

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

### Introduction

St. Thomas à Becket Catholic College, in accordance with the Church's teaching and concern for justice and equity, supports the promotion of equality of opportunity for all members of the community in line with our mission statement and aims and recognising that we are all, both unique in God's creation and equal in God's eyes. St Thomas à Becket Catholic College is, therefore, committed to pursuing non-discriminatory policies and practices, and to eliminating unfair discrimination against any employee or pupil, actual or potential, however it may arise, but particularly on the grounds of:

- ability
- gender
- age
- culture (includes ethnic origin and class)

The following are meant as guidelines to help implement this policy and are presented under the subsequent headings: -

- school routine
- curriculum
- interaction – subdivided into  
teacher/pupil  
teacher/teacher  
pupil/pupil  
school/home
- staffing

### School Routine

- a) Tasks/jobs should be sympathetically allocated to students regardless of gender, ability, culture or age.
- b) Displays should avoid reinforcing stereotyping and should offer positive images of all sections of society.
- c) Lists and registers should be in alphabetical order.
- d) It is undesirable that students should always be seated on the basis of gender, ability or culture.
- e) It is desirable that uniform does not discriminate on the grounds of gender and that it should accommodate cultural needs.
- f) There should be no discrimination on admitting new students to school on the basis of gender, ability or culture.
- g) Dietary needs should be accommodated within the school meals provision.
- h) Members of staff should be aware of preferred names.
- i) We should seek to improve the school environment for people with physical disabilities.
- j) We should explore ways of helping students with short term disabilities to maintain their normal timetables.
- k) We should seek to foster an increased awareness of hearing/visual disabilities and implement appropriate strategies to overcome them.
- l) There should be uniform provision of exam leave for external and mock exams.

m) All students should have the right to be entered for public examinations.

n) All students' grades should be valued at GCSE level.

Shared/ Handbook/ EqOpPol

### The Curriculum

- a) Students should have equal access to relevant mainstream courses, regardless of gender, culture or ability.
- b) Subject syllabuses/schemes of work should be examined and updated to make sure they do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, to ensure their appropriateness for all abilities and should reflect the rich cultural diversity of society.
- c) Schemes of work should be examined and enhanced by including the acknowledgement of contributions by both sexes and other cultures.
- d) Books/teaching materials should not reinforce sex stereotyping and should promote the understanding of cultural differences.
- e) We should make positive attempts to break away from pre-conceived stereotypes in the curriculum.
- f) All students should be made aware of the variety of options offered and the balance of them carefully monitored.
- g) The school should endeavour to provide Language support where necessary.
- h) Teaching styles should allow individuals to develop to their maximum potential.
- i) School should look at the possibility of flexible age limits for entrance to exams, courses and school.

### Interaction

#### Teacher/Pupil

- a) Time spent with students should be on the basis of individual needs.
- b) Care should be taken to use the forename preferred by the students.
- c) Disciplinary policy should be flexible but should not discriminate on the basis of gender.
- d) No derogatory/discriminatory comments should be made to or from students based on ability, gender or culture.
- e) Students should have the right to be told their grades/marks privately if they wish.

#### Teacher/Teacher

- a) Teachers should provide role models in behaviour, attitude, appearance and standards.
- b) It should be school policy to enhance a teacher's professional development.
- c) Groups should not be stereotyped by staff comment.
- d) Staff should try to view all colleagues in a positive light.

#### Pupil/Pupil

- a) Pupils should be encouraged to demonstrate a positive regard for one another.
- b) Pupils should be encouraged to accept differences amongst themselves.
- c) Students should not stereotype each other by their comments.

#### School/Home

- a) The school should make every effort to ensure effective communication with the child's parents or guardian or other named persons.
- b) Parents should have access to documents as specified in the LEA guidelines.
- c) Parents should be informed of exceptional work either above or below normal ability.
- d) Parents should have access to reasons why a child is placed in a particular group, if they so wish.
- e) Reports should be of a standard format and accessible to all concerned.

## Staffing

- a) Both sexes should be seen to have positions of responsibility and authority, no matter what area.
- b) It would be desirable for there to be a balance of male/female staff in all curriculum areas.
- c) We should try to provide staff role models in potentially stereotyped areas.
- d) All staff should have equal access to groups across the age and ability range.
- e) Positive feedback to staff should be encouraged at all times.
- f) School should seek to support colleagues through Inset and other strategies.
- g) Ability should be the deciding factor in making appointments.
- h) Individuals should not be discriminated against on the basis of age, race, gender or class.
- i) All staff should be aware of the equal opportunities policy within school and encouraged to implement it.