ASHFORD ST MARY'S Church of England School

Equality Statement and Information

Ratified by Full Governing Body: February 2026

Draft Prepared	January 2026
Date Agreed	February 2026
Signed by Headteacher	Nicola Hirst
Signed (Chair of Governors)	Elizabeth Worthen
Date Policy to be Reviewed	February 2027

Christian Values, Innovative Curriculum, Inspirational Teaching, Transformational Outcomes

Our Christian Vision:

To provide the children and adults of St. Mary's with exceptional learning experiences, which offer opportunities to develop their unique skills and talents, underpinned by strong Christian values. Our nurturing environment will foster creativity and enable our children to make a positive contribution to society, enjoy life in all its fullness and to shine as lights in the world to the glory of God.

Biblical Inspiration for our Vision:

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. **Matthew 5:16**

We aim to achieve this vision by:

- Having strong Christian values through which we live out our vision
- Supporting and challenging all abilities, helping every child to achieve beyond their potential in all areas of learning – intellectual, emotional, physical, social, moral, spiritual and cultural.
- Ensuring that all adults are highly skilled, access high quality professional development and flourish in our Christian environment
- Providing children with a broad, creative curriculum and a range of enrichment opportunities
- Empowering our pupils to become active learners who can problem solve, question, think critically, take risks and lead their own learning
- Ensuring that every child flourishes and fulfils their own potential, with resilience and self-belief.
- Promoting British values of: The rule of law, Individual liberty, Mutual respect, Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs, through our curriculum
- Ensuring that our entire school community has an opportunity to reflect on their learning and have opportunities to pray

Our Christian Values:

RESPECT FRIENDSHIP PERSEVERANCE FORGIVENESS COMPASSION TRUST

2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

As well as the specific actions which have been agreed by Governors and are set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways. The achievement of pupils will be monitored by gender, disability and race and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on gender, disability, race or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

3. Equal Opportunities for Staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at Ashford St Mary's CEP School.
We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.
All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of the wider community.

Employer duties

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include**:**

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;

- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

4. Equality and the law

The Equality Act (2010) legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations

The action plan at the end of this Equality Scheme outlines the actions Ashford St Marys CEP School will take to meet the duties detailed below.

4a. Sexual Equality

We have a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male pupils and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty we will**:**

- Prepare and publish an Equality Scheme which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

4b. Disability

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Strategy.

Definition of disability

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. "A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty if he or she: Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions". SEN Code of Practice (2015, p 15)

Many children and young people who have SEN may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is… "a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial' SEN Code of Practice (2015, p16)

Legal duties

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will**:**

- Prepare and publish an Equality Scheme which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

4c. Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for pupils and treatment of pupils.

4d. Race Equality

This section of the plan reflects the general and specific duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare an Equality Scheme which includes our written policy for race equality;
- Assess the impact of our policies, including this Plan, on pupils, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these pupils;
- Monitor the impact our plans and policies have on such pupils, staff and parents towards raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

4e. Community cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

5. Consultation and involvement

We have developed this plan by gaining:

- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / INSET;
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school.
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Personalised Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of governors

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

The role of the head teacher (or senior leader responsible for Equalities)

- It is the head teacher's role to implement the school's Equality Scheme and s/he is supported by the governing body in doing so.
- It is the head teacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Scheme, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The head teacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The head teacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The head teacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching

- All staff will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Scheme.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the head teacher.
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

7. Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / head teacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the head teacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body on a half termly basis.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as:

'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of discriminatory incident

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

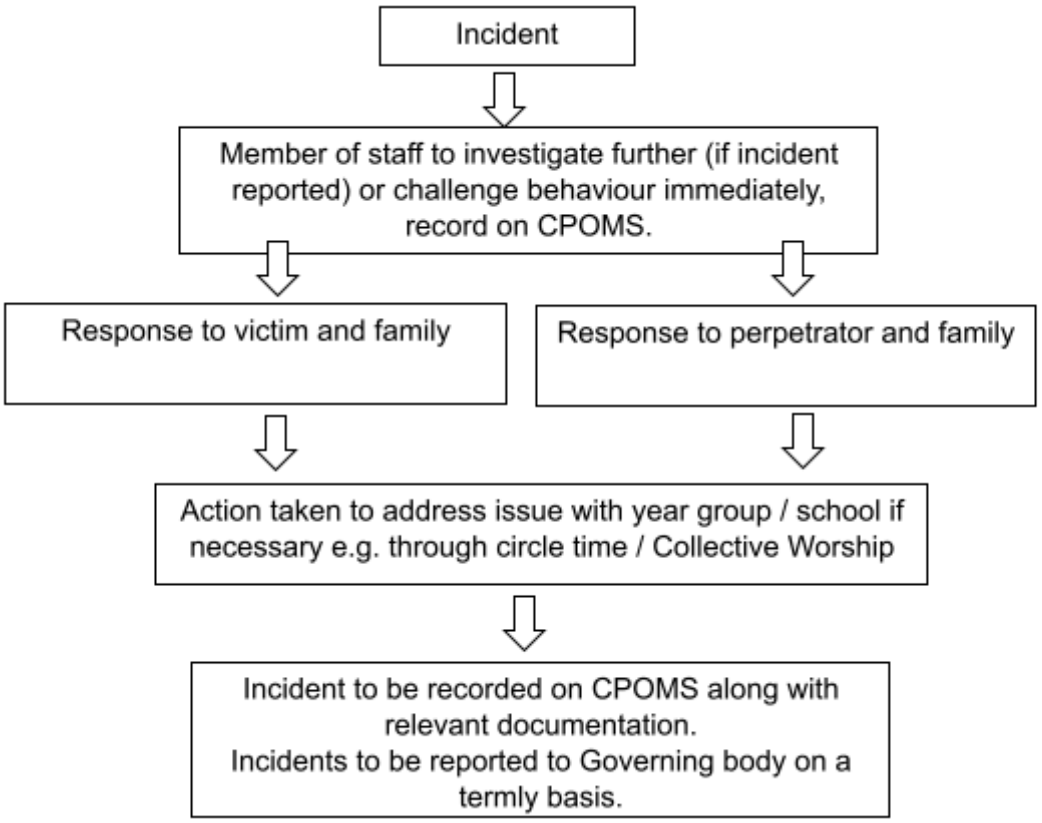
- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;

- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to cooperate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and reporting incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

The procedure for responding and reporting is outlined below:



8. Review of progress and impact

The Plan has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling program for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Scheme annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on a three year cycle.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

9. Publishing the plan

We will publish our plan on the school website; and raise awareness through parental communication, collective worship and staff meetings. A hard copy of this policy is available on request.

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