

St Mary's School Equal Opportunities Policy

Principles

St Mary's School is committed to the principle of equal opportunity for all stakeholders including pupils, parents and staff irrespective of race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, language, disability or family background. We believe that equal opportunity is at the heart of good educational practice. All pupils are of equal value and deserve equal access to every aspect of school life. We believe in supporting the development of personal and cultural identities of all pupils, and preparing our children for full participation in society.

Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, language, disability or family background is not acceptable at our school. We recognise that discrimination can be overt or covert. Covert discrimination relates to the assumptions, beliefs and values acquired over a long period of time which affects instinctive responses.

Our Core Values help to emphasise equal opportunities for all staff, parents and pupils at all times and emphasise the importance of community, achievement and pride.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that we implement this policy.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to ensure that every member of the school community is given an equal opportunity to be the best that they can be, within a supportive environment.

In order to achieve this we are committed to:

- equal access and treatment
- being responsive to changing needs
- educating and informing children and parents about the issues in this policy
- avoiding prejudice
- promoting a positive self image and mutual respect
- ensuring that equality of opportunity permeates the whole curriculum and ethos of the school
- using resources and examples which provide a positive image of all groups
- acknowledging the richness and diversity of society and to prepare children for their part in this
- developing a positive attitude to equal opportunity by all staff, children, parents and all who participate in the life of the school

Pupils are taught

- to be confident, strong and self affirming in their own identity
- to value and respect all children and adults
- to learn from other cultures and their own
- to be open to change, choice and development

- to be able to discuss, celebrate and challenge traditions and beliefs

Gender

We take practical steps to ensure that we treat genders equally. Our organisational structure, behaviour policy and curriculum are applied to all, regardless of gender. Classes are formed on a chronological basis and class groupings are flexible. When asking children to carry out tasks or represent the school, we aim to include both boys and girls and promote aspirational equality.

Race, Faith (and no faith), Languages and Family Background

In our school population, we have several different nationalities, faiths, family backgrounds and organisations. Racial discrimination is unlawful in Jersey, and we aim to help our pupils to develop concepts, skills, attitudes and ways of behaving which will promote good relationships and prevent ignorance and prejudice. Pupils, staff and parents are encouraged to contribute to school life from the richness of their heritage and religion. They share experiences and learn from one another through enquiry, investigative and collaborative work.

Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) often need learning support when they are first learning English. We are supported by the central EAL Support Team through advice and direct teaching when appropriate.

Disability

Some children at our school, or their parents, may have disabilities, either temporarily or more permanently. We aim to minimise difficulties and make all areas as accessible as possible.

We are committed to meeting the needs of children with disabilities, as we are to meeting the needs of all within the school. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled children.

In some circumstances teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, or modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities where children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment. At times, we may seek the support of the Occupational Therapy team, other Education or Medical professionals, in order to ensure we support children with disabilities as well as possible.

Curriculum Access

The Jersey 'Teacher's Task' and Teacher's Standards (2012) documents underpin our Non-Negotiables Document which is developing into the Teaching for Learning Policy. Within these documents, the onus is on class teachers to ensure access to the curriculum for all children.

The Jersey Curriculum (2014) requires a breadth, balance, relevance and differentiation which will enable each pupil to participate at an appropriate level. This applies to all pupils, from

those that might be considered 'gifted' in a subject, to those that might be experiencing difficulty in their learning.

Staff

The school values diversity amongst the staff. In all appointments the most suitable candidate will be appointed on professional criteria and recruitment carried out in a manner consistent with equal opportunity practice, following current guidelines from the Department for Education, Sport and Culture.

Dealing with issues if they arise

As part of growing up, children sometimes experiment with expressions, gestures and language which they have heard through the media or from member of the community. In most cases, they do not understand how hurtful and harmful these can be. We treat such incidences sensitively, but firmly, so that children learn quickly not to use expressions, gestures and language that are inappropriate and discriminatory. Everyone has the right to be protected from insults, abuse and bullying of any sort.

Unacceptable behaviour in the classrooms and playground are always dealt with swiftly and consistently using our Positive Behaviour Policy (2014). Any repeated incidents will be recorded for discussion with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and the child's parents.

Positive action to foster equal opportunities:

- When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of groups or genders.
- We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues.
- Matters of school organisation such as registration, seating, grouping are not made on the basis of gender, disability or ethnicity.
- Sensitivity and respect are shown towards variations in dress or appearance of other cultures and backgrounds.
- All pupils are given opportunities to organise, lead and care for others.
- Team work, often using Critical Skills methodology, is encouraged to show the advantages of pooling experience, knowledge and exploring various viewpoints.
- Assembly times will reinforce the importance of equal opportunities.
- Clear and consistent messages will be given regarding the school's expectations.
- Staff encourage children to be aware of, reflect on and consider other people's views, beliefs and traditions. They will sometimes deliberately present opposing views in order to prompt children's thinking, challenge assumptions and cause debate and discussion.

Monitoring Attainment and Progress

In conjunction with the Department of Education, Sport and Culture, we analyse our achievement and progress data carefully in order to ensure that we identify any issues which need addressing. We ensure that we monitor the progress and attainment of all pupils so that all pupils are making the best possible progress, and that no specific group of pupils is

underachieving across the school. These groups include the progress and attainment of both genders, children with EAL, and children with identified Special Educational Needs.

Related Policies: Behaviour 2014, Special Educational Needs (under review), Counter Bullying 2013.

MAS - December 2014

Review - December 2016