ST JOSEPH'S HIGH SCHOOL CROSSMAGLEN



Equality & Inclusion Policy

Summary	**This policy sets out your commitment and approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion.**
Purpose	To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of this policy and its application in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion for all pupils and staff.
Operational Date	
Frequency of Review	Every 3 Years
Date last Reviewed	March 2025
Approved by Board of Governors	

1. Introduction

St Joseph's High School is committed to equality and inclusion.

We recognise the value of diverse environments and strive to promote a culture in which all pupils, staff and members of the school community are welcomed and supported to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics.

We are committed to an ethos and culture of inclusion in St Joseph's for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, disability, SEN status, gender, gender identity (e.g. transgender) and/or sexual orientation (LGBTQ+).

St Joseph's High School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of all our children and young people and where all members of our school community are of equal worth.

We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength that enriches our lives. We take account of differences and strive to remove any barriers to learning and development.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and bullying and harassment. As a school community, we recognise the need to champion equality and ensure inclusion for all pupils in the full life of our school; where appropriate making necessary adjustments to enable everyone's participation.

St Joseph's High School believes that education (both formal and informal learning) is fundamental to equality of opportunity. It prepares young people for life and is a powerful influence on access to and advancement in employment. All young people should be able to learn and develop fully in a truly diverse and inclusive environment.

All our policies and practices are fully inclusive and supportive of a welcoming culture for all communities; this is evidenced in our practices and procedures.

2. Mission

"Every Child, Every Chance, Every Class, Every Day."

At St Joseph's High School, we believe that it is our obligation to provide a caring, respectful, creative, and safe environment where we educate to the highest standards and hold high expectations for all the children in our care. By doing this, we believe that each child will achieve his/her full potential in becoming confident, well-rounded, lifelong learners who are ready to contribute and shape their world.

As a Catholic School, St Joseph's High School is open and welcoming to young people of all nationalities and of all faiths and to those who have no religious affiliation. Within our school we promote a belief that difference is to be understood and celebrated as a source of enrichment. This mission is undertaken by Governors, school leaders and staff who are dedicated and committed to

supporting the young people in our care and the communities from which they come.
(**Catholic Schools Trustee Service)**

3. Values

- **Compassion -** The act of showing kindness and empathy to others.
- **Respect** - accepting someone as they are and for who they are.
- **Integrity** - being honest and having strong moral principles.
- **Inclusion** - the act of creating environments in which any individual or group irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need will feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued.
- **Excellence** is striving to do more and be great even if that means making errors along the way.

St Joseph's High School also supports the wider values of the Education Authority of Openness, Respect, Reflection, Responsibility, Excellence and Equality.

4. Diversity Statement

St Joseph's High school recognises the wider value of education, beyond solely the achievement of qualifications, allowing individuals to develop an understanding and experience of the value and range of diverse cultures, identities, and backgrounds. We recognise that **St Joseph's is** enriched by the diversity that everyone brings and are committed to creating a safe, welcoming environment for all, where each learner can flourish, knowing that differences are respected.

5. Equality and Inclusion – School Policies

Through this policy, and the wider practices within **St Joseph's High School,** we seek to empower our young people to embrace diversity and challenge discrimination. We equip our Governors and staff to fulfil their legal responsibilities, ensure that our school's safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and inclusive and enable robust monitoring of our progress as a school.

Inclusion underpins all our school policies.

As part of our overall school policy development there are many policies that we must have in place and regularly review to ensure our school is addressing its statutory responsibilities. These include:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Uniform Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- RSE Policy
- SEN Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- School Development Plan

Any arising incident will be dealt with by the appropriate policy. There should never be any grey areas when it comes to young people's safety and well-being.

This is supplemented by a range of other policies that as a school we feel are important to have for our whole school community. It is our belief that equality and inclusion is central to **all** our policies and that we maintain an ethos that welcomes diversity and promotes equal opportunities for all, ensuring all our pupils and their families feel valued and supported and making sure that equality and inclusion is evident in everyday school life.

6. Responsibilities

The ***Board of Governors*** have overall responsibility to:

'Promote equality, good relations and diversity and to comply with education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties in relation to the school' *'Every school a good school – the governors' role'* (Department of Education NI, August 2019).

The Governors have overall responsibility to manage the implementation of equality and diversity in our school.

The ***Principal*** is responsible for:
ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with equality legislation.

- ensuring the school implements policies and practices in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.
- following the relevant procedures and acting in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, or bullying.
- ensuring appropriate training and awareness raising is undertaken with staff.
- ensuring that appropriate records are kept of any cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

The ***School Senior Management Team*** are responsible for:

- putting the school's equality and inclusion policies and codes into practice.
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out.
- following the relevant procedures and acting where necessary.

The School's Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Team (led by the Designated Teacher) will manage the implementation of the policy in partnership with the principal.

All School Staff (*teaching and non-teaching*) have a responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this policy and will contribute to an inclusive and welcoming environment within the school.

Pupils/students are responsible for:

- respecting others in their language and actions.
- following all the relevant school policies and codes of conduct in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.

7. How do we promote Equality and Inclusion?

St Joseph's High School promotes equality and inclusion within our school through the following activities:

School/Centre Practices

- Develop a whole school approach that welcomes learners and staff from other Christian and non-Christian traditions.
- Have an inclusive mission statement.
- Use a range of resources and teaching approaches.
- Use appropriate terminology and language.
- Tackle stereotypes.
- Challenge homophobic, transphobic or any other type of bullying.
- A Behaviour for Learning Policy that is consistently and fairly applied.
- Increase the visibility/ role modelling of minority groups.
- Set clear expectations about acceptable behaviour.
- A strong learner voice through student council.
- Nominate a diversity and inclusion champion.
- Relationships are respectful and inclusive.
- Opportunities for learners of other faiths to explore and develop their spirituality.
- Opportunities for learners of no faith to develop their own view of the world.
- Have Equality and Inclusion as a regular topic at Board of Governor meetings.
- Have regular Diversity Training for **all** staff.
- Discussing uniform preferences with pupils / students.

Facilities/ Services

- Promoting and using interpreting services.
- Using translated documents where available.
- Have allocated accessible parking.
- Having all accessible toilets/changing facilities.
- Having an accessible main entrance and building.

- Having signage, displays and resources reflecting all languages and cultures throughout the school.
- Considering flexible payment schemes when planning trips and extra-curricular activities.
- Helping young people to access advice from support organisations including notice boards with clear and accessible information and contacts.
- The sharing of facilities, resources and expertise of the school is available to the school community.

Curriculum

- Integrated value-led curriculum.
- Examining where and when themes around equality and inclusion might be embedded into topics within each curriculum area.
- Holding equality and inclusion themed events on a regular basis and following up on these.
- The school community fully embraces Shared Education Programmes and recognises the educational and social benefits to learners, the promotion of equality of opportunity, good relations, quality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion which sharing can provide.
- Ensuring that staff with specific areas of responsibility consider the implications of Equality and Inclusion with their teams.
- Engaging with and participating in ALC collaborative programmes/events.

8. Monitoring the Success of the Equality and Inclusion Policy

The policy will be monitored via a range of methods:

- Team meetings to have Equality & Inclusion as an agenda item.
- Governors to report on the successes and challenges in relation to inclusion.
- Number of bullying incidents by equality characteristic to be monitored and appropriate action taken, as necessary.
- Embedding of equality and inclusion across curriculum areas to be monitored
- Number of comments and complaints in relation to equality and inclusion to be monitored.
- ~~a~~ Record of training / information presented to staff/ pupils to be kept.
- Positive stories on equality and inclusion to be highlighted.
- Feedback from pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community to be sought regularly.

9. Complaint's Procedures

The school has a robust and transparent Complaints procedure. If a complaint is made regarding equality or inclusion, the Complaints process will be fairly and systematically applied. Access to the Complaints procedure can be found on the school's website at **https://www.stjosephscrossmaglen.com/**

10. Review cycle of policy

The Equality and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed by all stakeholders (Governors, SLT, staff, pupils, and parents and, if required, updated every ***three*** years in line with our school policy review cycle.

11. Definitions.

Diversity, Inclusion, Discrimination, Reasonable Adjustments, Harassment and Bullying

Equality means ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities regardless of their abilities, their background, and their lifestyle or personal characteristics. Equality does not mean treating everyone the same.

Inclusion: Inclusion is about valuing and respecting our differences and so creating a welcoming and productive environment for diverse colleagues to flourish. It is the richness of colleagues' ideas, backgrounds and perspectives that creates businesses value by enabling us to innovate and anticipate the needs of our diverse service needs.

Diversity: Diversity means all the ways we differ. It includes visible differences such as age, gender, ethnicity, and disability, as well as invisible differences such as thinking styles, sexual orientation, and nationality. It recognises that all these characteristics interact and influence our sense of identity and how we behave and make us each the unique people we are.

Direct Discrimination: This is where someone is treated less favourably than others in the same of similar position based on a protected characteristic, for example their gender.

Indirect Discrimination: Indirect discrimination is where an organisation unjustifiably operates a rule or policy that looks the same for everyone but in effect disadvantages people from a particular protected group.

For example, you do not permit pupils to wear headgear as part of your uniform policy and this policy applies to every pupil equally. Due to the cultural values (often religious) of some minority groups in our community this could potentially be defined as indirect discrimination.

Disability-Related Discrimination: Disability-related discrimination is a form of direct discrimination. It is very closely linked with the duty to make reasonable adjustments. Disability-related discrimination is much less likely to occur when the reasonable adjustment duty has been complied with.

What is the reasonable adjustment duty for disabled people?

In certain circumstances the law places a duty on us to make reasonable adjustments for those pupils or prospective pupils who have a disability. This may include access, additional equipment, or changes to routines / schedules.

Harassment and bullying:
Harassment and bullying are terms used to explain certain types of unacceptable behaviour that pupils may sometimes be subjected to such as name-calling, unacceptable comments, intimidating text messages, deliberate exclusion, pushing / shoving, or more aggressive physical contact.