



**SINGLE EQUALITY &**  
**COMMUNITY COHESION POLICY**

**2023 – 2024**

Date for review: 09/24

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## 1. Foreword

Rochdale MBC aims to be recognised as a leader of diversity and equality in its work and as an example of good practice in the delivery of services and employment. This Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy for Rochdale's schools reflects this ambition and outlines the activities which will deliver this.

Equality of opportunity and social inclusion issues will ensure that all school communities can truly benefit from and contribute to the improvements we are making, which will bring long-term and positive benefits for Rochdale Borough. Therefore, the school's Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy will require ownership by Governors, senior leaders, all staff, the school community and the pupils in order to succeed.

This policy serves essentially two purposes:

1. To set out a school's overall commitment to equality and community cohesion in one central document for past, present and prospective pupils. The Policy therefore contains the school's approach to all relevant protected characteristics of: **Disability, Gender, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual orientation**; and
2. How the school will manage, plan and include its Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy within its day to day work.

**Schools also have obligations as employers and a service provider against the protected characteristics of Age and Marriage and Civil partnerships.** These obligations are not covered in this framework as this policy is concerned with a school's obligations to its pupils (mainly present and prospective pupils and where relevant former pupils and staff).

Separate policy guidance covering recruitment and employment is available from Schools Personnel team and the Local Authority.

This Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy will help schools ensure that they focus more on the outcomes that matter to pupils, community and people who use their services; and that their services are more accessible and delivered effectively. This policy provides a framework for the school to **eliminate prohibited conduct, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations** in a proactive way.

The Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy is based on the Equality Act 2010.

Much of what is required of schools is already being carried out by them. The main new provisions in the Equality Act 2010 are:

- new disability discrimination provisions (direct disability discrimination, indirect disability discrimination and discrimination arising from disability)
- new protected characteristics:
- new positive action provisions

Schools had a "specific duty" to publish information around their equality objectives in an accessible manner in April 2012.

Finally, as schools are already aware, avoiding discrimination and promoting equality supports the agenda of improving attainment and progression for all pupils. Good

education and skills are crucial for opening up opportunities and increasing the chance of a successful life. Furthermore, Equality and Community Cohesion is a 'limiting judgment' in OFSTED inspections and need to be considered at all times.

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## **2. Introduction**

There were a number of statutory duties that the school was required to meet prior to the Equality Act 2010. As such, with the implementation of this act and the harmonisation of previous legislation, this policy will refer to the Equality Act 2010 and its various provisions as the legislative framework through which this Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy will operate.

In the development of this Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy **St Vincent's RC Primary School** has moved from a focus on an individual response to an approach that builds on **disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation** considerations from the start and at every level of the school, at strategic, policy, management and classroom level. We will demonstrate what we have done and what we plan to do to improve opportunities and outcomes for pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school. This policy will be monitored and delivered through the governors' role, School Improvement and Self Evaluation process.

We will ensure that every pupil irrespective of the protected characteristics is able to achieve high standards and that strategies are in place to tackle under-achievement. We will ensure that every pupil has access to the necessary support required to enable them to achieve their highest potential. We will ensure that the school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair, effective and equitable.

Our intention is to ensure that the adults working or volunteering in the school include as much as possible a balanced representation of the local and wider community. We believe that this will provide good role models for pupils from all backgrounds.

This Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy will be linked to a joint action plan which sets out how we intend to implement the policy over the next three years.

**St Vincent's RC Primary School** sees this Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy as a living document and we will continuously review the action plan in consultation with pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and all other stakeholders where possible. We believe they need to be involved from the very start and their involvement will inform the preparation, development, publication, review and reporting of the policy and action plan to ensure that we meet the needs of people from different backgrounds.

## **Structure of our Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy**

This policy document is designed to give a background to St Vincent's RC Primary School in respect of the protected characteristics in both education and service provision.

Recruitment and employment issues with regard to staff may be referenced but these will be covered in more detail under separate policy.

Therefore, we have set out below:

- The definitions in respect of each of the protected equality characteristics
- Our commitment for each of the protected equality characteristics

We have then set out our key approaches and tools to help us achieve these aims including:

- Our consultation and involvement strategy
- Our commitment to Equality Impact Assessments
- Our accountability processes for the policy
- Our commitment to publication and public access
- Our monitoring and review processes

### **3. Specific Equality Areas**

#### **Disability**

##### **What do we mean by Disability Equality?**

We recognise that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

##### **Our commitment**

**St Vincent's RC Primary School** is committed to promoting an ethos that safeguards the dignity and well-being of everyone and encourages practices that consider the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and victimisation directed at anyone because of their disability.

This Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy incorporates our commitment and actions on disability equality. It demonstrates our commitment to addressing disability equality in our decision making and the delivery of education.

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for disabled pupils, staff and other users of our services so they can have equal access to all our school and its services. This policy is a statement of our commitment and shows clearly how we will work over the next three years to achieve our goal.

We will be continuing to review our policies, practices and procedures so that they do not adversely affect anyone because of their disability. By also building this into our

curriculum, working and procurement processes we will expect others to do the same.

## **Gender**

St Vincent's RC Primary School is not a single sex school.

### **What do we mean by Gender Equality?**

We recognise that a person's gender refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or to boys or girls.

### **Our commitment**

**St Vincent's RC Primary School** is committed to promoting an ethos that safeguards the dignity and well-being of everyone and encourages practices that consider the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and victimisation directed at anyone because of their gender.

We recognise that stereotypes exist for both genders and some can lose opportunities because of these stereotypes and welcome the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 with specific provision for Gender Equality and we will give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender, including domestic violence, sexual violence, bullying and exploitation.
- Promote equality of opportunity between women and men in all of our functions.

## **Gender Reassignment**

### **What do we mean by gender reassignment?**

We recognise that a person may express their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical gender that they were born with.

### **Our commitment:**

**St Vincent's RC Primary School** is committed to promoting an ethos that safeguards the dignity and well-being of everyone and encourages practices that consider the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and victimisation directed at anyone because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.

We understand gender reassignment does not necessarily require a medical process to be undertaken and that a person will be protected because of gender reassignment if they:

- Make their intention known to someone at the school
- Start to behave or dress according to the gender they identify with
- Undergo treatment such as surgery or hormone therapy
- Have already received gender recognition under the gender recognition act 2004

The school will also respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within its school community.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

#### **What do we mean by pregnancy and maternity?**

Treating a woman (or a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger.

#### **Our commitment:**

**St Vincent's RC Primary School** is committed to promoting an ethos that safeguards the dignity and well-being of everyone and encourages practices that consider the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and victimisation directed at anyone because of their pregnancy or maternity.

We will also seek to make arrangements for female pupils or staff to ensure that they are not treated less favourably because they are pregnant or breastfeeding.

We will not discriminate against staff in absences related to pregnancy and maternity.

### **Race**

#### **What do we mean by Race Equality?**

The school adopts the definition of Race as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 as one of the protected characteristics which refer to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

#### **Our commitment:**

**St Vincent's RC Primary School** is committed to promoting an ethos that safeguards the dignity and well-being of everyone and encourages practices that consider the rights of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that race discrimination, harassment and victimisation may be experienced by all in a number of ways, including day-to-day interaction with fellow pupils, staff and visitors.

The School also recognises that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pupils and staff may experience discrimination on the basis of race, colour, nationality and ethnic origin. This discrimination can manifest itself in all areas of their lives and can have serious consequences in terms of damaging people emotionally and physically and limiting life choices and opportunities.

The school and governing body does not tolerate any form of race discrimination which it recognises is unacceptable, discriminatory and unlawful, and is proactive in ensuring that people whatever their race, are treated fairly. This commitment is consistent with the significant progress that the school has already made in this area.

Refer to the School's Mission Statement and Racial Equality Policy.

We will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to Race Equality.

### **Sexual Orientation**

### **What do we mean by sexual orientation equality?**

The school uses the definition as outlined in legislation as sexual orientation meaning a person's sexual orientation towards:

- persons of the same sex
- persons of the opposite sex, or
- persons of either sex

The school extends the definition of this protected characteristic of sexual orientation to include:

- references to a person who is of a particular sexual orientation, or
- references to persons who share the same sexual orientation

### **Our commitment:**

**St Vincent's RC Primary School** is committed to promoting an ethos that safeguards the dignity and wellbeing of everyone and encourages practices that consider the rights

of individuals to be treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment and victimisation directed at anyone because of their sexual orientation.

The School will combat discrimination faced by lesbians, gay and bisexual (LGB) people. We want to ensure equality of opportunity for LGB people across our curriculum provision, services and employment.

We will respect the rights of individuals to be open about their sexual orientation, tackle homophobia, challenge stereotyping and improve knowledge about LGB communities, both internally and to the community as a whole.

The school recognises the need to protect pupils and staff from unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation as required by the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation). We are committed to taking a pro-active approach to preventing all forms of homophobia within the school and will assess the impacts of our policies, functions and procedures on promoting sexual orientation equality as part of our Equality Impact Assessment processes.

We will deal with complaints of discrimination and harassment speedily and according to Local Authority Guidance and notify complainants of the outcome and actions taken.

## **4. Community Cohesion**

### **What do we mean by Community Cohesion?**

**St Vincent's RC Primary School** adopts the Department for Education definition of community cohesion to mean working towards a society in which:

- There is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued
- Similar life opportunities are available to all, and



- Strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community."

**Our commitment:**

For a number of years, we have been committed to promoting community cohesion as part of the response to the legal duties outlined in previous legislation.

We understand that Community Cohesion is the process that should happen in all communities to ensure that different groups and individual people get on well together. It should also allow for new communities and existing communities to adapt and integrate with one another.

The school will promote community cohesion within a number of dimensions including:

- the school community
- The Parish community
- the community within which the school is located
- the community of Britain
- the global community.

We will evidence our effectiveness for OFSTED by demonstrating:

A widely shared sense of the contribution of different communities to a shared vision-

- A strong sense of individual rights and responsibilities within the school community.
- That all children and parents feel they are being treated fairly and have the same opportunities.
- That children trust the school to act fairly.
- We have strong and positive relationships.

**Safeguarding & Building Resilience – “Learning together to be safe”**

**St Vincent’s RC Primary School** is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by taking all reasonable steps to protect them and build resilience in accordance with the DfE guidance – *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*.

This commitment is in line with our school’s current Safeguarding and Child protection policies and applies to all adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of the school.

We recognise that some young people, who are vulnerable to extreme views, may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. We also recognise that their behaviour may be challenging at times, and that some may cause offence or harm to others.

We will therefore always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all of our pupils by:

- providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn and develop in our school setting, and
- identifying children and young people who are particularly vulnerable to

extreme views / radicalisation, and taking appropriate action in accordance with the schools Safeguarding procedures with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our school setting.

- making appropriate referrals to the Local Authority for early intervention and support where necessary
- ensuring that staff member(s) or governor(s) responsible for safeguarding are kept fully aware of their responsibilities, by attending relevant training and briefings
- letting staff, parents and pupils know how to voice their concerns
- responding to any allegations appropriately in accordance with appropriate school policies and procedures.

## **5. Equality Impact Assessment**

We are reviewing key policies, functions or procedures that have been assessed as relevant to meeting the duties set out under the Equality Act 2010.

The main system by which we will assess the impact of our current policies, functions or procedures will be through carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.

We need to understand whether our policies and services are meeting everyone's needs and that anyone who needs to can get access to them. To do this we undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to test how we are doing at the moment and what can be done better in the future. An EIA will decide whether a policy or service has a "positive, negative or neutral impact" on some sections of our school and local community. It will also be used to test future policies or services. The impacts will enable us to consider the needs of different groups of people who share one or more of the protected characteristics defined by legislation.

We will consult with the local authority where necessary and our staff and Governors who are responsible for carrying out these assessments have attended relevant training or will be attending future training as part of their role.

Examples of policies / practices that schools should impact assess include those relating to:

- Admissions and in –year transfers
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Curriculum
- Uniform
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Sports
- Anti-bullying policy
- School trips

## **6. Consultation and Information**

We recognise that our Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy is a public document that should be available to any interested stakeholder.

### **Specific Duty**

Under the Equality Act 2010, we recognise as a school, we also have a "specific duty" to:

1. Publish sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty every four years, with an action plan review on at least an annual basis. This can include information on the effect that our school policies and practices have on protected groups.

We will also

2. Prepare and publish equality objectives in an accessible manner, to meet one or more aims of the general equality duty, and supporting the local authority in publishing relevant information to demonstrate compliance where necessary.

The Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy will be made aware to all staff. It will be placed on the school intranet site with other school policies.

A link will be made on the school website so that parents can have access to the policy

## **7. Monitoring and evaluating the Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy**

We will regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of our Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy Action Plan. We will report on our progress and performance. Our report will be shared with Governors and our School Improvement Partner. We will inform staff and pupils of our progress.

The findings of our monitoring and evaluation will be used to update the Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy Action Plan and inform subsequent Equality and Community Cohesion Policies

We want this Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy to be a 'whole organisational' document that drives forward equality and achieves improved outcomes. We will therefore ensure that the Action Plan is an integral part of our School Improvement Plan, and as such, our progress will have regular oversight by the senior leadership team and the governing body.

Information and data, both quantitative and qualitative, will be used to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the action plans including information on the school population, workforce recruitment, retention and progression, special initiatives, progress at key stage levels and targets and future plans will be reported on to ensure effective monitoring.

We will formally review, evaluate and revise this Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy and Action Plan every three years, to set new priorities and identify new actions. This process will again involve staff, pupils, parents and governors who reflect the full diversity of the school community.

The school has a procedure in place for recording, reporting and responding to racist incidents. The school will continue to comply with the Local Authority procedure for monitoring racist incidents so that the information can be analysed. This procedure is outlined fully in the *guidelines for schools in combating and recording racist incidents*.

## **8. Links with other school policies**

School policies that link with, and have informed this Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy include:

- SEN policy

- Racist Incident policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Admissions policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Screening, Searching and Confiscation Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Child Protection Policy

## **9. Roles and responsibilities**

This Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy and Action plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved and connected with the school, so that each individual knows what is expected of them. Promoting equality and preventing discrimination, victimisation and harassment is the responsibility of the whole school staff, including support staff. All who are associated with the school have a responsibility for promoting equality and community cohesion, and avoiding unfair discriminatory practices.

### **The Governing body will:**

- Ensure sure the school complies with all current equality legislation.
- Monitor the implementation of the Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy Community Cohesion and Action Plan to check progress and assess impact on staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure that all governors are aware of their legal responsibilities under equality legislation
- Receive and discuss regular equality and community cohesion reports on progress and performance
- Monitor achievement of equality targets
- Check that implementation of the Policy and action plan achieves improved outcomes for equality and community cohesion and people who share an aspect of their identity in relation to the protected characteristics of disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- Monitoring equality impact assessments
- Support the Head teacher in implementing any actions necessary
- Inform and consult with parents about the policy

### **The Head teacher will:**

- Provide proactive leadership to create a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and cooperation
- Ensure staff, pupils, parents/carers and any other interested stakeholders are aware of this Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy, their roles and responsibilities in implementing it, and receive training and support in carrying these actions out.
- Monitor to ensure effective implementation of the Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy Action plan
- Provide regular reports for governors on progress and performance
- Allocate appropriate responsibilities, and provide suitable training and development for staff to implement this policy
- Assess and monitor the impact of the policy through developing the action plan

- Making sure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents know about it
- Taking appropriate action in any cases of victimisation, harassment and discrimination in line with the school and LA guidance
- Report racist incident monitoring information to the LA on a termly basis
- Produce a report on progress for governor on an annual basis

**The Senior Leadership Team will:**

- Drive forward implementation of the Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy and Action Plan
- Support staff to carry out their role in implementing this policy
- Provide effective leadership on equality, inclusion and community cohesion
- Ensure the Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy is successfully promoted
- Respond in a timely and appropriate manner when dealing with any incidents or issues of discrimination, victimisation or harassment.
- Assist in implementing reviews of the Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy as detailed in the School Improvement Plan
- One member of the senior management team will be identified as the co-ordinator for equality and community cohesion and will be involved in action planning, policy development and monitoring and evaluation

**All Staff will:**

- Recognise that they have a role and responsibility in their day-to-day work to:
  - promote equality, inclusion and good community relations
  - challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
  - tackle bias and stereotyping
  - respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination, victimisation and harassment and report these
- Highlight to the senior leadership team any staff training or development that they require to carry out the above role and responsibilities.
- Promote an inclusive curriculum and whole school ethos which reflects our diverse society
- Reviewing and monitoring curriculum policies and planning in their own subject areas to ensure that equality is promoted

**All Staff will also ensure that pupils are encouraged to:**

- Recognise that they have a role and responsibility to themselves and others so that they understand and are able to:
  - promote equality, inclusion and good community relations
  - challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
  - tackle bias and stereotyping
  - work to promote anti-bullying strategies
  - respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination, victimisation and harassment and understand the action needed to report these.
- Work within the Rights and Responsibilities framework we have adopted as Rights Respecting School

**Administrative, Ancillary, Supervisory and Support Staff**

- All staff will familiarise themselves with this Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy and know what their responsibilities are in ensuring that it is implemented

**All our Pupils are responsible for:**

- Treating others kindly and fairly without prejudice, discrimination, victimisation or harassment
- Attending and engaging in their own learning as well as helping other pupils to learn
- Learning to treat each other with respect and report incidents of discrimination to an adult

**All our Parents and Carers are responsible for:**

- Supporting our school in its implementation of this Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy
- Following the school policy through their own behaviour
- Ensuring their children attend and engage in the learning
- Inform staff about any prejudice related incidents that occur

**Visitors and contractors are responsible for:**

- Knowing and following our equality policy

**10. Breaches of the Policy**

Breaches of this Single Equality & Community Cohesion Policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body.

If a member of the public feels that they have suffered harassment or been treated unfairly by the school because of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation, they should report this without fail through the School's complaints procedure.

Complaints by staff will be dealt with under the Grievance or Dignity at Work Policies, as appropriate. Monitoring complaints is also another way of gathering information to see whether we are meeting our equality duties. We will report annually on complaints made and action taken as part of monitoring the Single Equality and Community Cohesion Policy.

**REVIEW DATE: October 2024**