



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Saffron Walden

EQUALITY POLICY

Policy No. STM-062

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1. Aims and Values

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, we are committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming and respectful environment where every pupil, member of staff, governor, parent, carer and visitor is valued and treated with dignity. Our school's ethos is underpinned by strong, Catholic, faith-based values, encouraging us to love one another as God loves us.

Our commitment to equality reflects our school vision, values and ethos. We believe that every individual should have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, regardless of background, identity or personal circumstances.

We will:

- promote equality of opportunity for all;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and prejudice;
- foster positive relationships and mutual respect;
- celebrate diversity and difference;
- create a culture where everyone feels safe, valued and included;
- provide an environment in which all pupils can thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

We recognise and value diversity within our school community and wider society. We actively promote respect for:

- disability;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- marriage and civil partnership (for staff).

These are known as the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Equality Act 2010;
- Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 Equality Act 2010);
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years;
- Education Act 2011;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest edition, September 2026);
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations.

The Governing Body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the school complies with all relevant equality legislation and guidance.

3. Public Sector Equality Duty

In carrying out our functions, the school will have due regard to the need to:

3.1 Eliminate discrimination

We will work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

3.2 Advance equality of opportunity

We will seek to identify and remove barriers that may prevent individuals from achieving their potential and participating fully in school life.

3.3 Foster good relations

We will promote understanding, respect and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds and experiences.

The school will consider equality implications when making decisions, developing policies and reviewing procedures.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ensuring compliance with equality legislation;
- approving and reviewing this policy;
- setting and monitoring equality objectives;
- scrutinising equality information and data;
- ensuring appropriate resources are allocated;
- monitoring the effectiveness of equality-related actions;
- promoting an inclusive culture throughout the school.

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- implementing this policy;
- ensuring equality considerations inform school improvement planning;
- promoting an inclusive school culture;
- ensuring staff receive appropriate training;
- monitoring and addressing prejudice-related incidents;
- ensuring reasonable adjustments are made where required;
- reporting equality information and progress to governors.

4.3 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- promoting equality and inclusion;
- modelling respectful behaviour;

- challenging discriminatory language and behaviour;
- ensuring pupils are treated fairly and consistently;
- recognising and addressing unconscious bias where possible;
- reporting concerns and incidents promptly;
- supporting pupils to develop respect for diversity and difference;
- participating in equality training and professional development.

4.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- show respect towards others;
- value diversity;
- challenge bullying and discriminatory behaviour appropriately;
- contribute positively to an inclusive school environment.

4.5 Parents, Carers, Visitors and Contractors

Parents, carers, visitors and contractors are expected to support the school's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and comply with relevant school policies.

5. Equality Information

The school gathers and analyses information to identify any barriers to participation, achievement or wellbeing.

Information may include:

- pupil attainment and progress;
- attendance and persistent absence;
- behaviour and exclusion data;
- SEND information;
- pupil premium and disadvantaged pupil outcomes;
- participation in extracurricular activities;
- bullying and prejudice-related incidents;
- staff recruitment and workforce data where appropriate;
- feedback from pupils, staff, parents and carers.

The school will use this information to inform strategic planning and future equality objectives.

5.1 School Context

The school serves a diverse community and values the contribution made by individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, experiences and beliefs.

The Governing Body will review demographic information annually to ensure the school remains responsive to the needs of its community.

6. Accessibility

The school is committed to improving accessibility for pupils, staff and visitors with disabilities.

Through the Accessibility Plan, the school aims to:

- increase participation in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment;
- improve access to information;
- make reasonable adjustments where required;
- remove barriers that may disadvantage disabled individuals.

The Accessibility Plan is reviewed regularly and published in accordance with statutory requirements.

7. Preventing Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to:

- discrimination;
- harassment;
- victimisation;
- racist incidents;
- homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour;
- sexist language and behaviour;
- disability-related prejudice;
- religious discrimination.

All incidents will be:

- taken seriously;
- investigated promptly;
- recorded appropriately;
- addressed in line with school procedures;
- monitored for patterns and trends.

The school will support those affected and take appropriate action where necessary.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- analysis of pupil achievement data;
- attendance monitoring;
- behaviour and exclusion records;
- safeguarding information;
- participation rates;
- pupil voice activities;
- staff and parent surveys;
- records of prejudice-related incidents;
- governor monitoring activities.

Equality information will be reviewed annually and reported to governors.

9. Publication

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 Specific Duties, the school will:

- publish relevant equality information;
- review and publish measurable equality objectives;
- make this policy publicly available through the school website or upon request.

10. Equality Objectives (2026-2030)

Objective 1: Maintain an Inclusive and Respectful School Culture

To ensure incidents involving discrimination, prejudice or harassment remain rare and are addressed promptly, with patterns reviewed termly by senior leaders and governors.

Objective 2: Promote Representation Through the Curriculum

To ensure pupils experience a diverse curriculum that reflects different cultures, backgrounds, abilities and experiences through annual curriculum reviews.

Objective 3: Reduce Gaps in Participation and Outcomes

To monitor and reduce any significant differences in achievement, attendance, participation or wellbeing between identified groups of pupils.

Objective 4: Develop Staff Knowledge and Confidence

To provide regular, and wherever possible annual, training for all staff and governors on equality, diversity, inclusion and relevant safeguarding issues.

Objective 5: Strengthen Pupil Voice and Belonging

To ensure all pupils feel represented, respected and able to express their identity safely through pupil voice opportunities, wellbeing surveys and inclusive school practices.

11. Review Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- legislation changes;
- statutory guidance is updated;
- local circumstances require revision;
- monitoring identifies areas requiring improvement.

The Governing Body will review progress against the Equality Objectives annually and ensure that the policy continues to meet the needs of the school community.