



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Reviewed and updated autumn 2024 | Next review autumn 2025

Introduction

This policy applies to all current and prospective members of the School Community. This policy is available on the School website and on request. It should be read in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.

Overview

St Nicholas' School promotes equal opportunities throughout all levels of the School, including Early Years. The School opposes less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity, marital or civil partnership status, religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief), age, race or disability ("the protected characteristics").

All members of the School Community are expected to comply with this policy.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy is consistent with our School's values and ethos and has been built on our own existing good practice. This policy is consistent with all of the School's policies, including the:

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Policy on Promoting Good Behaviour
- Discipline Policy
- Pupils' Charter
- Complaints Procedure

All policies can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Aims

The aims of this policy and the School's ethos as a whole is to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics.
- Eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a learning difficulty or special educational need, or because English is an additional language.
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the School community.

- Value diversity.
- Promote good relations between all members of the School community.
- Comply with the School's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.

Admission

The School treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. Each application will be considered on its merits in accordance with the School's selection criteria based on an applicant's ability and aptitude.

The School accepts applications from, and admits, all prospective pupils irrespective of their disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief) or special educational needs. The School accepts applications from all genders up to the age of 7 but thereafter the School only accepts applications from girls.

In accordance with the School's terms and conditions, parents must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, special needs or disabilities or other circumstances which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School.

The School will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs.

The School monitors the admission and progress of students from different backgrounds.

Educational services

The School affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services, facilities irrespective of any protected characteristic subject to our reasonable adjustments' duty and considerations of safety and welfare.

The School will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

In both curricular and extra-curricular activities, pupils are encouraged to explore the viewpoints and values of different cultures that make up contemporary society and to benefit from the richness of experience that knowledge of other cultures can bring.

The School will:

- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination;
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics;
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an EHC Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support;
- Ensure that all children are included, valued and supported;
- Monitor the admission and progress of students from different backgrounds;
- Ensure that publicity materials present appropriate and positive messages about minority racial groups;

- Make staff aware that schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources should demonstrate sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity, to encourage children to value and respect others;
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff;
- Foster and encourage positive attitudes and behaviour towards all members of the community through the planned teaching of relevant knowledge, skills and values;
- Celebrate cultural diversity through School events, such as dance, drama and music;
- Ensure that, although assemblies are broadly Christian, they emphasise the importance of values such as respect, open-mindedness and tolerance;
- Provide careers guidance that does not promote stereotyping in employment and encourages pupils not to be influenced by such factors when choosing a career;
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum, including being able to participate in a full range of extra-curricular activities;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support;
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School;
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive practices;
- Take reasonable steps to help avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage.

The School recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional.

Religious belief

Although the School's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, the School is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or no religion or faith) subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of the School community.

Reasonable adjustments

The School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils, such as, allowing dyslexic pupils extra time in examinations, providing visually impaired pupils with text in larger font and providing reasonable adjustments to the School uniform for disabled pupils.

The School will inform and consult with parents about the reasonable adjustments, if any, the School are legally required to make for their disabled child.

The School also recognises that it has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for the public where services are provided to the public e.g. parents' evenings and School concerts.

The School is not legally required to make physical alterations as part of the reasonable adjustments duty. However, the School monitors and reviews the School's physical features to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps can be taken to alleviate any substantial disadvantage caused to disabled pupils. The School has an Accessibility Plan in place and a hard copy can be made available by the School office upon request.

The School is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for those disabled pupils who are put at a substantial disadvantage, as part of the School's reasonable adjustments duty. The School will carefully

consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School. Further information on the School's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the School's SEN and Disability Policy.

In the meantime, the School will have due regard to any request by those parents who are willing to pay for such aids and services.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

The School has a SENCO who is also responsible for Early Years Foundation Stage provision, details of which are available from the School office. The SENCO works closely with the Head and meets with the Head at least every other week.

The SENCO has a range of responsibilities including ensuring Individual Education Plans are in place, liaising with parents and other professionals in respect of a pupil's special educational needs, advising and supporting other staff at the School and ensuring that relevant background information about pupils with special educational needs is collected, recorded and updated.

The School will have due regard to the SEN Code of Practice (2014) when monitoring and reviewing provision for pupils with special educational needs.

For those pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, the School will continually monitor and review any special educational needs when assessing a pupil's progress towards the early learning goals. The approach to assessment may be varied as appropriate.

Concerns and complaints

The School will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment.

Pupils who feel they are being discriminated against should talk to a member of staff. Alternatively, if parents or pupils feel this policy has been breached, they should raise their concern or complaint through the School's Complaints Procedure which is available on the School website and upon request.

Breach of the policy

Pupils who are in breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Policy for Promoting Good Behaviour.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis to evaluate its effectiveness and to ensure that appropriate steps can be taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination where necessary.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the aims of the policy are carried out in accordance with the School's equality duty.