



ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*To lead those in our care to grow in their faith
and to benefit from an enriching education*

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

STATEMENT REGARDING THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY AND HOW IT APPLIES TO ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principles

'You are, all of you, sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. All baptized in Christ, you have all clothed yourself in Christ, and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.'

Galations 3: 26–29.

The Gospel itself leaves us in no doubt, that our belief in its values should place us in the forefront of the movement for justice, equality and harmony. We wish to create and maintain a trusting, secure and happy environment where everyone can work cooperatively and where everyone is treated with respect and is valued. All members of the school community have the responsibility to promote equality in terms of opportunity, treatment and experience, and to challenge stereotypes. Our school community consists of a diverse range of people – employees, visitors, students and parents. We celebrate our differences, by understanding them and enjoying the diversity they bring in accordance with our Catholic ethos.

The Governing Body of the school aims that the school provides an appropriate learning experience for all pupils, whatever their colour, origin, culture, gender, religion or ability. The school has high expectations of all pupils, and it is the responsibility of all staff to educate against any form of prejudice or negative stereotyping and to ensure that their conduct with pupils and colleagues reflects this responsibility at all times.

Heads of department, subject leaders, teachers and support staff share a responsibility for ensuring that:

- a) methods, language, questioning and classroom management includes and engages all pupils;
- b) suitable resources are chosen which are inclusive and are sensitive to different groups, cultures and backgrounds;
- c) stereotypes and what are thought to be stereotypical activities are effectively challenged;
- d) they are aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes.

The Head of School and leadership team are responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are put in place to monitor the performance of potentially disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. Measures include:

- a) identifying and investigating any patterns with regard to exclusions, sanctions and poor attendance in respect of particular groups;
- b) addressing issues such as sexual or racial harassment, bullying and hostile behaviour and ensuring that there are effective procedures for reporting and responding to such incidents;
- c) ensuring that the performance of different groups of pupils is monitored and evaluated so that the particular needs of different pupils are met;
- d) ensuring staff development raises awareness of differences in need and to promote strategies to raise achievement in all pupils creating a welcoming Catholic ethos that

affirms and supports ethnic, cultural, religious and social diversity and effectively promotes good personal, community and race relations.

The Equality Act of 2010 makes it a duty of public bodies to take into account ‘protected characteristics’ including

- Sex (gender)
- Race (ethnicity)
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender

As a Catholic school we want to ensure that no one in our community experiences unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. We want our school culture to be welcoming and tolerant. We want to foster an open environment where people feel they are being treated with dignity and respect. We will strive to promote equal opportunities and not to discriminate either directly or indirectly against anyone on the grounds of race, nationality, beliefs, sexuality or gender.

All forms of unlawful discrimination by any person within the school will be treated seriously. A careful note of such incidents will be made in the RHSI book kept by the Behaviour lead.

It will always be made clear to offending individuals that such behaviour is unacceptable and sanctions may result.

We commit to advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not and will work towards eliminating the attainment gaps that exist between groups of pupils.

We will strive to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The school’s response to its duty to advance equality of opportunity between people (those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not)

Examples	Steps the School has Taken
Teaching and Learning:	A programme of Continuing Professional Development focussed on Teaching and Learning
Admissions and Transfer:	Attendance at Year 6 annual reviews where appropriate. Attendance at primary transfer meetings where primary Sencos hand-over key information to Secondary Sencos. Casework to ease transition of individual students. Offer of interpreters for parents where appropriate.

Participation:	Non-gender traditional subjects such as Design and Technology and GCSE PE. All students do double science, with an offer of triple science. Girls' football team and sports leader training.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	Ensuring equality of access for pupils who are pregnant or who have had a baby
Access to Work Experience and Placement:	Non-gender stereotyping and supported access for those who have a physical or learning disability. Self-find option for those who might want a less traditional work experience placement
Careers :	Careers interviews for targeted students.

Fostering Good Relations between People – those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Examples	Steps the School has Taken (Case Studies)
Social and Emotional Wellbeing:	Mentoring offered to students as they need it. Home Liaison worker to support more complex cases. Anti-bullying and Refugee weeks.
Student Voice:	School Council members are elected from each year-group. Concerns are gathered from form groups and then taken to School Council meetings with an Associate member of SMT. Feedback is then given in assemblies. Student voice is also widely explored in subjects such as PSHRE, History, English and Citizenship, where students are encouraged to become responsible through discussion, debate, word and deed. Student leaders, prefects and senior leadership team.
Positive Imagery:	Positive imagery is displayed throughout the school in all curriculum areas, celebrating the diversity of the school population. Photographs of students and teachers at St Thomas More are also used extensively on the

	school website and on notice boards.
Community Links:	Portuguese classes three nights a week. Turkish School on Saturdays. A disabled group use the Sports Centre on Saturdays. Community sports groups each evening and weekends.
Cultural ideas, Religion and Belief:	A chapel is provided for staff and students.
Removing Barriers and Reasonable Adjustments:	Special exam arrangements are assessed and provided for those students that require them. The school building has been re-designed to incorporate a lift.
Partnerships with Parents:	Parents' evenings held with all year-groups. A target setting and Learning Review Day provides another opportunity for parents to discuss their child's progress with teachers. Our home-school support worker has regular communication with pupils' parents. Annual reviews for Statemented pupils.

Our Equality Objectives (for 2020 through to 2022, to be reviewed 2022)

- 1. To monitor and implement strategies to reduce sanctions where groups with a protected characteristic are over-represented.**

To achieve this objective, we plan:

To extend our analysis of sanctions given by staff to review equality of treatment and efficacy.

- 2. To ensure staff have a better understanding of transgender issues, so that school staff are better prepared to respond to emerging situations.**

To achieve this objective, we plan:

To ensure all staff are trained to ensure a better understanding of transgender issues;
To identify facilities in the school for use by transgender pupils.

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

*This policy was ratified by the Full Governing Body on 27 June 2017
This policy was reviewed by the Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee 15th June 2021*