

Single Equality Policy 2026 - 2027

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ENCOUNTER ● LEARN ● GROW ● FLOURISH

Table of changes

Version Number	Date of Version/Review	Detail changes
V. 1		

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1. Executive Summary

The Trust remains committed to fostering positive attitudes, removing barriers, and treating all stakeholders as of equal value. Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) will be ensured.

Principles Guiding Our Equality Policy

In developing this Equality Policy, the Trust is guided by the following principles:

- **Equal Value of All Stakeholders**
Every pupil, parent, carer, staff member, and partner is of equal worth, regardless of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- **Recognition and Respect for Difference**
Equality does not mean treating everyone identically; we take account of differences in life experience, outlook, and barriers faced.
- **Fostering Positive Attitudes and Relationships**
We promote mutual respect and understanding, building a shared sense of cohesion and belonging across our school communities.
- **Integration into Employment Practices**
Equality principles are embedded in staff recruitment, retention, and development, ensuring fairness and transparency.
- **Commitment to Removing Barriers**
We actively work to reduce and eliminate pre-existing inequalities and obstacles to participation and achievement.
- **Inclusive Consultation and Engagement**
Policy development involves wide consultation with, and meaningful participation of, all stakeholders.
- **Evidence-Based Approach**
Decisions and practices are informed by sound data and research, including monitoring the impact of policies on individuals with protected characteristics.
- **Specific and Measurable Objectives**
Equality objectives are clear, specific, and measurable within reasonable time-scales, and progress is reviewed regularly.
- **Compliance and Accountability**
We will meet statutory duties under the PSED and report progress annually to the Trust Board.

2. Policy Statement

The UK has specific legislation on equality that outlaws discrimination and offers protection and redress to employees and stakeholders, underpinned by core British values, individual freedom, belief in personal responsibility, and mutual respect and fairness.

This policy sets out how the Trust and its academies comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). We will:

- publish annual equality information
- set, publish and review equality objectives at least every four years

- integrate equality considerations proportionately into decision-making, policies and day-to-day functions, monitoring their impact.

3. Scope and purpose

This policy applies to all stakeholders including parents/carers, employees, volunteers, directors, governors, trustees, students, agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

4. Responsibility for implementing the policy

The Trust Board is accountable for compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and PSED. Each academy Headteacher is responsible for implementation, ensuring staff training and proportionate consideration of equality implications in decisions and policies.

Implementation

Our policies, procedures, and activities will:

- Avoid discrimination and take account of differences in life experience and barriers faced.
- Promote positive attitudes and interactions, fostering mutual respect and good relations.
- Ensure fairness in recruitment, promotion, and professional development, reducing inequalities wherever possible.
- Engage with a range of stakeholders to involve those affected by policies in their design and review.
- Contribute to wider social cohesion and encourage participation in public life.
- Be regularly reviewed and updated in line with national and local priorities and available evidence.

5. Legal duties

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The Trust will have due regard to the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We will integrate PSED into all policies and decision making, ensuring equality implications are considered thoroughly and transparently. Responsibility for compliance rests with the Trust and cannot be delegated.

Specific duties: to meet statutory requirements, we will publish relevant equality information annually and set and publish equality objectives at least every four years

on accessible Trust and academy websites.

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific protected characteristics. A protected characteristic under the Act covers the groups listed below:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (for employees)

6. Aims and Objectives

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust is committed to equal opportunities and to preventing discrimination, victimisation, and harassment.

- In particular: No stakeholder shall suffer discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
- No individual will be treated less favourably for exercising their statutory rights (victimisation).
- No individual will be subjected to unwanted, unwelcome, or upsetting behaviour based on a protected characteristic (harassment).
- All stakeholders share responsibility for adhering to this policy and ensuring its effectiveness.
- We will provide a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all stakeholders.
- Every student will have the opportunity for full involvement in school activities and access to the curriculum at a level suited to their ability.
- Contributions of all members of the school community will be valued and respected.
- No form of harassment will be tolerated.
- Equality principles will guide staff selection, promotion, deployment, and training.
- Resources will be free from stereotypes and, where appropriate, reflect diversity and promote equal opportunities.
- The curriculum will take account of equality issues and promote participation and achievement for all.

To achieve these aims, we will:

- Publish and share this policy with all stakeholders to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty.

- Reinforce our ethos of valuing equality and diversity.
- Analyse relevant data to monitor compliance and identify areas for improvement.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour that breaches equality commitments.

Success Criteria:

- Students understand the impact of prejudice and their responsibility to prevent it.
- Staff are aware of and implement the Single Equality Policy.
- Equality data is collated and analysed to monitor progress.
- Incidents are logged and reported appropriately.
- Equality objectives are specific, measurable, regularly reviewed, and re-published.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Promoting equality is the responsibility of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust and all its stakeholders. The Trust ensures compliance with relevant legislation and the effective implementation of this policy, its procedures, and related action plans.

Trust Board

- Approves the Equality Policy and equality objectives.
- Receives and reviews annual equality information and progress reports.
- Assures that equality information and objectives are published in an accessible format.

Senior Management

- Champion equality and diversity across all strategic and operational decisions.
- Allocate resources to support equality objectives and staff training.
- Review equality data and incident reports regularly to identify trends and take corrective action.
- Support headteachers and HR in consistent policy implementation across the Trust.

Headteachers

- Implement the Equality Policy within their academy.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive appropriate training and support.
- Consider equality implications in all decisions and policy development.
- Take prompt action in cases of unlawful discrimination.
- Monitor and report equality-related data and incidents to the Trust.

Academies

- Coordinate day-to-day implementation of the policy and provide regular progress reports.
- Embed equality principles within all academy policies and practices.
- Review responses to allegations of inequality and contribute to policy reviews.

Human Resources (HR)

- Ensure recruitment, promotion, and staff development processes comply with equality legislation and Trust policy.
- Maintain accurate workforce data for monitoring diversity and reporting progress against equality objectives.
- Provide guidance and support to managers on handling discrimination, harassment, and victimisation issues.
- Lead on staff training related to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Monitor and review employment practices to remove barriers and promote fairness.

All Staff

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in and around the academy.
- Report prejudice-related incidents promptly and appropriately.
- Plan and deliver lessons and activities that reflect equality objectives and foster respect for diversity.
- Support students for whom English is an additional language.
- Keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their role.

Students

- Treat each other with respect and courtesy.
- Explore and value diversity with a positive approach.
- Speak out if they witness or experience inappropriate language, behaviour, or unfair treatment.

8. Information and Resources

This policy will be communicated to all staff, trustees, and, where appropriate, students and parents/carers. Equality and diversity resources will be made available to support understanding and effective implementation of this policy across the Trust.

9. Religious Observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all employees, students and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

10. British Values

The Trust actively promotes fundamental British values—democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs—through its curriculum and wider school activities. These values underpin our commitment to equality and diversity, preparing students for life in modern Britain and fostering respect and understanding across all communities.

11. Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust employees receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individ-

uals and as cohorts. This includes regular training on equality, diversity, and inclusion to support effective implementation of this policy and compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Training needs will be monitored and reviewed to ensure relevance and impact.

12. Accessibility of Published Information

We will ensure online equality information and objectives comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018, including a current accessibility statement and content meeting WCAG standards.

13. Handling Allegations

Allegations of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation will be investigated promptly, fairly, and in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Procedures, and Disciplinary Policy. Detailed records of decisions, actions taken, and the rationale behind them will be maintained securely, in compliance with data protection requirements.

Throughout the process, the Trust will exercise its duty of care to safeguard the health, safety, and wellbeing of all individuals involved. Support arrangements and confidentiality measures will be managed in line with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy, Complaints Policy, and Disciplinary Policy, ensuring that all parties are treated with dignity and respect.

14. Confidentiality

The Trust is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all personal and sensitive information relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Any disclosures, complaints, or records will be handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to fulfil their professional responsibilities, and will be stored securely and retained only as long as necessary.

15. Monitoring and Review

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that this Equalities Policy is effectively implemented and is fit for purpose for both staff and pupils. To achieve this, the Trust will collect, analyse, and use quantitative and qualitative data to monitor the impact and effectiveness of this policy, making adjustments where appropriate to promote equality and inclusion.

For Staff (specifically)

- Review the data broken down by:
 - Age, Disability, Race, Religion and belief, Sex, Gender reassignment, Sexual orientation, Maternity and pregnancy, Marriage and Civil Partnership (for employees).

For Students and Pupils (specifically)

- Review data relating to achievement and participation, broken down by protected characteristics, including:
- Disability and special educational needs, Ethnicity and culture, Language, Religious affiliation, National origin/status, Gender

This information will be used to identify trends, address inequalities, and inform strategic planning and decision-making.

The Trust recognises its legal obligations to preserve and develop the Catholic character of its schools, as set out in the following documents:

- Articles of Association
- Scheme of Delegation
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Catholic Church and the Department for Education

Regular reviews will be undertaken by the Trust Board and senior leadership teams, and findings will be reported through appropriate governance structures. Where necessary, actions will be taken to ensure compliance with statutory duties and alignment with the Trust's mission and values.

16. References

This policy has been developed with reference to the following key legislation, statutory guidance, and best practice documents:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- EHRC Technical Guidance for Schools (2023)
- Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018
- Department for Education guidance, including draft guidance on gender-questioning children (to be updated upon publication of final guidance)
- Trust Disciplinary Policy
- SEND Policy
- Articles of Association
- Scheme of Delegation
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Catholic Church and the Department for Education

Further information and updates can be found on the GOV.UK and Equality and Human Rights Commission websites.