



Equality Policy

Maricourt seeks to provide and sustain a living Catholic Community which is rooted in Christian Values and where growth and knowledge, respect, love and fellowship are shared by all.

Governor approval September 2017

**Maricourt Catholic High School
Equality Policy**

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Aims

Maricourt seeks to provide and sustain a living Catholic community which is rooted in Christian values and where growth and knowledge, respect, love and fellowship are shared by all.

Overall aims of our Equality Policy:

- to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- to promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and wider community
- to promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people from different backgrounds

Catholic Schools and Community Cohesion: CES Guidance (2008)

For the Catholic community there can be nothing optional about striving for a cohesive society. The Second Vatican Council urged Catholics to read the signs of the times and to engage with the world around them. Such engagement is a catalyst for action for the Common Good of society in light of scripture and reflected in Catholic Social Teaching.

Definition of Community Cohesion:

A cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

Legal Duties:

1. We welcome our duties under the Race Relations 1976 as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000; the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 as amended by the Equality Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2010.
2. The Equality Act 2006, Section 49 allows for exceptions for maintained schools which have a religious character with regard to:
 - Schools with a religious character may give priority in admissions to applicants who are of their faith.
 - School curriculum and collective worship are excluded from the requirement on schools not to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief.
 - Age discrimination legislation does not apply to the treatment of pupils or the delivery of education.
3. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
4. We recognise that these four sets of duties are essential for achieving the five outcomes of the every Child Matters framework, and that they 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.
5. In fulfilling the legal obligations referred to above we are guided by nine principles.

Guiding Principles:

Principle One: All learners are of equal value

We see all learners and potential learners as of equal value:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their race, ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- Whichever their gender
- Whatever their gender identity
- Whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whether they are pregnant or have recently given birth

Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- race and ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- age
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- pregnancy or maternity, so that the needs of individuals who are pregnant or have recently given birth are recognised

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interactions, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men, and an absence of sexual, homophobic and gender identity based harassment.

Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their race, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whichever their gender and sexual orientation
- whatever their gender identity
- whether or not they are pregnant or have recently given birth
- whether they are married or in a civil partnership
- whatever their age

However the post of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head of Religious Education are to be filled by baptised and practising Catholics.

Other Leadership posts that affect directly the Catholic Mission of the school should be staffed by skilled practitioners who are committed Catholics.
(Memorandum on Appointment of Teachers to Catholic Schools 2003).

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist in relation to:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different races, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- age
- pregnancy or maternity
- marriage/civil partnership

Principle 6: We consult widely

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We involve, where appropriate:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, and girls and boys

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, and girls and boys of all ages
- people with various sexual orientations

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence and information

We maintain and publish **at least annually**, quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

disabled and non-disabled people
people of different races, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
girls and boys, women and men
sexual orientation
gender identity
pregnancy or maternity
age

Principle 9: Objectives

We formulate and publish **at least every four years**, specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement in which we have been involved (principle 7), in relation to:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different races, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- pregnancy or maternity

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy are what make a difference.

Each year we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan, setting out the specific actions and projects we shall undertake to implement the principles in paragraph 5 above.

Our current action plan is set out in our School Improvement Plan

We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

The curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the seven principles in paragraph 5 above.

Ethos and organisation

We ensure that the principles listed in paragraph 5 above apply also to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- learners' progress, attainment and assessment
- learners' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed toward religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against travellers, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia
- prejudices regarding gender identity issues
- prejudices regarding age

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they were dealt with.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for coordinating implementation of the policy.

All staff are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the relevant principles in paragraph 5 above
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- Support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Religious observance

6. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and governing body.

Monitoring and evaluation

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

To review good practice we make use of a range of auditing schedules.