**

   i. Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust (referred to hereafter as the Trust) is required to publish information to show how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") and to prepare and publish equality objectives under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. This policy and guidance document details the schools within the Trust's approach and commitment to equality and provides information on how each school is complying with its general and specific equality duties. As part of its commitment to equality, this policy also provides guidance on the types of behaviour which are unlawful under the Act and on the protected characteristics referred to in the Act

   ii. This policy takes into account the provisions of the Department for Education's non-statutory advice for schools on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Employment Statutory Code of Practice on the Equality Act 2010 produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). This policy also takes into account the provisions relating to equality in the Ofsted inspection framework 2015. The framework places a strong focus on actively promoting equality and diversity, tackling bullying and discrimination, narrowing any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners and actively promoting British values. It also makes clear that schools will be assessed in relation to compliance with their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 and on the extent to which they promote equality of opportunity and take positive steps to prevent any form of discrimination, either direct or indirect, against those with protected characteristics.

   iii. This policy also acknowledges the guides on equality produced by ACAS in August 2015, the guidance documents for schools produced by the EHRC, and the standards of international human rights as expressed in the Human Rights Act 1998, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

   iv. This policy will inform the School Development Plan and will enable the school to demonstrate how promoting equality and eliminating discrimination can help to raise standards, ensure that equality and diversity are part of the school's core business both as a school and an employer and ensure that the school's commitment to ensuring its position as a provider of the highest quality education supports the school's equality objectives.

   v. This policy is the key school document for information about equality. It brings together all the school's previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality.

2. **Scope of the policy**

   i. This policy applies to all employees who work at school within the Trust.

ii. This policy does not apply to self-employed staff, contractors, external consultants, agency staff or governors.

iii. This policy also applies to pupils and provides guidance and information for parents, carers, school visitors and other members of the wider school community and sets out the school's expectations and required standards of behaviour with regard to equality issues.

iv. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Grievance Policy, Dignity at work Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Recruitment Policy, Behaviour Policy, Admissions Policy, SEN and Anti-Bullying Policy and Flexible Working Requests Policy.

v. Unless indicated otherwise, all references to "Governing Body" apply to school's Local Governing Body or Interim Management Board.

3. **Principles**

i. In fulfilling its obligations under the Act and when carrying out its duties as detailed in this policy, the school will be guided by the following Key Principles.

- **Principle 1 - All members of the school community are of equal value and should be treated with dignity and respect.** Every member of the school community is of equal value whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation. All individuals are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and should treat others in the same way.

- **Principle 2 - The school recognises, respects and values difference and diversity.** Treating people equally does not necessarily mean treating them all in the same way. The school will take account of differences and the kind of barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to protected characteristics. The school will make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices in relation to disability including the provision of any necessary auxiliary aids and services. The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances should be appreciated and valued. Diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit the school.

- **Principle 3 – The school will actively promote British values.** The school will ensure that equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity is promoted and that pupils respect others and are well prepared to contribute to wider society and life in modern Britain. The fundamental British values are democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

- **Principle 4 - The school fosters positive attitudes and relationships.** The school intends that its policies, procedures and activities should actively promote positive attitudes, good relations and mutual respect between all groups of individuals who are different from each other. The school will take action to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language including language that is derogatory about disabled people and homophobic and racist language.
- **Principle 5 - The school observes good equalities practice for all members of staff.** The school will ensure equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion and continuing professional development. The school's policies and procedures for employees and potential employees will take into account equality considerations including any relevant exemptions or exclusions.
- **Principle 6 - The school aims to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers which may already exist.** In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts in its policies and practices, the school will take steps to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers which may already exist in relation to certain groups with protected characteristics.
- **Principle 7 - The school will consult and involve widely in relation to equality issues.** When tackling equality issues, the school will consult and engage with those affected by its decisions and where possible, with those people who have special knowledge who can inform the school's approach. The school will take into account the views of those affected in the implementation and the review of this policy and in particular in relation to the school's equality objectives.
- **Principle 8 - The school will address bullying and prejudice motivated incidents.** The school takes bullying and prejudice motivated incidents seriously and any such conduct and behaviour will be carefully monitored and dealt with fairly and firmly. The school will take into account the specific guidance issued by the DfE on bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying and bullying related to sexual orientation, transgender, disability, race and religion. Training will be given to members of staff to ensure they are aware of how to identify and to deal with such incidents. Further guidance is detailed in the school's Behaviour Policy.
- **Principle 9. - The school fosters a shared sense of cohesion and belonging and intends that its policies and procedures should benefit society as a whole.** The school will strive to ensure that all pupils, members of staff and school governors feel a sense of belonging within the school and within the wider school community and that they feel respected and are able to participate

fully in school and in public life. The school intends that its policies and procedures should benefit society as a whole both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and by promoting greater participation in public life of all individuals from all groups including those with protected characteristics.

ii. The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that pupils, members of staff, governors and members of the wider school community are aware of and conduct themselves in accordance with the Key Principles.

4. **Roles and Responsibilities**

i. The Trust has delegated the overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy to the school's Local Governing Body or Interim Management Board. The responsibility for the day-to-day management and operation of this policy has been delegated to the Headteacher.

ii. The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all governors are aware of their responsibilities under equality legislation;
- Having due regard to the school's general equality duty when making decisions;
- Ensuring that this policy is implemented by the Headteacher;
- Ensuring that all the school policies promote equality and maintaining aspects of the school's commitment to equality under review, for example in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment;
- Ensuring that the school's equality objectives are published, actively pursued and reviewed at intervals of no more than four years;
- Ensuring that equality information is published on an annual basis;
- Monitoring the achievement of equality objectives;
- Promoting British values.

iii. The Headteacher has responsibility for:

- Making sure this policy and any related policies and procedures are implemented in school;
- Ensuring the school's equality objectives are published and actively pursued;
- Monitoring how and whether the school's equality objectives are being met;
- Producing information for pupils, staff and governors about the school's equality objectives and how they are working;

- Ensuring reasonable adjustments are made in relation to disability, with regard to pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors to the school;
- Ensuring that the school follows its Disability Accessibility Plan;
- Making sure that this policy (and any other policies through which the school addresses equality matters) are published and are readily available to governors, staff, pupils, parents, carers and the wider school community;
- Making sure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities under the Act and receive appropriate training and any support in carrying these out;
- Ensuring that appropriate action (including disciplinary action) is taken in cases of discrimination, harassment and victimisation including cases involving bullying and harassment related to any of the protected characteristics;
- Ensuring that members of staff and pupils are aware of the procedure for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents;
- Promoting British values.

iv. All members of staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of their responsibilities under the Act and this policy and recognising that they have a role and responsibility in their day to day work to promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
- Keeping up to date with equality legislation relevant to their work;
- Highlighting any training or development they require to carry out their responsibilities under the Act or this policy and attending any related training or learning opportunities;
- Promoting equality of opportunity and good relations and not discriminating on any grounds;
- Fostering good relations between groups with protected characteristics and those without protected characteristics;
- Dealing fairly and professionally with any bullying and discriminatory incidents;
- Being able to recognise and challenge prejudice, bias, discrimination, stereotyping and any inappropriate language or behaviour;
- Promoting an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their lessons and being role models for equal opportunities through their words and actions.

v. Pupils must be encouraged to recognise that they have a role and responsibility to themselves and others so they understand and are able to:

- Promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
- Challenge inappropriate language and behaviour;
- Tackle bias and stereotyping;
- Work to promote anti bullying strategies;
- Respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and understand the action needed to report these;
- Regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance;
- Support the school's approach and commitment to equality and comply with the provisions of the Act and this policy.

vi. Visitors (including parents, carers and contractors) are expected to:

- Support the school's approach and commitment to equality and to comply with the provisions of this policy;
- Refrain from engaging in any behaviour which is unlawful under the Act whilst on school premises.

5. **The Equality Act 2010**

i. The Act provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, replacing all the previous UK anti-discrimination **laws.** The Act defines types of **unlawful behaviour** in relation to persons with **protected characteristics**. The Act applies to all schools and academies.

ii. As part of the school's commitment to eliminating conduct prohibited by the Act, guidance on the provisions of the Act (and how those provisions apply to schools) is contained in Appendix A. The guidance provides information about the types of behaviour which are unlawful under the Act and information about the characteristics which are protected under the Act.

6. **The Public Sector Equality Duty**

i. The Act also introduced a single **Public Sector Equality Duty** (sometimes also referred to as the **'general duty'**). The general duty applies to public bodies, including all schools and academies. The general duty is supplemented by separate **specific equality duties** which require schools to publish information to show how they are complying with their general duty and to prepare and publish equality objectives.

ii. Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and the specific equality duties and how they apply to schools is contained in Appendix A.

iii. Information in relation to how the school is complying with its general and specific duties is detailed below and in the Appendices referred to. In particular:

- Examples of how the school has due regard to the three strands of its general duty are set out in **Appendix B**;
- Details of how the school complies with its duties in relation to disabled pupils and members of staff are included in **Appendix B**;
- The school's current equality objectives are detailed in **Appendix C**;
- Details of the school's accessibility planning are contained in **Appendix D.**

iv. To assist with the duty to have due regard, the school will carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and assess the equality implications in relation to all new policies, procedures and projects. This will help the school to ensure that it is not unlawfully discriminating against certain individuals or groups and that the school is ensuring that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

v. The Governing Body and the school's leadership team will keep written records of all relevant decisions and actions including notes of Governing Body meetings, senior leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

vi. The school's equality objectives are specific and measurable and are arrived at as a result of consultation with staff, pupils, parents and members of the local community. The school will monitor and review its equality objectives in consultation with the school's parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community as appropriate.

vii. Information will be published on the school's website, including details of staff and governor training on the Act to demonstrate how the school is complying with its general duty. The school's website provides links to important equality information including a link to this policy and to the school's current equality objectives.

7. **Recruitment and training**

i. All members of school staff who are involved in recruitment will receive appropriate training on equality issues. Further Information about staff recruitment is contained in the school's Recruitment Policy. Decisions concerning staff recruitment will be based on merit apart from in necessary or exceptional circumstances and where exceptions under the Act apply.

ii. In accordance with provisions in the Act, the school will not enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until after a job offer has been made (unless the questions are related to an intrinsic function of the work for

the job). Any necessary health questions will be asked after a job offer has been made and, in all cases,, any health related questions will be targeted, necessary and relevant to the job applied for.

iii. The school is committed to ensuring that all members of staff and the school's Governing Body undergo training and development in relation to their duties under the Act and in relation to this policy.

8. **Monitoring and review**

i. The school will review this policy annually and will ensure that the views of any other interested parties are sought in relation to the ongoing development and review of this policy.

ii. The school will evaluate the success of the school's equality work using quantitative and qualitative data and by the extent to which the school achieves improved outcomes for different groups.

iii. An analysis of equality data will inform discussions about the school's equality objectives and the school will regularly monitor whether and how the school is meeting its objectives.

iv. The school will monitor and will regularly review all policies, procedures and practices to ensure compliance with the Act and will assess whether any changes need to be made.

9. **Availability of equality information**

i. The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the whole school community knows about the school's commitment to equality and is aware of the school's equality objectives. This will be done via school communications including the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings, school council meetings and via the school's website.

ii. This policy is available:

- On the school website;
- As a paper copy from the school office;
- As a paper copy in the staff room;
- On display for visitors including parents and carers;
- In summary form in the school's prospectus;
- As part of the school's induction process for new staff;
- As part of equality training for existing staff.

iii. Although this policy is the key document for information about the school's approach and commitment to equality, further equality information is included on the school's website and in the school prospectus. There are references to the school's equality duties and obligations in the School Development Plan, the School's Self-

Evaluation Review and other school policies including, but not limited to the school's Recruitment Policy, Behaviour Policy, Admissions Policy, SEN and Anti-Bullying policies, and Flexible Working Requests Policy.

10. **Dealing with breaches**

i. Equality is a matter which is high on the school's strategic agenda. The school takes breaches of the Act and of this policy seriously. The school is committed to ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to stop individuals from taking any form of discriminatory action or from engaging in any form of discriminatory or other unlawful behaviour as detailed in the Act.

ii. The school will ensure that any complaints and evidence of a failure to comply with the Act or this policy are promptly and thoroughly investigated and are dealt with as determined by the Headteacher (or Governing Body as appropriate) in accordance with the relevant school policy and procedure.

iii. Where appropriate, discriminatory acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the school's disciplinary procedure. In addition to being an employment issue, sexual harassment may also amount to a criminal offence and may lead to police involvement. Harassment may also be an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (which is not limited to circumstances where the harassment relates to a protected characteristic). Serious acts of discriminatory behaviour, including acts of harassment, could amount to gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Guidance on the Equality Act 2010

(a) An overview

The guidance in this policy is provided by the school as a reasonable step to prevent individuals from engaging in any form of behaviour or conduct which is deemed unlawful under the Act. The guidance in also intended to create an awareness and understanding of the school's obligations and duties under the Act, including any exemptions and exclusions which may apply.

The Act provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, replacing all the previous UK anti -discrimination **laws** and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas. The Act defines types of **unlawful behaviour** in relation to persons with **protected characteristics**. The Act applies to all schools and academies including maintained and non-maintained special schools.

The Act applies to schools as employers and also to the way schools treat their pupils and potential pupils, and in limited circumstances, former pupils. As employers, schools must not discriminate against potential employees in respect of whether to offer a job or the terms on which a job is offered. Schools must also not discriminate against existing employees in respect of benefits, facilities and services offered including training opportunities, promotion or dismissal.

In relation to pupils, schools must not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, in the way education is provided, in the way pupils are provided with access to any benefit, facility or service and by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The school's "Responsible Body" must ensure compliance with the Act. The Responsible Body is the Governing Body (and the Local Authority in maintained schools) and the proprietor in independent schools, academies or non-maintained special schools. Any person acting on behalf of the Responsible Body, including school employees is liable for their own discriminatory actions**.** The Responsible Body is also liable unless it can show that it has taken all reasonable steps to stop an individual from doing the discriminatory action or from doing anything of that kind. Members of staff should understand therefore that they can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment and unlawful discrimination in the course of their employment against fellow employees, pupils or members of the public.

(b) Types of unlawful behaviour and protected characteristics

Types of unlawful behaviour under the Act are:

- Direct discrimination,
- Indirect discrimination,
- Harassment,
- Victimisation.

The protected characteristics under the Act are:

- Age,
- Disability,
- Race,
- Religion or belief,
- Sex,
- Sexual orientation,
- Gender reassignment,
- Marriage and civil partnership,
- Pregnancy and maternity.

All the protected characteristics are covered by the employment provisions of the Act but the protected characteristics of **age, marriage and civil partnership do not apply to pupils.** It is not a breach of equality law therefore for schools to admit and organise pupils in age groups and to treat pupils in a way that is appropriate to their age.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat, or would treat other people.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a "provision criterion or practice" (PCP) is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. It is a defence to a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown that the PCP is a "proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate. In the context of schools, examples of legitimate aims might be: - maintaining academic or other standards or ensuring the health, welfare and safety of pupils.

Discrimination can include **associative discrimination** (when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic) and **perception discrimination** (when a person is treated less favourably because it is believed they have a protected characteristic even if that is a mistaken belief).

Harassment has a specific legal definition in the Act based on the definition from the European Convention on Human Rights. It is "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect

of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person". This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, and potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated badly or treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because they have done "a protected act" or because the school believes that a person has done or is going to do a protected act. A protected act might involve, for example; making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information or doing anything else under or in connection with the Act.

(c) Additional provisions relating to disability

With regard to disability, there are two further types of unlawful behaviour, these are:

- Discrimination arising from a disability,
- A failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Discrimination arising from a disability is when a disabled person is discriminated against because of something that is a consequence of their disability. This is unlawful unless the discrimination can be justified.

The **duty to make reasonable adjustments** now extends to **a duty to provide auxiliary services and aids.** The duty to make reasonable adjustments means that where something a school does places a disabled pupil or member of staff at a disadvantage compared to other pupils or members of staff, the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage. Auxiliary aids or services are things or persons which help. Whether a school should provide an auxiliary or service is a question of reasonableness in all the circumstances of the case.

The overriding principle of the equality legislation is one of equal treatment but schools may, and often must, treat disabled pupils and disabled members of staff more favourably than non-disabled pupils or non-disabled members of staff by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils and members of staff without disabilities.

Schools must also carry out **accessibility planning** for disabled pupils and members of staff under the Act. With regards to pupils, schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum; improving the physical environment of school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils. With regard to staff, schools are under a duty to consider alterations to physical features of the school where it is reasonable to avoid disadvantage caused by disability.

(d) Positive action and positive discrimination

New provisions in the Act allow schools to take positive action in relation to pupils and members of staff with certain protected characteristics who may be disadvantaged for social or economic reasons to do with past or present discrimination. Any such action must be a proportionate way of achieving a legitimate aim.

Positive action is **not** the same as positive discrimination. Positive discrimination is always unlawful except in the case of disability.

(e) Exceptions and exclusions

There are some exceptions in the Act which apply to all schools and some which apply specifically to schools with a religious character (faith schools) and to single sex schools. As a faith school further information about the faith school exemptions is detailed below.

The daily act of collective worship is an exemption which applies to all schools in relation to the Act's religion or belief provisions. Schools are permitted to have acts of worship or other forms of collective religious observance and will not be acting unlawfully if an equivalent act of worship is not provided for other faiths. Schools are permitted to celebrate religious festivals.

The content of the school curriculum is excluded from the Act but the way, in which schools provide education, i.e. the delivery of the curriculum is not. Schools must ensure that the curriculum is not delivered in a discriminatory way and that it is delivered in accordance with the public sector equality duty. Schools should provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and should ensure that all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. When a school's Curriculum Policy is reviewed, due regard must be given to equality considerations.

The Act does not deal specifically with school uniform or other aspects of appearance such as hair, jewelry and make up. The school's Governing Body determines uniform policy and the rules relating to appearance but must have due regard to equality law and to obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 when making decisions in this regard. Governing Bodies should be sensitive to the needs of different groups and should act reasonably in endeavoring to accommodate those needs without compromising other school policies and requirements including requirements relating to health, safety and discipline.

(f) Faith schools

Certain exceptions apply to the religion or belief provisions in the Act which mean that faith schools may conduct themselves in a way which is compatible with their religious ethos. Faith schools may discriminate because of religion or belief in relation to admissions and in the access to any benefit, facility or service.

Faith schools may give priority in admissions to pupils of the school's own religion although this may only be done when a school is oversubscribed. Faith schools may also choose to allocate some places to children of a specific faith if the school wishes for example to ensure a mixed intake to reflect the diversity of the local population. Any such selection would be on the basis of faith only and not on the basis of ethnic background.

There are also exemptions in relation to how education is provided to pupils in faith schools and the way in which faith schools allows access to other aspects of school life which are not necessarily part of the school curriculum. If for example, a faith school was to organise a visit for pupils to sites of particular interest to the school's faith, the school would not be discriminating unlawfully by not arranging trips to sites of significance to the faiths of other pupils. Nor could a pupil of a different faith claim they were being treated less favourably because objects symbolic of the school's faith are given special status in school.

Faith schools must not treat a pupil less favourably because they do not (or no longer) belong to the school's religion. They must not discriminate in relation to other protected characteristics.

There are some specific exceptions for faith schools in relation to the employment of staff. The provisions differ for voluntary controlled and foundation schools with a religious character, and voluntary aided independent schools, academies and free schools with a religious character. Further information about the exceptions in relation to the employment of staff in faith schools can be found in the DfE's non-statutory advice for schools on the Equality Act 2010 and these are reflected in the schools' recruitment and other relevant staff policies.

(g) The Public Sector Equality Duty and supporting specific duties

The Act also introduced a single **Public Sector Equality Duty** (sometimes also referred to as the **'general duty'**). The general duty applies to public bodies, including all schools and academies. The general duty is supplemented by separate **specific equality duties** which require schools to publish information to show how they are complying with their general duty and to prepare and publish equality objectives.

The general duty applies to all protected characteristics and requires schools, when carrying out their functions, to have **due regard** to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations across all characteristics.

Having due regard means that the Governing Body and the school's leadership team must ensure that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, thought will be given to equality considerations. Equality will not just be an afterthought and will never be just a matter of ticking boxes. Decisions and actions will be made with an open mind and an assessment will always be made as to whether a particular decision or action may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 introduced new **specific equality duties** to help public authorities meet their obligations under the general duty. These specific duties apply to all schools. In order to comply with their specific duties, schools are required to:

- Publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with their general duty;
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

Schools are required to update published information at least annually and to publish objectives at least once every four years. The school's current equality objectives can be found in Appendix C.

How the school is complying with its general duty

1. **What the school is doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.**

- Conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 is detailed in this policy which is available to all members of the school community through a variety of sources;
- The school's Equality Policy and equality issues in school are monitored by the Headteacher;
- The school provides training to staff and governors about their responsibilities under the Act and about equality issues;
- The school will make reasonable adjustments to the school environment and make activities as accessible and welcoming as possible for pupils, staff and visitors to the school;
- By planning ahead, the school will ensure where reasonably possibly that all pupils are able to take part in all the activities in school including extra-curricular activities and any residential visits. The school will monitor uptake to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic;
- The school takes seriously the need to consider equality implications whenever policies and procedures are developed, adapted and reviewed and whenever significant decisions are made about the day-to-day life of the school. This will ensure that policies, procedures and decisions do not even inadvertently, disadvantage groups of pupils with protected characteristics. A record will be made of any equality considerations and will be published on the school website as appropriate;
- Equality considerations are taken into account in all school policies;
- Bullying and prejudice related incidents are carefully monitored and dealt with effectively;
- The school will ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to equality issues so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to recruitment, promotion or training opportunities. The school will ensure that job applicants are not asked health related questions in accordance with the Act and the school's Equality Policy unless they related to an intrinsic function of the work they do. The school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to the interview and recruitment process as necessary;
- The school will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its practices when considering requests for contractual variations. Requests will only be refused if there are good business reasons unrelated to any protected characteristics in accordance with the school's Flexible Working Requests Policy and Procedure;

- The school is committed to ensuring pupils understand that they belong to a society and a world that is diverse and multi-cultural. The school will regularly consider and review the way in which its teaching and the curriculum helps promote an awareness of the rights of individuals and helps pupils understand and value difference and diversity and to challenge prejudice and stereo-typing. The school will actively promote equality, diversity and fundamental British values though the curriculum and by creating an environment which demands respect for all.

2. What the school is doing to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

- The school knows the needs of its population very well and collects and analyses data in order to inform planning and identify targets to achieve improvements;
- The school has procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through admissions meetings;
- The school collects data and monitors the progress and achievement of groups of learners by the relevant and appropriate protected characteristics and taking into account the groups of learners identified in the 2015 Ofsted Common Inspection Framework. This information will help the school ensure that pupils are achieving their potential, the school is being inclusive in practice and that trends are identified which will help to inform the setting of the school's equality objectives;
- The school will publish attainment data which shows how pupils with different characteristics are performing in helping to identify whether there are any areas of inequality which need to be addressed, RAISE on line will be used as this contains much detailed analysis by relevant characteristics;
- The school will take action to close any gaps in progress or achievement for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age appropriate literacy and number skills;
- The school will collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups. This information can be found on the school's website;
- The school will collect and analyse information about staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities and promotion to ensure that all staff have equality of opportunity;
- The school will ensure that it engages and consults with those people who are affected by a policy or activity in the design of new policies and in the review of existing ones;
- The school will encourage pupils with particular characteristics to participate fully in school activities for example by encouraging both boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds to be involved in the full range of school clubs and societies;
- The school has disabled access, disabled parking bays, a disabled toilet and offers a hearing loop;

- The school is fully aware of the dietary requirements of ethnic groups within school and makes for all of our pupils taking into account equality issues;
- The school will avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any child's achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as" less able". The school will use a range of teaching strategies that ensures it meets the needs of all children;
- The school will provide support to children at risk of underachieving; the school is alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality;
- The school will take positive action which is proportionate to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of children and staff members with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support.

3. What the school is doing to foster good relations across all protected characteristics.

- The school will prepare children for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children;
- The school teaches about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE and citizenship and across the curriculum;
- The school will use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping;
- The school promotes a whole-school ethos and values which challenge prejudice-based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour;
- The school provides opportunities for children to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- The school includes the contribution of different cultures to world history that promote positive images of people;
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences;
- The school promotes positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, school assemblies, visitors and whole school events;
- The school includes equality matters in the Newsletters to parents and carers;
- The school will review relevant feedback from the annual parents questionnaires and from parents' evening, parent-school forums, from issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support;
- The school will secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events review feedback and responses from the children and groups of children, from the school council, PSHE lessons, and whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school.

Appendix C

The school's current Equality Objectives are:

1. To identify all pupils across the school with barriers in language development so that they are provided with adequate support from school professionals to support their communication difficulties.
2. To identify pupils with mental health or wellbeing concerns and create robust interventions to support.
3. To further develop pupils understanding of some protected characteristics and provide early intervention when pupils show a misunderstanding of those.

How the school has developed its objectives:

The school's current equality objectives represent the school's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review and analysis of data and other information. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues. In particular:

- The objectives are based on consultation conducted with staff, children, governors and parents and carers and evidence collected and published;
- The objectives are specific and measurable – they meet the school's needs and are achievable;
- The objectives are integrated into the school improvement plan;
- The school will publish its objectives on the school's website;
- The school will report annually to the Governing Body on progress towards achieving the objectives;
- Evidence will be published on the school website of the steps being taken and the progress towards meeting these objectives;
- Evidence of steps taken and progress made towards meeting past objectives will also be published;
- The objectives will be reviewed annually and will be updated at least every four years.

School plan in relation to how its equality objectives will be met:

Equality Objective	Reasons for objective. Key issues for the school. How the objective will be implemented and who will have responsibility for monitoring the progress of the objective.	Timeframe	Progress
1. To identify all pupils across the school with barriers in language development so that they are provided with adequate support from school professionals to support their communication difficulties.	**The school has invested in the WELLCOM assessment tool for pupils across the school after identifying that speech, language and communication was a characteristic of, not only academic achievement, but also an indicator as to the behavioural needs of some children - particularly those who are unable to articulate how they are feeling.** **Steps to implement will include:** **1. Using WELLCOMM assessments to create a comprehensive screening process to identify pupils with language barriers** **2. Staff development and training to recognise language development difficulties** **3. Use of the Morning Meeting initiative to provide quality-first teaching in the delivery of WELLCOMM** **4. Establish assessment procedures to determine specific needs** **5. Develop individual support plans for identified pupils** **6. Allocate resources and specialist central support through CCCAT Speech and Language specialists.** **7. Implement interventions and monitor progress as highlighted through further speech and language assessment.** **8. Review effectiveness and adjust support as needed** **This will be managed by the Headteacher and led by the SENDCO with support from an Assistant Head in the implementation of WELLCOMM and the Morning Meeting.** **The assessment of progress within this objective will be using attainment outcomes for the pupils identified as being the furthest behind after the initial assessment (marked 'red' and completed in Autumn Term 2024), alongside noticeable**	**Autumn 2024** **Ongoing** **From Autumn and ongoing Spring 2025** **Summer 2025** **Spring 2025** **Ongoing** **Summer 2025**	All pupils across the school were assessed using the WELLCOMM screening tool. This has enabled the school to establish a clear and accurate profile of pupils' Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). The impact of the WELLCOMM intervention has been strong, with 80% of pupils progressing beyond the point of intervention during the year. All pupils initially highlighted as making progress have subsequently been reassessed to ensure that support remains appropriately targeted and responsive to need.

	improvements in any behavioural difficulties identified as part of the language and communication difficulties.		
2. To identify pupils with mental health or wellbeing concerns and create robust interventions to support.	**In order for pupils to accomplish and flourish in school, it is important that vulnerable pupils with mental health concerns are promptly identified and that they feel seen by the school and its leaders. Staff are competent in recognising and responding to wellbeing issues, but earlier identification of such concerns would benefit pupils holistically.** **This will be addressed with the following steps:** **1. Implement school-wide screening to identify vulnerable pupils with mental health concerns** **2. Setting up a pupil-led mental health and wellbeing ambassadors** **~~3. Purchase My Happy Mind to structure the mental health curriculum offer~~** **4. Observation of Trauma-Informed approaches being implemented across other schools** **5. Establish clear referral pathways for pupils needing additional support** **6. Develop personalized support plans for identified vulnerable pupils and through extended services offers** **7. Create partnerships with external mental health services and specialists** **8. Provide a nurturing school environment that promotes wellbeing through more staff developing expertise in Trauma-Informed practices** **9. Engage with families to ensure consistent support at home and school**	**Summer 2025** **Spring 2025** **for Autumn 2026** **Spring 2025** **Summer 2025** **Ongoing** **Ongoing** **Summer 2025** **Ongoing**	The school has made strong progress towards achieving this objective, with key adaptations implemented to ensure sustainability within existing budget constraints. A significant development has been the creation of a comprehensive spreadsheet that identifies pupils with known barriers—such as SEND, safeguarding factors, social communication difficulties, or external agency involvement—which may indicate increased vulnerability to mental health or anxiety-related concerns. This systematic approach now enables staff to proactively identify patterns of need, monitor emerging concerns more effectively, and ensure that pupils receive timely, targeted support. Alongside this, the school has continued to strengthen its early identification processes, further develop trauma-informed practice across staff, and enhance referral pathways for pupils requiring additional intervention. Collectively, these developments mean the school is better equipped to recognise and respond to wellbeing issues swiftly, ensuring that vulnerable pupils feel known, supported and able to flourish.
3. To further develop pupils understanding of some protected characteristics and provide early intervention when pupils show a misunderstanding of those.	**Pupils leaving Ss John Fisher and Thomas More for High School, at the end of Year 6, are required to have an age-appropriate understanding of the key protected characteristics, within a Catholic lens. Staff need to feel supported to deliver lessons on equality and diversity topics with confidence and in a manner that addresses any bias within the pupils. Furthermore, the reporting and intervention requiring incidents where protected characteristics are identified.** **This will be addressed by:** **1. Reviewing the current RSE curriculum against the wider PSHE offer to identify where protected characteristics are identified and addressed.** **2. Develop age-appropriate curriculum materials on protected characteristics that are covered as part of the wider curriculum offer.** **3. Train staff on effectively teaching about equality and diversity** **4. Create school environments that promote respect and inclusion, across various forms and media.**	**Spring 1** **Summer Term** **Summer Term** **Summer Term** **Spring Term**	Work has been successfully completed on points 3–8, strengthening staff confidence in teaching equality and diversity, embedding protected characteristics more visibly across the curriculum, and ensuring that pupils have structured, safe opportunities to explore these themes. This includes staff training on equality and diversity teaching, improvements to the school environment to promote respect and inclusion, the establishment of clear procedures for identifying and addressing incidents relating to protected characteristics via CPOMS, and the development of early intervention strategies to respond promptly to any misconceptions pupils display.

	5. **Establish clear procedures when required to address protected characteristics, including the central reporting formats on CPOMS, so that incidents can be clearly tracked.** 6. **Design early intervention strategies for addressing misconceptions** 7. **Implement regular opportunities for discussion and learning within the safe environment of a classroom, with a trusted adult.** 8. **Continue to map the inclusion of protected characteristics within whole-school assembly and Celebration of the Word.** **The RSE Lead and Headteacher will continue to monitor and assess the outcomes and understanding of pupils through effective pupil voice capture and monitoring of the relevant CPOMS entries.**	**Spring Term** **Summer Term and ongoing** **Autumn Term**	Additionally, regular opportunities for discussion—within lessons, assemblies, and Celebration of the Word—have been strengthened to reinforce understanding in age-appropriate and contextually sensitive ways. Points 1 and 2, which relate to reviewing the current RSE curriculum and developing age-appropriate curriculum materials, have been initiated and are underway, forming the next phase of development. These combined efforts ensure that pupils leave Ss John Fisher & Thomas More with a secure, age-appropriate understanding of protected characteristics within the context of the school's Catholic ethos.

School Accessibility Plan

Aim	Strategy and responsibility	Outcome	Achieved
Objective 1. **To ensure curriculum resources represent disability positively and authentically and provide materials and equipment that enable full participation.**	**Audit existing curriculum resources for representation of disability**	**Audit completed with gaps identified (HT and SENDCO)**	**October 2025**
To promote positive role models of disability.	**Purchase books, posters, and digital resources that positively represent people with disabilities**	**Resources acquired and mapped into the wider curriculum (HT and AHTs)**	**Ongoing**
	Ensure PE and sports activities are adapted to enable participation of all pupils	**PE lessons are observed and planned for adaption (HT and PE Lead)**	**Ongoing**
	Create environments throughout the school celebrating achievements of people with disabilities	**Pupils can identify where disability issued are raised and identified in school (SENDCO and HT)**	**Spring 2025**
	Invite speakers with physical disabilities to share experiences with pupils	**One speaker from a Paralympic background visits school**	**Incomplete**
	Establish a pupil voice group that includes representation from pupils with disabilities	**Pupil voice identifies the group representation**	**Ongoing through subject moderation**
Objective 2. To identify and address physical barriers to access across the school site	**Conduct a comprehensive accessibility audit of all school buildings and grounds**	**Audit completed with prioritized recommendations (Premises Manager)** **New signage installed**	**Completed – October 25**

To ensure all areas of the school are accessible to pupils, staff, and visitors with disabilities	**Improve signage throughout the school using clear fonts, symbols, and dual-coding** **Ensure all entrances have step-free access or appropriate ramps** **Ensure emergency evacuation procedures account for people with disabilities**	**(Premises Manager)** **All entrances accessible (Premises Manager)** **Procedures updated and tested (Headteacher)**	**Incomplete** **Completed** **Completed**
Objective 3. **To create an inclusive environment where families affected by mental health challenges feel supported and understood.** **To improve communication with families experiencing mental health difficulties**	**Establish a mental health support team for families with representation from staff, parents, and external professionals** **Create a confidential referral system for families experiencing mental health difficulties** **Provide private and flexible meeting options (virtual, home visits, out-of-hours) for parents who may struggle to engage with traditional formats** **Designate a welcoming, private space for sensitive conversations with families** **Develop clear pathways to external support services for families**	**Team formed (Headteacher & DSL)** **System established and communicated to all families (DSL and Parent Support Lead)** **Increased attendance at parent meetings and events (Headteacher)** **Space identified and appropriately furnished (Headteacher)** **Pathways documented and shared with relevant staff (DSL and Parent Support Lead)**	**Completed** **Completed – December 2025** **Ongoing** **Completed August 2025**

	experiencing mental health challenges **Create accessible, jargon-free communication methods for sharing information with families**	 **Parents report improved understanding of school communications (Headteacher)**	