

ST JAMES'

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Equality and Diversity Policy

Date of Approval:	February 2026
Date of Review:	February 2029

St James' Mission Statement:

*To ensure everyone within our school **family** achieves their full potential, to encourage learning and development through **faith**, and to strive for **excellence***

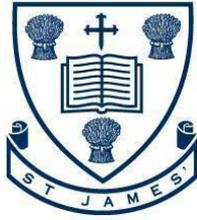
Rationale:

St James' commitment to equality and the celebration of diversity is not merely a matter of legal compliance or secular ethics, but a direct expression of our identity as a Catholic educational institution. Our rationale is defined by three core principles:

1. The Inherent Dignity of the Human Person (Imago Dei)

The cornerstone of all Catholic social teaching is the sacredness and inherent dignity of every human life. This is derived from the teaching that every person is created *Imago Dei*—in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26).

- **Universal Value:** Because every individual, regardless of their background, ability, gender, race, culture, or personal circumstance, reflects the divine image, they possess an inviolable, unconditional dignity. This dignity is not earned but given by God, meaning it can never be lost or diminished.
- **Rejection of Discrimination:** Any form of prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, or marginalisation is a direct affront to the dignity of the human person and, therefore, an offence against God. Our policy ensures that every member of the school community—student, staff, and parent—is treated with the profound reverence due to a child of God.



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2. The Principle of the Common Good

The Church teaches that the purpose of society—and by extension, the school community—is the flourishing of all its members. This is known as the Principle of the Common Good.

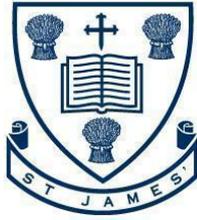
- **Solidarity and Justice:** The Common Good requires active solidarity, which means we are called to be one with our brothers and sisters, especially those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, or face injustice. This policy is an active measure of justice, seeking to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent any individual from achieving their full potential.
- **Diversity as Strength:** As articulated by Pope St. John Paul II, human interdependence is a moral necessity. Our diversity of gifts, talents, perspectives, and experiences enriches the entire school community, making it a stronger, more complete, and more faithful reflection of the Body of Christ. Celebrating this diversity is essential to building a just and equitable environment for all.

3. The Call to Love and Discipleship

Ultimately, the policy is driven by the Great Commandment: to love God, and to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39).

- **A Culture of Encounter:** Following the example of Christ, who consistently sought out and elevated the marginalised, we commit to fostering a "Culture of Encounter" (Pope Francis). This means moving beyond tolerance to active engagement, mutual understanding, and genuine relationship with those who are different from us.
- **Witness of Faith:** By championing equality and inclusion, St James' fulfils its mission to be a faithful witness in the world. Our policy ensures that all decision-making and interactions within the school environment are guided by Christian love and a commitment to Gospel values, ensuring that our educational setting truly welcomes and supports everyone equally.

The legal and local framework for this policy is:



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- The Equality Act 2010, which replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.
- Diocesan Guidelines and Canonical Requirements relating to the governance and mission of Catholic schools.
- Stockport Diversity and Equality Policy and Comprehensive Equality Scheme.

1. Aims and Values

Our school ethos states: St James' Catholic High School is a welcoming school where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect, rooted in Christian love, are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person (intellectual, spiritual, moral, and physical), both students and staff, within a supportive, secure and creative environment.

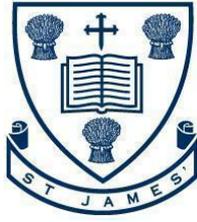
A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils to maximise their potential regardless of age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pupils who are pregnant or have recently given birth, or who are undergoing gender reassignment.

At St James' Catholic High School, we aim to promote equality and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in relation to the nine Protected Characteristics:

- Race
- Sex or gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Disability
- Age
- Religion or belief
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. We recognize that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998, all of which align with the Catholic Church's teaching on the inherent dignity of every human being.



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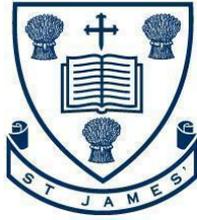
Our Aims

We aim to:

- Provide a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and we remain committed to the principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and the moral imperative of safeguarding.
- Provide a curriculum that, while respecting the Church's teachings, exposes pupils to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, however challenging or controversial, without fear of legal challenge.
- Provide a learning environment that does not subject individual staff members or pupils to discrimination, and where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging.
- Prepare children for life in a diverse society in which they are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community.
- Include and value the contribution of all members of our school community to our understanding of equality and diversity.
- Provide positive non-stereotyping information about different groups of people regardless of the Protected Characteristics (listed above).
- Plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity.
- Actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage through education and, where necessary, restorative practices and sanctions.
- Make inclusion a thread which runs through all our activities.

To achieve these aims we will:

- Involve stakeholders in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures.
- Publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community.
- Collect and analyse data from students to ensure all groups are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage.
- Collect data regarding staff pay, appraisal, absence, capability, grievance, discipline and turnover to prevent any discrimination to staff.
- Use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for all, respond to pupils' diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning.
- Ensure that the wider school curriculum makes explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity.
- Have high expectations of behaviour which demonstrates respect for all people as children of God.
- Ensure that students are not discriminated against:
 - In relation to admissions (in line with the school's approved Admissions Policy).
 - In the way we provide education for pupils.



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- In the way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

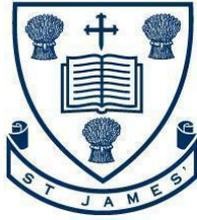
2. Leadership, Management and Governance

St James' Catholic High School is committed to:

- Being proactive in promoting good relationships and equality of opportunity across all aspects of school life and the wider community.
- Encouraging, supporting and enabling all pupils and staff to reach their potential and make a positive contribution.
- Working in partnership with families, the local authority (LA), the Diocese, and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and tackle discrimination ensuring that our Equality and Diversity Policy is followed.

Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibility Additions
The Governing Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that the school complies with equality legislation and all Diocesan/Canonical requirements. ● Ensure the school's mission is upheld, particularly in relation to the pastoral care and spiritual development of all members of the school community. ● Follow the school's admissions policy, which is fair and equitable in its treatment of all groups, within the legal framework of a Voluntary Aided Catholic School.
The Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement the policy and its strategies and procedures. ● Deal with any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with LA guidance in the Dignity at Work Policy and the school's Catholic approach to Restorative Justice. ● Ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality and diversity policy. ● Include an annual update in the Headteacher's report.
All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on grounds of the Protected Characteristics (listed above). ● Act as Christian role models, upholding the values of compassion, forgiveness, and respect in their interactions. ● Keep up to date with equality legislation, development and issues by attending relevant training and accessing information provided by the school.



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Breaches of the Policy

All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures (Behaviour Policy, Staff Disciplinary Policy, etc.), and reported to the Governing Body and LA as required.

3. Policy, Planning and Review

We ensure that all policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development, regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or status, gender and sexual identity and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Policy Planning and Development

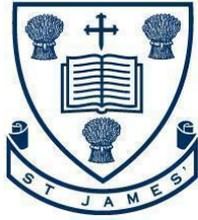
- In the planning and development stage of policy-making, we will ensure we have consulted and taken into account stakeholder views.
- All improvement plans will be designed with equality impact assessment built in to monitor the success of each activity.
- There will be a systematic review of the impact of all policies and procedures on equality and diversity to address any areas of inequality. (Eg. achievement and attainment will be analysed to ensure progress for all, especially in relation to any identified disadvantaged groups; attendance and exclusion data will be reviewed to ensure no over-representation of any one group).
- Our target-setting processes ensure appropriate, challenging targets are set in relation to identifiable groups as well as individual pupils/cohorts.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- Each pupil's progress is monitored and tracked. The resulting data is analysed in respect of gender, race, ability or additional needs, looked-after status. In addition to monitoring to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the school meets its duty to positively promote diversity. This includes monitoring the impact of RE provision and Collective Worship on promoting good relations.
- The data collected is used to inform further school planning, target-setting and decision-making.

Objectives

1. By July 2028, reduce the attainment and achievement gaps between all students and identified priority groups—particularly boys, students eligible for free school meals, students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked-after children, and students from minority ethnic groups—by at least 5% as measured through termly assessment data, attendance records, and progress scores, with progress reviewed and reported each term.
2. By July 2028, increase access to diverse role models for all students by ensuring that **100% of year groups** engage with at least **one diverse role model per term** through staff representation, leadership visibility, or



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visiting speakers, and by increasing the diversity of staff and leadership representation year-on-year, with impact monitored through curriculum audits, student voice surveys, and participation records.

3. Train all members of staff and governors involved in the recruitment and selection of staff on equal opportunities and non-discrimination by the end of July 2026. Training evaluation will show 100% completion.