

Disability Equality Policy

“What does the Lord ask of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

(Micah 6:8)

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Statement of Intent

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do. All members of the school community are committed to upholding the St Michael's Church of England Christian values:

- to show love, care and kindness to all in our community
- to value what we have and to share with others
- to enable everyone to achieve their full potential

St Michael's Church of England High School is committed to promoting equality for all. This statement represents the response of the Governing Board to its duties to promote equality for people with a disability. We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality of status and opportunity for all pupils, other members of the school and service users, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or beliefs, as defined within existing equalities legislation. The purpose of this policy is to set out how we will fulfil our duties to promote equality for people with 'protected characteristics' and embed fairness and equality in everyday practice here at St Michael's Church of England High School.

The eight characteristics defined by law are age, disability, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. In these areas, we will ensure there is no direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The Governing Board is under a duty to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination. The Governing Board works with and through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to discharge their responsibility, for example, by raising awareness, providing training and monitoring outcomes.

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person with a disability as someone who has 'a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment, not the cause.

- 'physical impairment' includes sensory impairments
- 'mental impairment' includes learning difficulties and impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness
- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial'
- 'long term' is defined as 12 months or more

The Equality Act also covers those with:

- Severe disfigurements
- Impairments controlled or corrected by the use of:
 - medication
 - prostheses
 - an aid or otherwise
- progressive symptomatic conditions
- a history of impairment
- children under the age of 6 with impairments which, in an older person, would result in that person being covered.

Since December 2005 persons with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are also covered at the point of diagnosis. But excluded are those with:

- addiction to or dependence on nicotine, tobacco or other non-prescribed drugs or substances
- seasonal allergic rhinitis (hay fever) and
- certain mental illnesses with antisocial consequences.

The Governing Board's Duty

The Governing Board will discharge its responsibilities towards staff, pupils and those using the school's services by ensuring that people with a disability are not treated less favourably in the following aspects as relevant:

- accessibility to the premises and facilities
- accessibility to the curriculum
- accessibility of associated educational services
- training of staff and pupils.

The school's policy is to

- promote equality of opportunity
- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate disability related harassment
- promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability
- encourage people with a disability to participate in public life
- take steps to take into account people's disabilities, even where that involves more favourable treatment.

Accessibility Plans

The Governing Board's Accessibility Plan follows the local authority's guidelines and aims, as far as is reasonably practicable, to:

- enable staff with a disability to have access to premises and facilities that they need for their contracted duties
- ensure that the needs of visitors with a disability are taken into account
- increase the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the school curriculum
- improve the physical environment of the school in order to enable pupils with a disability to take advantage of education and associated services
- improve the delivery to pupils with a disability, within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking into account their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents, of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

Unlawful Discrimination

The school will ensure that discrimination is prohibited in:

- the selection and appointment and promotion arrangements for staff
- staff conditions of service
- staff training
- the arrangements for determining pupil admissions
- the terms on which admission is offered
- refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an admission application
- provision of education or associated services (including educational visits and extracurricular activities)
- exclusions
- victimisation and harassment
- failing to take steps to ensure that pupils with a disability are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with all other pupils in the arrangements for determining admission to the school and in relation to the provision of education and associated services. However, alterations to buildings and the provision of auxiliary aids and services are not required under this law.

Pupils:

The school values the full range of its pupils and seeks to ensure that its practices are fully inclusive. Every effort will be made to ensure that 'reasonable adjustments' are made to accommodate pupils with a disability, while bearing in mind the interests of other pupils. The school is required to make, under the terms of the Children and Families Act 2014:

- improvements in access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability
- physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services (e.g. extracurricular activities) and
- improvement in the provision of information in a range of formats for pupils with a disability.

There is an additional requirement for schools to explore whether or not pupils with behaviour issues may or may not have an underlying disability leading to this. For example, the following may be underlying reasons for poor behaviour:

- mental illness, mental health problems, learning difficulties, dyslexia, diabetes, epilepsy.

(NB Behaviour difficulties arising from social and/or domestic circumstances are not covered by the Act. Other school policies cover these areas.)

The school will take into account all these requirements when considering the inclusion and treatment of pupils with a disability in the school.

Education and Associated Services

For pupils these will be deemed to include:

- Preparation for entry to the school
- The curriculum
- Teaching and learning
- Classroom organisation
- Timetabling
- Grouping
- Homework
- Access to school facilities
- Activities that supplement the curriculum e.g. a visiting speaker
- School sports
- School policies
- Breaks and lunchtimes
- Serving school meals
- Interaction with peers
- Assessment and examination arrangements
- Discipline and sanctions
- Exclusion procedures
- School clubs and activities
- Educational visits
- Arrangements for working with other agencies
- Preparation for the next phase of education
- Administration of medicines
- First Aid

Staff Training

Training will be given to staff to ensure understanding of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010 and how actions at school level may be undertaken to ensure inclusion of members of staff and pupils with a disability. All staff (teaching and support staff) must attend training regarding duties to members of staff and/or students with a disability under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010, and to attend updating sessions when deemed necessary by the Headteacher. All teaching staff have training regarding improved practice in differentiation for all pupils including those with disability. Regular staff training will be undertaken regarding the needs for learning of particular pupils with a disability. Support staff working with members of staff and/or pupils with a disability will be given relevant training.

Responsibilities

Governing Board Committee

The Governing Board has established a Finance and Premises Committee which will:

- oversee the implementation of all the school's policies and practices in this area, including disability inclusion
- consider what reasonable adjustments are being made and could be made
- make recommendations to the Headteacher with a view to improving access to teaching and learning
- consider the school's systems and procedures for making staff, parents and pupils aware of the policies
- consider the school's Accessibility Plan and
- review the plan annually.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- oversee the implementation of the policy and scheme
- report on progress as required to the Governing Board
 - the Headteacher will report to the Governing Board on members of staff who have a disability, and the steps taken to ensure that they are not treated less favourably
 - the Headteacher will report on staff training issues relevant to the scheme
 - the Headteacher will report to the Governing Board on relevant pupil activities and ensure that reasonable adjustments will have been identified and implemented
 - the Headteacher will ensure that the school's Accessibility Plan has been reviewed periodically and updated annually, or as necessary, and report progress to the Governing Board
 - the Headteacher will ensure that regular liaison with parents of pupils with a disability takes place.

Reports on these meetings and any correspondence with parents and pupils regarding their disabilities will be contained in the school's reports to the Governing Board.

All staff

All staff have a duty to ensure, as far as is practicable, adherence to the intentions and purpose of this scheme, and to bring any potential shortcomings or difficulties to the attention of a member of SLT.

Monitoring, Inspection and Review

The governors will ensure that the working of the Scheme and Accessibility Plan is monitored. The Headteacher's report to the Governing Board committee will report on related issues. The Governing Board will report to the local authority as required.

The governors recognise that these duties are monitored by OFSTED for England through their inspection.