

Equality Policy and objectives

Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College



Approved by: Full
Governing Body

Date: January 2024

Last reviewed on:
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Next review due by: January 2025

1. Aims

Our college aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

At Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College we wish to create and maintain an inclusive, trusting, secure and happy environment where everyone can work as equals. Our college virtues underpin this policy. All members of the college community have responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity, experience and treatment. We are all treated equally in the eyes of God and we are all of equal worth.

Our college consists of a diverse range of people – employees, visitors, students and parents. We celebrate our difference, by understanding them and enjoying the diversity this brings. This policy takes into account the requirement of the Equality Act 2010. The policy will be applied to all staff and students, as well as any volunteers working in Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College. We want to foster mutual tolerance and our aim is for everyone to feel valued within the college. By actively promoting equal opportunities and not discriminating either directly or indirectly against anyone on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, beliefs, sexuality or gender the college can ensure that all staff, students and volunteers:

- Have opportunities to achieve their potential.
- Have access to and can make full use of the college's facilities and resources.
- Are prepared for life in a diverse and multi-ethnic society.
- Understand the meaning of prejudice, how discrimination occurs and how to take a stand against these.
- Participate in our positive ethos and environment.
- See that Racist and discriminatory incidents are dealt with effectively (see Behaviour policy, Peer on Peer Abuse policy and Anti-Bullying Policy).
- See that Inclusion issues are taken seriously and are considered in all aspects of college life.
- Are free from discrimination.

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require colleges to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the college, including to staff, students and parents.
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteacher

The headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and students
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors

All college staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in section 8.

4. Eliminating discrimination

The college is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every September.

5. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the college aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of college extra-curricular activities)

6. Fostering good relations

The college aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, students will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Students will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising college trips and activities based around the local community
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with any tensions between different groups of pupils within the college. For example, our college councils have representatives from different year groups and are formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the college's activities, such as sports clubs.
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

The college ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

The college always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a college trip or activity is being planned, the college considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to students with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

All college trips and visits are designed to ensure as far as possible that all students have access to the educational opportunities on offer. Trips and visits that are essential for curriculum development, including assessment/coursework are offered to all students on that particular course to ensure that no one is excluded from the group being offered the visits. Other supplementary visits that enrich the experience of students are also offered to all of the appropriate group. Visits which are not curriculum related such as sporting tours, outdoor pursuits or group social trips must be offered to all students in the target groups though the school may need to specify particular requirements in terms of skills, maturity or sporting ability etc. Approval is not given for curriculum visits which inappropriately draw distinctions between students; inappropriately impact adversely on students with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 or do not comply with the college's equality policy; or would have a negative impact on the education of students who remain in college.

8. Equality objectives

Objective 1: Implement the College's revised Disadvantaged Strategy under the banner of Think Barriers

Objective 2: Work with staff to ensure they all adopt an equity mindset which recognizes that the most vulnerable students need additional support to succeed.

Objective 3: Enhance and develop students' knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to appreciate and value difference and diversity. This will be achieved through a focus on our college mission and the ongoing development of a well planned and skillfully delivered RSHE programme.

Objective 4: Develop a three year plan which outlines how the college will address the challenges faced by our disadvantaged students.

Objective 5: Focus on teacher whole class questioning as a key inclusion tool for ensuring all students are engaged in their learning.

Objective 6: Work in collaboration with other schools as part of the college's IQM Centre of Excellence status

Objective 7: Closely monitor and record incidents involving the use of homophobic, sexist and/or racist language by students. A report will be issued to governors three times a year.

9. Monitoring arrangements

The headteacher will update the equality information we publish, [described in sections 4-7 above], at least every year.

This document will be reviewed by the governing body at least every 4 years.

This document will be approved by the governing body.

10. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Safeguarding policy
- Anti bullying policy
- SEND Policy
- Peer on Peer abuse policy

- RSHE Policy

APPENDIX 1

Gender Reassignment

Introduction

Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under section 7 of the Equality Act 2010. This section states that “A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.” It is important to note that gender reassignment is to do with the individual. As a Catholic College we uphold the belief that everybody is made in the image and likeness of God and therefore must have their unique dignity respected.

Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College recognises that as soon as a student proposes to undergo a process which will result in a change of sex they are protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. When the college is informed that a student is proposing to undergo gender reassignment the following steps will be followed.

Mentoring

A member of staff will be assigned to act as an identified point of contact for the parents and student.

Initial discussion

Initial discussions will take place between parents and the mentor to gather information on how the student can be supported in college. The student will be asked which term he/she prefers the college to use when discussing their gender identity. Some individuals may prefer to use the term transgender person or trans male or female. The student and their parents will be asked if from this point onward they wish the student's photograph to be used on the college website, newsletter or future publicity material.

Toilets and changing facilities

The mentor will identify a toilet and changing facility for the student's use. This will be done so as to respect the dignity and privacy of the student and others using the toilet whilst ensuring their safety.

Physical Education

The college will deal with each student individually and sensitively in terms of participation in PE whilst recognising that each student has a right to access physical education in college. PE is important to the physical and mental wellbeing of students and is a key part of the college curriculum. Issues will be discussed with the student and parents and lesson plans will be devised sensitively and carefully in agreement with the mentor. Different rates of development of students will be taken into account when considering participation in certain contact sports and discussion will take place with parents and the student before the lesson. In terms of competitive college sports the college will adopt a common sense approach in light of limited current guidance from sporting bodies.

Change of name

If parents request it the college will refer to a student who is proposing to undergo gender reassignment by their preferred name. At this stage the Chair of Governors and staff will be informed by the Headteacher. The college will also inform the Archdiocese and discuss the issue with their press officer. Staff will also be informed and asked to pass all enquiries regarding the student to the Headteacher. At all times the college will be open and transparent whilst recognising the student's right to privacy. Staff will be reminded that they should not disclose information that may reveal the student's transgender status unless legally required to do so or the young person has asked them to do so. Staff should not discuss the student outside of college even when making no particular reference to their name or personal details. The child's gender will be recorded on the college's information management system in line with the child's and parents wishes.

College uniform

If after a series of meetings the parents request that their child be allowed to wear the uniform with which he/she identifies the college will request a period of half a term before implementing the change. This is to ensure that all necessary steps are followed in protecting the needs of the student concerned.

College trips

Learning about different cultures and lives and taking part in activities may involve overnight stays both at home and abroad. The college recognises that issues may arise for young transgender people but these should not mean they are excluded from the trip. Any trip involving overnight stays will be discussed well in advance with parents and the student and consideration given to any additional needs, such as the safety of the child and other children and adults on the trip. Plans will be agreed by the trip organiser and mentor.

Outside agencies

The college will liaise where necessary with any outside agencies working with the student who are aware of the individual's gender reassignment. Parental and student consent will be sought before doing so.

Medication

If the student is taking medication the college will ensure that appropriate staff are fully briefed on the effects of these medications in line with all relevant college policies.