



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Internal Use

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1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out the Trust's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all. It applies to every aspect of school life including interactions with students and families, employment, including recruitment, selection, training, promotion, conditions of service and termination of employment.

In keeping with Catholic Education Service guidance, the Trust recognises that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, every decision must respect the dignity and worth of the individual and be taken in a spirit of justice and reconciliation.

As a family of Catholic schools where everyone is known, loved and adds value, Sancta Familia seeks not only compliance with the law but a culture of welcome and respect. We believe in autonomy with coherence – sharing best practice across our schools while supporting each person to grow in service, faith and professional excellence.

This policy applies to everyone in our Trust, students, families, employees, and to any contractors, agency workers, volunteers and governors working on Trust premises.

All employment relationships within the Trust shall be conducted consistently with both UK employment law and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching – solidarity, subsidiarity, the common good and respect for the human person.

Through this policy the Trust commits to being a little bit better tomorrow than today, ensuring that our words and actions reflect excellence in faith, service, personal development and academic progress. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended by the Trust following consultation.

2. Legal framework

The Trust is committed to meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, including subsequent amendments and associated Codes of Practice. This legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of the protected characteristics of sex, marital status, age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

In applying this legislation, the Trust recognises that compliance with the law is the minimum standard; the Gospel imperative of justice and human dignity calls us to go further, promoting inclusion and reconciliation within our workplaces.

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against harassment and victimisation. The Trust will ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities under the Act and understand that discrimination, harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

As part of Sancta Familia's culture of "known, loved and valued," the Trust expects all students, staff, and families to model respect and care in their daily interactions. We strive to create environments where each person's contribution is recognised, and differences are embraced as a source of strength and innovation.

The Trust also acknowledges its duties under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Employment Rights Act 1996, and other relevant legislation ensuring fairness, privacy and respect in the workplace.

In accordance with Catholic Social Teaching, the Trust upholds the principle of the common good, ensuring that the rights and welfare of the individual are balanced with the flourishing of the community.

This policy is intended to operate in conjunction with other Trust policies, statements and practices on recruitment, safeguarding, whistleblowing, grievance and disciplinary procedures to ensure that equality and fairness are embedded throughout employment practice.

Through continuous reflection and improvement, Sancta Familia seeks to ensure that equality is not merely a statutory obligation but a lived expression of our faith and our collective mission to serve others with excellence.

3. Policy statement

The Trust opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or harassment. It is committed to creating an environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect and where differences are valued and celebrated.

The Trust aims to provide a learning and working environment that enables all students and employees to achieve their full potential and to contribute positively to the success of the organisation. This will be achieved by ensuring that all employees are aware of the policy and their responsibilities under it, and that managers are given appropriate training and guidance.

The Trust will regularly monitor and review its policies and practices to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and that unlawful discrimination is not taking place. Equality objectives will be set and reviewed at least every four years, in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Catholic foundation

As a Catholic Multi Academy Trust, the Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust embraces its mission to serve the common good through education that is both excellent and inclusive. Our approach to equality and diversity is shaped by the Gospel call to recognise the dignity of every human person and the values expressed in Catholic Social Teaching:

- Dignity of the human person – every individual is made in the image of God and must be treated with respect.
- The common good – we work for a community where all can flourish.
- Solidarity – we stand with those who are marginalised or disadvantaged.
- Subsidiarity – we empower others to act and take responsibility in their roles.

This Catholic understanding of equality deepens our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010, grounding them in a shared moral and spiritual framework.

Sancta Familia equality objectives

In fulfilling the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Trust will publish measurable equality objectives to ensure that the principles of fairness, inclusion and human dignity are reflected in every aspect of Trust life. These objectives are reviewed annually by the Trust Board as part of ongoing monitoring and improvement.

Our current Trust-wide equality objectives are to:

- Reduce attainment and participation gaps for disadvantaged and underrepresented student groups.
- Strengthen a culture of faith, inclusion and belonging for all staff and students.

- Improve diversity and equity in recruitment and leadership across all schools and governance structures.
- Collect more qualitative and quantitative data to deepen understanding of diversity and lived experience.

Progress towards these objectives will be measured through attainment data, attendance and participation analysis, workforce composition and engagement surveys.

In doing so, the Trust seeks to live out its Catholic mission, ensuring that every person is known, loved and valued, and that all policies reflect both the letter of the law and the spirit of the Gospel.

3.1 Commitment to pupils, students and families

We are mindful that our equality objectives must reflect the lived experience of our pupils, students and their families. Families who feel welcomed, respected and heard are partners in education. The Trust is committed to removing barriers that prevent families from engaging fully in school life — whether those barriers relate to language, disability, cultural background or socio-economic circumstance. Our values of Love, Service, Humility and Faith call us to build genuine relationships of trust with every family we serve.

3.2 Commitment to diversity in the curriculum

We are determined that the teaching in our schools follows our Gospel values. It is also important that each member of our community can recognise themselves and their families in our taught curriculum. Our schools serve wonderfully diverse communities. Our differences make us stronger, and it is important that everyone feels known, loved, and valued. Our school leaders must engage in regular reviews regarding curriculum content and perspective, ensuring that knowledge taught across lessons, reading books, assembly content etc. is reflective of the backgrounds of all of our students, staff and families.

4. Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that they treat students, families, colleagues and others with dignity and respect and do not discriminate against or harass other people, including students, families, colleagues, job applicants, suppliers, clients, and visitors.

Managers have a particular responsibility to ensure that this policy is implemented in their area of responsibility and that any complaints or suspected discriminatory acts or practices are dealt with promptly and fairly.

The executive team and HR team will provide support and advice to managers and employees on the application of this policy and related equality matters.

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation complies with its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and for monitoring progress against equality objectives.

As a Catholic Trust, these responsibilities are carried out in a spirit of service, justice and respect for the dignity of every person. Leadership at all levels within the Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust recognises that equality and inclusion are not only legal duties but Gospel imperatives rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the principles of the common good, solidarity, and the dignity of work.

Within Sancta Familia, leadership is understood as service: we act justly, serve humbly and build communities where everyone is known, loved and valued.

4.1 Responsibilities to pupils, students and families

Every employee, manager and governor has a responsibility to model equality and inclusion in their interactions with pupils, students and their families. As St Francis tells us, “Always preach the Gospel and where necessary use words.” Our students learn about the Gospel through our actions and what we do. Students will learn what fairness, respect, and dignity look like by observing how we treat one another and how we engage with their families. Guided by our values of Love, Service, Humility and Faith, we are called to ensure that every pupil — whatever their background, identity or need — experiences our schools as places of genuine belonging.

5. Forms of discrimination

Unlawful discrimination can take a number of forms. For example, but not limited to:

- Direct discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied which disadvantages people with a particular protected characteristic more than others and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- Victimisation is where someone is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, or because they are suspected of doing so.

Discrimination by association and by perception are also unlawful.

Employees must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including students, families, current and former colleagues, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors.

This applies not only in the workplace itself, but also outside the workplace when dealing with stakeholders, attending work-related functions or representing the organisation.

As a Catholic Multi Academy Trust, Sancta Familia upholds these legal definitions in the light of Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching. We affirm that every person is created in the image of God and therefore possesses inherent dignity and worth. Acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation contradict not only the Equality Act 2010 but also our shared Christian duty to love one another as Jesus loves us (John 13:34).

Within our family of schools, we nurture a culture where everyone is known, loved and valued — ensuring that equality is lived daily through compassion, fairness and integrity.

6. Recruitment and selection

All recruitment and selection exercises, including advertisements, job descriptions, person specifications, application forms, short-listing and interview processes, will be carried out in accordance with this policy and the Trust’s recruitment procedures.

Short-listing and selection decisions will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination. Recruitment decisions will be based on objective criteria that are directly related to the requirements of the post.

Vacancies will be advertised widely to encourage applications from all suitably qualified candidates, and reasonable adjustments will be made for applicants with disabilities.

Those involved in recruitment will receive appropriate training in equality, diversity and inclusion and in the avoidance of unconscious bias.

We will ensure that recruitment decisions are recorded and retained in accordance with data protection requirements.

Employees and applicants are encouraged to inform the Trust if they have, or become aware of, a disability so that reasonable adjustments and support can be considered.

Part-time and fixed-term employees will not be treated less favourably than comparable fulltime or permanent employees and will enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment can be objectively justified.

As a Catholic Multi Academy Trust, all recruitment processes must uphold both the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the moral imperatives of Catholic Social Teaching. This means acting with integrity, justice and respect for every person's inherent dignity. The Trust is committed to ensuring that recruitment decisions reflect fairness, transparency and equality of opportunity for all.

At Sancta Familia, we believe leadership is service and that every appointment should strengthen our shared mission, to ensure everyone in our community is known, loved and adds value. In recruitment, we look for individuals who not only meet professional standards but also embody our values of faith, service, personal development and academic excellence.

Recruitment across the Trust will therefore seek to attract a diverse and representative workforce, ensuring that each academy contributes to a culture of belonging and shared purpose. Decisions will always be made on merit, and all candidates will be treated with compassion, consistency and professionalism.

Through this approach, Sancta Familia promotes autonomy with coherence: empowering each academy to appoint staff who meet their local needs, while ensuring that the principles of fairness, equality and inclusion are upheld consistently across the Trust.

6.1 Safer recruitment and blind redaction

In line with safer recruitment principles, the Trust ensures that equality considerations are embedded throughout the recruitment process in a manner consistent with robust safeguarding practice. All shortlisting panels must be trained in both safer recruitment and equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Trust does not use blind redaction of application forms as part of its shortlisting process. This is consistent with TES safer recruitment training guidance, which makes clear that blind redaction is not a required or recommended practice. Instead, trained panel members are required to score candidates solely against the published criteria in the person specification, setting aside any irrelevant personal information. All shortlisting decisions must be documented and defensible.

We recruit with our pupils and families in mind. Every appointment we make shapes the culture and character of our schools. We therefore seek individuals who not only meet professional standards but who also demonstrate, through our values of Love, Service, Humility and Faith, a genuine commitment to the wellbeing and flourishing of every child and family we serve.

7.Training, promotion and conditions of service

Training needs will be identified through regular performance reviews, career development and professional growth plan (PGP) discussions.

All employees will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to develop their skills and realise their full potential, subject to the operational needs of the Trust.

Decisions about training, promotion, and terms and conditions of employment will be made on merit and in accordance with this policy and the Trust's equality, diversity and inclusion principles.

No employee will be denied training, promotion or other opportunities for advancement on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

As a Catholic Multi Academy Trust, Sancta Familia is committed to nurturing every employee as a whole person, recognising their dignity, gifts and vocation to serve the common good. In accordance with Catholic Social Teaching, professional growth is seen not only as an employment right but as an act of stewardship and service.

We believe that excellence is achieved through continual improvement — being “a little bit better tomorrow than we were today.” Staff at all levels are encouraged to develop in faith, service, personal growth and professional practice. The Trust will therefore provide structured opportunities for development, collaboration and reflection that help individuals flourish in their roles and contribute fully to the mission of our schools.

All decisions regarding training and promotion will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant employment legislation, ensuring transparency, objectivity and fairness throughout. The Trust is committed to removing barriers to progression and ensuring that advancement opportunities are accessible to all employees based on merit, capability and potential.

In line with our commitment to autonomy with coherence, each academy is encouraged to design local professional development plans that reflect their unique community needs while contributing to the shared priorities and values of the wider Trust family. Leadership development will focus on building servant leaders — those who lead through collaboration, compassion and example.

7.1 Professional development and pupil outcomes

Professional development and equal access to training directly benefits our pupils and students. Staff who are skilled, confident and growing in their practice bring that energy and expertise into the classroom. The Trust recognises that investing equitably in every member of staff — regardless of role, seniority or school — is ultimately an investment in the learning and wellbeing of every child. Our values of Love, Service, Humility and Faith call us to nurture not just academic outcomes but the whole person, and that begins with how we develop the people who work with young people every day.

8.Termination of employment

Termination of employment will always be handled in accordance with employment law, the employee's contract, and the Trust's disciplinary, capability, and redundancy procedures.

Decisions to terminate employment will be made objectively, lawfully, and without discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

Employees will be given appropriate notice of termination as specified in their contract or as required by law.

Where employment is ended due to redundancy, ill health, or the expiry of a fixed-term contract, the Trust will act fairly and reasonably, ensuring that consultation and procedural requirements are met in full.

Records relating to any termination of employment will be retained in accordance with data protection requirements and confidentiality obligations.

In keeping with Catholic Social Teaching, the Trust recognises that ending an employment relationship carries both legal and human dimensions. Decisions regarding termination must therefore be reached with fairness, compassion, and a commitment to the dignity of the individual.

Within Sancta Familia, leadership in such situations is seen as an act of service — balancing justice with mercy. Managers and governors must ensure that every reasonable effort has been made to support, train, and restore performance or conduct before employment is brought to an end. Dismissal should always be the last resort, taken only after careful discernment and full adherence to policy.

Where the decision to terminate employment intersects with the Catholic mission, ethos, or faith character of the Trust, for example, where professional standards relate to the expression of Gospel values, the Diocesan Schools Commission (DSC) will be consulted before any decision is confirmed. This ensures that both civil and ecclesial obligations are respected.

The written communication confirming termination must be factual, respectful, and clear. It should acknowledge the individual's contribution to the Trust community and reflect the values of fairness, respect, and reconciliation. In doing so, Sancta Familia demonstrates that even difficult decisions are carried out in a way that sustains human dignity and strengthens our shared culture of faith and service

9.Implementation and monitoring

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively across all schools within the Trust. The Board will delegate operational responsibility for compliance to the Chief Executive Officer and the Central HR Team, who will monitor its application and ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under this policy.

All managers and leaders must ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently within their area of responsibility, and that appropriate records are maintained to demonstrate compliance.

Regular audits and reviews will be undertaken to monitor the effectiveness of this policy and to identify areas for improvement. Data will be gathered, where appropriate, on recruitment, training, promotion and retention, to identify and address any disproportionate impacts on particular groups.

Any breaches of this policy will be regarded seriously and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Trust's procedures.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if there are relevant changes in legislation, guidance, or Trust practice.

In the spirit of Catholic Social Teaching, the Trust recognises that equality and inclusion are not simply legal duties but expressions of justice and respect for the inherent dignity of every person. Monitoring implementation therefore serves not only to ensure compliance but also to uphold the moral and pastoral responsibilities that come with Catholic education.

Within Sancta Familia, implementation will focus on “being a little bit better tomorrow than we were today”, embedding continual improvement into every aspect of our community. Each school within the Trust will be supported to evaluate its own culture and practice, balancing autonomy with coherence to ensure consistency of principle and integrity of application.

The Trust will regularly review data and feedback in partnership with staff, governors, and where appropriate, the Diocesan Schools Commission (DSC), to ensure that decisions and practices remain aligned with both UK equality law and the values of faith, service and the common good.

Progress against the Trust's equality objectives, reducing attainment gaps, strengthening inclusion and belonging, improving workforce diversity, and deepening understanding through data and dialogue, will be reviewed annually as part of the Trust's Summer Term HR and Wellbeing Committee report to the Board of Directors. This process ensures that equality, diversity, and inclusion are lived values, not just written commitments.

9.1 Pupil voice, families and community

Monitoring will also take account of the experience of pupils, students and families. The Trust will gather feedback through pupil voice, parental engagement surveys and community consultation, ensuring that those we serve have a meaningful say in how equality and inclusion are embedded across our schools. The lived experience of families — particularly those from underrepresented or disadvantaged groups — will be treated as essential evidence in evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Our values of Love, Service, Humility and Faith remind us that data alone is insufficient; we must listen, reflect and act with compassion and courage.

10. Policy review and approval

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if there are changes in relevant legislation, guidance, or the Trust's operational circumstances.

The review will assess the policy's effectiveness in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the Trust, and its compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and associated statutory duties.

Responsibility for initiating and overseeing the review lies with the Chief Executive Officer and the Central HR Team, in consultation with the Trust Board and the Local Governing Bodies.

Any amendments or updates to this policy will be approved by the Trust Board.

All staff will be informed of any revisions to this policy, and training will be provided as necessary to support its implementation.

In keeping with the Catholic Education Service (CES) model and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, policy review is understood as part of the Trust's moral and pastoral duty to ensure that justice, equality, and respect are reflected in its working practices and culture. This review process allows the Trust to discern where further growth, reconciliation or improvement is required.

For Sancta Familia, reviewing this policy is more than a compliance exercise, it is an expression of our shared mission to lead "a family of Catholic schools where everyone is known, loved, and adds value." Reviews will therefore examine not only data and procedure, but also the lived experience of belonging, inclusion and wellbeing among staff and pupils across the Trust.

The Board will use both quantitative data and qualitative feedback to evaluate the Trust's progress against its equality objectives, ensuring that every review leads to meaningful action and measurable improvement. Consultation with the Diocesan Schools Commission will ensure that the policy continues to support the Catholic character and mission of the Trust.

Ultimately, this process embodies our commitment to autonomy with coherence — schools are empowered to act locally while remaining connected through shared principles, Gospel values and professional integrity. The review cycle ensures that equality, diversity and inclusion are woven into the daily life, leadership and witness of the Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust.



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