



**EQUAL TREATMENT POLICY
(Whole School including EYFS)
Independent Day School for Boys and Girls**

Our Lady of Sion School

Reviewed: November 2021

Date of next review: November 2022

Frequency: Annually

1 Introduction

1.1 The School Community: Our Lady of Sion School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged 3 - 19 years and is a registered charity with a Roman Catholic Foundation. Our School community is made up of children, parents, legal guardians, education guardians, teachers, and, other employees and governors from many different races, creeds and backgrounds.

1.2 School's position: The School recognises the benefits of having a diverse School Community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Pupils will be taught to value and respect others. The School is committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and is committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the School Community. In the provision of equal opportunities, the School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination on the basis of:

- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief);
- gender;
- sexual orientation and (in the case of adult members of the SchoolCommunity);
- marital or civil partnership status and;
- age.

These can be called the **Protected Characteristics**. The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a Special Educational Need (**SEN**) or learning difficulty, or because English is an additional language.

The School aims to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities. The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through PSHEE and RSE education and through the supportive School culture and through the pastoral programme (assemblies, spaces for dialogue, What Matters Programme and our associated policies).

Our school is founded upon tolerance and understanding of one another. Building bridges between all people through dialogue and endeavours to understand difference and celebrate diversity. The school will ensure that the whole community engages in events and discussions around diversity and that young people and members of staff are fully briefed around the many facets of diversity. The school will proactively provide opportunities for children and staff to openly share about any concerns around bullying and discrimination relating to the Protected Characteristics and even more widely.

Related policies: This Equal Treatment Policy is consistent with all of the School's policies, including the Admissions Policy, Policy on Discipline and Behaviour, Exclusions, the School Rules, Uniform Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Disability Policy, Accessibility Plan and the Special Educational Needs Policy.

1.3 All policies can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

2 Policy statement

2.1 Application: This policy applies to all current and prospective members of our School community, referred to in paragraph 1 above.

2.2 Equal Treatment: We will promote equal treatment for all members of the school community. No-one will be treated less favourably than any other person on grounds of their gender, race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation or religion or belief. Children who are fluent in English yet for whom English is an additional language receive equal treatment.

2.3 Approach: The principles of equal treatment guide the way we:

- recruit, induct, train, promote and generally manage all our employees;
- conduct admissions of pupils and provide access to facilities, services, opportunities and responsibilities;
- guide our expectations of the pupils themselves.

3 Forms of discrimination

3.1 Types: Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

3.2 Direct discrimination: Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as set out in paragraph 1.2 above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race. This would be a decision based on direct discrimination.

Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity). For example, if a pupil is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that pupil.

3.3 Indirect discrimination: Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with gender, they would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of gender.

3.4 Discrimination arising from disability: Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, where a pupil with cerebral palsy who is a wheelchair user is told they will be unable to attend a school trip because there is no wheelchair access available and other options are not investigated.

4 Admission

4.1 Applicants: The School accepts applications from, and admits pupils irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered, subject to section 8, below. The School will treat every application in a fair, open-minded way.

4.2 Selection: Every application will be considered on its merits within the School's criteria for selection on grounds of the pupil's academic and character requirements current at the time of admission and entry to the School, but this will not be done as a way of excluding pupils with a disability or special educational needs, subject to section 8 below.

4.3 Admissions Policy: The School's Admissions Policy reflects the School's approach towards equal opportunities and is consistent with this policy.

5 Education and associated services

5.1 Equal access: The School will afford all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects including all sports, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare, paragraph 5.2 below and section 8, below.

5.2 Positive action: The School may afford pupils of a particular racial group, or pupils with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the pupils in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.

5.3 Exclusions: The School will not discriminate against any pupil by excluding him or her from the School, or by subjecting him or her to any other detriment, on the grounds of his or her gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs, subject to section 8 of this Policy.

5.4 Teaching and School materials: Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example, gender or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both the School's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias. The School's PSHEE and RSE curriculum encourages respect for other people with particular regard to the protected characteristics.

5.5 Pupil interaction: All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for all other pupils, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, pregnancy or maternity or special educational needs subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the School, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

5.6 Bullying: The School will not tolerate bullying or cyber bullying for any reason. Specific types of bullying may include:

- bullying relating to race, religion, belief or culture;
- bullying related to SEN, learning difficulties or disabilities;

- bullying related to appearance or health conditions;
- bullying relating to sexual orientation;
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances;
- sexist or sexual bullying
- peer on peer bullying
- sexual harassment and sexual violence

We are mindful of the concerns raised through the Black Lives Matter campaign (2020) and the Everyone's Invited Campaign (2021) and provide opportunity in school to discuss the issues raised through these high-profile messages. We aim to ensure that the culture of our school establishes the need to call out abuse and share concerns with those in charge of leading the school. Our What Matters? Programme, anonymous message box and Sion Sounds Radio provide regular opportunities for young people and staff members to share concerns and raise the profile of important messages around safeguarding, respecting diversity and ensuring that everyone is treated equally.

The School's Anti-bullying Policy contains more details about the School's anti-bullying practices and the National Bullying Helpline provides further information for young people and adults who may be experiencing bullying either in school or in the workplace.

<https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>

6 School uniform

6.1 The School Uniform Policy is consistent with this policy. The same School Uniform Policy applies equally to all pupils, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, the School will consider reasonable requests to alter the School Uniform, for example, for genuine religious requirements and reasonable adjustments for disabled children.

6.2 Symbols of faith: Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by pupils when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the School's existing School Uniform Policy principles (in regards to, for example, the school colours). Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the pupil or his or her parents to the Headteacher, whose decision will be final, subject to the Complaints procedure.

6.3 Disabled pupils: Reasonable adjustments may be required to the School Uniform for disabled pupils who require them. The pupil or his or her parents should refer the matter to the Headmaster to ensure all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the pupil.

7 Religious belief

7.1 Religion: The School is a day school for boys and girls aged from 3 to 19 years. The School is a Catholic Foundation with a Christian ethos and welcomes staff and children from all different ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. Human rights and freedoms are respected.

8 Disability and special educational needs

8.1 Our approach: We are an inclusive School which welcomes members of the School Community with disabilities and special educational needs. We maintain and drive a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people and those with special educational needs in all the activities of the School and we will not treat a member of the School Community less favourably on these grounds without justification. At present, our facilities, physical and otherwise, for the disabled and those with special educational needs are limited. However, we will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the School's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone. Our Disability Policy and Policy on Special Educational Needs are consistent with this policy. For a copy of these policies, please contact the school office.

8.2 Definitions: Children have **Special Educational Needs** if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a "*substantial and long term adverse effect*" on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activity (Equality Act 2010). For further clarification, please refer to the policies mentioned in paragraph 8.1 above.

8.3 Reasonable adjustments: The School has an ongoing duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs in respect of the education and associated services provided to ensure that such pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils. This is a broad expression that covers all aspects of school life, for example:

- the curriculum;
- classroom organisation and timetabling;
- access to school facilities;
- clubs and visits;
- school sports and;
- school policies.

Reasonable adjustments may typically include:

- making arrangements for a child in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room;
- allowing extra time for a dyslexic child to complete parts of an entrance exam;
- providing examination papers in larger print for a child with a visual impairment;
- rearranging the timetable to allow a pupil to attend a class in an accessible part of the building
arranging a variety of accessible sports activities.

The School is not legally required to make adjustments which include physical alterations such as the provision of a stair-lift or new ground floor facilities, or a new library

In making "reasonable adjustments" the School is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils where to do so would be reasonable. The School will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services.

8.4 Informing the School: In accordance with the School's terms and conditions, parents of pupils must notify the Headteacher in writing if they are aware or suspect that the pupil (or prospective pupil) has a disability or if they (either parent), the pupil (or prospective pupil), or any close relations have at any time had, or has a learning difficulty. The registration form enables prospective parents to give details of their child's disability when applying for a place at the School. Parents must provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information upon request. Providing the School with such information will enable the School to support the pupil as much as possible. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. The School will have due regard to any request made by a parent or pupil (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential.

8.5 Admission of children with special educational needs and / or a disability: Applications for a place at the School will be considered on the basis that reasonable adjustments (see definition above) have been made by the School in order to cater for the child's special educational needs and / or disability. The School will not offer a place if, after reasonable adjustments have been made, the School will not be able to provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs. The School shall inform the parents of their decision and give details of the reasonable adjustments they are going to make or give reasons why an offer of a place has not been made.

8.6 Existing pupils: Where the School becomes aware of a disability or special educational need of an existing pupil, the School will do all that is reasonable to assist the pupil whilst at the School, which may include making reasonable adjustments. If in the professional judgement of the Headteacher, and after consultation with the parents and the pupil (where appropriate), the School cannot provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs after all reasonable adjustments have been made, parents will be asked to withdraw the pupil, without being charged fees in lieu of notice and with the acceptance deposit returned. The School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide their child with the necessary environment and level of teaching and support.

8.7 Access: The School will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the School will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. The School has an Accessibility Plan, which is kept under review and revised as necessary. The Plan is available on request from the Bursar.

8.8 Learning Support Co-ordinator: The School's Learning Support Co-ordinator is Mrs D Caruana.

9 Pupils with statements of special educational needs/Education, Health and Care plans

9.1 The School's Policy on Special Educational Needs includes details about the welfare and educational provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP).

10 Pupils with English as an additional language

10.1 Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) will receive additional learning support if necessary. The School will consult with the pupil and the parents as appropriate. The School has appropriate welfare support for all such pupils through the pastoral/academic support system. Where there is a requirement for SEND provision, the School will openly discuss this with parents so that any

support in addition to what the School can offer can be explored by parents alongside the in-school assistance.

10.2 Where it has been identified that extra support is necessary for the child to access the mainstream curriculum, additional 'school support', either on a short or long-term basis, may be recommended and targets in the form of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for the child will be established. Where appropriate, additional support from the SENCO or a qualified Learning Support Assistant will be provided as a package.

10.3 Parents may be asked to fund this support in addition to school fees. This support may be one to one out of class, in a small group, or within the classroom setting. The level of support will be regularly reviewed and modified to suit the needs of the child. The school may work with relevant external agencies to support individual needs. Discussions between parents, the Learning Support Department and members of the Senior Leadership Team would take place to agree the nature of the support required. These discussions and agreed plans of action must take place before the child is formally admitted into the school.

11 Provision for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs

In keeping with the School's Mission Statement, Our Lady of Sion School teaches respect and consideration for pupils of all faiths, cultural and ethnic backgrounds in order to help them reach their highest potential in a caring atmosphere.

12 Responsibilities

12.1 All members of the School Community are expected to comply with this policy and therefore to treat others with dignity at all times. Awareness of this policy among employees will be raised and maintained by means of discussion at staff meetings and will form part of our education programme for pupils in PSHE lessons and tutor groups.

12.2 Overall responsibility: The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the School's Equal Treatment Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Board of Governors has delegated to the Bursar day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review.

12.3 Management: Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard to equal opportunities.

13 Monitoring and review

13.1 Monitoring: To ensure that this policy is operating effectively with respect to admission and selection, and to identify those sections of the local community which may be under-represented in the School, the School monitors applicants' gender, race, disability and religion or belief confidentially as part of the Admissions procedure. We also maintain records of this data in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy.

13.2 Review: The Bursar is responsible for the on-going monitoring and regular analysis of the data monitored under paragraph 10 above and under paragraph 14.2 below and will arrange for the taking of

appropriate positive steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination where necessary. The Bursar is also responsible for reviewing whether the aims of this Policy are carried out throughout all areas of the School and taking appropriate action where necessary. This policy is reviewed annually by the SLT. Recommendations for any amendments are reported to the Board of Governors.

14 Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination

14.1 Questions about this policy: If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Bursar.

14.2 Complaints: If you believe that you have received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed in paragraph 1.2 above, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to your detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's formal Complaints Procedure. For a copy of the School's Concerns and Complaints Procedure, please contact the School office. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the complaints procedure.

14.3 Reports: If you would like to report a breach of this policy that does not constitute a complaint under paragraph 14.2 above, please contact the Bursar.

14.4 Enforcement: We will treat seriously and urgently investigate every complaint and report. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the School Community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy.

14.5 Record: All reported breaches of this policy will be recorded and this record will be reviewed annually by the Bursar. Breaches of the policy will be recorded on the CPOMS file if this relates to pupils and students. HR will hold all records of breaches within the Staff Body along with associated actions carried out by the management of the school in response to breaches.

15 Publication

15.1 This policy will be available on the School's website and on request from the Bursar.

Authorised by

Date