

St James the Great RC (VA) Primary and Nursery School



Equal Opportunities Policy

Spring 2008

ST JAMES THE GREAT'S POLICY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Governors and Staff of St James the Great, in line with the institution's Mission Policy and Aims and in accordance with the Church's teaching and concern for justice and equity, base their provision of education and employment practices on the concept of equality of opportunity.

'All people are endowed with a soul and are created in God's image; they have the same nature and origin and, being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same divine calling and destiny; there is here a basic equality between all people and it must be given ever greater recognition.

Undoubtedly, not all people are alike as regards physical capacity and intellectual and moral powers. But forms of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions or language must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design.' **Gaudium et Spes, N29**

The Governors and Staff of St James the Great seek to utilise and celebrate the many gifts we share as a community.

Equality of Opportunity in our Provision of Education

We believe that all deserve equal respect and the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential regardless of gender, race, class, disability or special need. In order to achieve this everyone must have equal access to all facilities and provision.

Prejudice and discrimination can affect the life and opportunities of individuals. It is important that we are conscious of these negative attitudes and that we recognise them and challenge them. Some of the ways we do this at St James the Great are through expectation, resources, language, allocation of responsibilities, attitudes in classes, organisation of groups and distribution of equipment.

We do not seek to "iron out" differences between individuals but to acknowledge and appreciate them, provide for individual needs, encourage understanding and co-operation and foster attitudes which are appropriate to the life we lead today.

We regard the involvement of all adults and young people as vitally important.

As an institution we are committed to the principles and policies established through the Church, the Local Education Authority, and national legislation.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

There are laws relating to equal opportunities which support institutions in challenging discrimination in the areas of race, gender and special educational needs.

Race

The Race Relations Act 1976, amended by Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000, makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person, directly or indirectly, in the field of education. Institutions must actively try to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. In addition there are acts which cover issues ranging from use of institution premises to threatening, abusive or insulting language.

(For further details please refer to Racial Equality Policy)

Gender

The Sex Discrimination Act renders it unlawful for an educational establishment to discriminate against an individual directly or indirectly on grounds of sex in the way access is afforded to any benefits, facilities or services.

Special Educational Needs

The 1988 Act reaffirms the belief that all individuals share the right to a broad and balanced curriculum. This is regardless of whether or not the individual has a statement of special educational needs which calls for provision to be made which is additional or different from that which is generally available.

(For further details please refer to Special Educational Needs Policy)

Disability Equality

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a general duty on schools to have due regard to promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.

(For further details please refer to Disability Equality Scheme)

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

The institution seeks to eliminate prejudicial and discriminatory practices in all areas of institution life and will agree guidelines for responding to such incidents.

Prejudicial attitudes towards individuals or groups on the grounds of gender, race, disability and special educational needs frequently lead to the following:-

- discrimination, name calling, jokes, graffiti and physical abuse.

It also leads to poor social and academic development and limited expectations of self and others. Anyone observing or participating in such incidents which are not addressed, will come to believe they are acceptable. This in turn will damage their social behaviour and therefore their life chances.

EQUALITY OF ACCESS FOR ALL

The institution seeks to ensure equal access for all individuals to quality teaching.

All should have access to:-

- * balances, broad and accurate information about life in multi-cultural Britain and the wider world;
- * resources;
- * a variety of learning experiences;
- * personal safety;
- * opportunities in life.

The institution is committed, therefore, to the following principals:-

- * the development of high self esteem for all individuals and a respect for the views and lifestyle of others;
- * a curriculum and resources which are balanced and which present positive images of all groups in society;
- * the development of an effective partnership between individuals and the institution;
- * the use of teaching and learning styles which encourage motivation independence and co-operation as outlined in the institution's teaching and learning policy;
- * fair procedures of assessment and the recording of achievement;
- * competence in English for all individuals while respecting linguistic diversity;
- * strategies for responding to prejudice and discrimination;
- * career guidance for all which includes positive role models for both sexes, all cultures and differently abled people.
- * providing in-service training for staff to raise and support awareness of equal opportunities in institution