



**St. Martin's School
Strategic Equality Plan
2016**

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Introduction

St. Martin's School is an 11-18 co-educational school with approximately 902 pupils on roll in Years 7-13. The school uses an active discipline system where good behaviour is rewarded and students have clear boundaries. As a result of this, relationships between staff and pupils are a great strength and assist in the learning process.

We are a fully comprehensive school which provides a safe, supportive and stimulating environment, ensuring that students achieve their potential.

As an 11-18 school we are able to provide students with the continuity throughout school key stages, which assists in the development of the young person. The majority of students choose to remain in St. Martin's School for their post-16 education where they are comfortable in the knowledge that they will receive high quality teaching to assist in their learning development.

At St. Martin's, teaching and learning in a safe, supportive and stimulating environment are paramount so that each individual can achieve success.

This strategic Equality Plan builds upon the school's previous Disability Policy, Race Equality Scheme and Equality Policies. It sits above the school's Inclusion Policy. This policy is relevant to all pupils, teaching and administrative staff, parents, carers, supporters and the local community.

The Equality Act 2010 provides the framework for this plan. The Human Rights Act 1998, the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 are also relevant to this policy.

1 Equality vision and equality objectives

The Equality Act 2010 requires all schools to have equality objectives in place by April 2012. These objectives cover all following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and include the Welsh language in Wales. Actions to achieve these objectives are in the action plan at the end of this document and have been included as an initiative or action in the School Improvement Plan

The process of choosing objectives involved:

- Attending Headteacher's meetings with equality experts and Heads of schools in the CCBC
- SLT, ALENco and teaching staff input
- Feedback from parents
- School council
- Governing body

Equality Objectives:

- Reduce difference in attainment between eFSM and non eFSM pupils and other vulnerable groups of learners as identified in local data
- Increase pupil involvement through Learner Voice
- Promote equality and celebrate diversity through the curriculum and pastoral provision

The following plan sets out our equality commitments. The Strategic Equality Plan will be evaluated through the School Improvement Plan.

2 School strategies and equalities

Implementing the Strategic Equality Plan is one of the key objectives of the School Improvement Plan. Equalities implications will be identified in each school improvement objective. Progress on this plan is reported to the Governors annually and included in the School's Self Evaluation. The Strategic Equality Plan will be reviewed within 4 years of setting the equality objectives in 2016.

3 The national equality agenda

The following pieces of legislation are at the heart of the equality agenda.

3.1 The Equality Act 2010

The 9 protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act include everybody: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act sets down Public Sector Duties that apply to all the school's functions:-

- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good community relations
- Eliminating discrimination

Specific public sector duties for Wales are set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, as issued by the Welsh Assembly Government.

3.2 The Human Rights Act 1998

Human Rights and equality are inextricably linked. Equality is treated as a fundamental human right, from the principle of equal respect for the inherent dignity of all people.

Article 14 of the Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination 'on any grounds such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status'.

The words 'other status' have been used to cover, amongst other things, sexual orientation, illegitimacy, marital status, trade union membership, transsexualism, disability, carers and imprisonment.

Article 14 can only be used when attached to a complaint relating to another article of the Convention such as Article 3: right to life, liberty and security of person or Article 8: right to a private and family life, home and correspondence.

In some instances the Human Rights Act 1998 gives greater rights to people than other equalities legislation because it judges treatment against a fixed standard and does not rely on comparison between treatment of one group of people and another.

3.3 The Welsh Language Act 1993 & the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

The Welsh language has official status and belongs to all the people of Wales. The Welsh Language Measure puts the Welsh and English language on a basis of equality. The Welsh Education Scheme was approved by Caerphilly County Council in 2009 and applies to all schools. The principles of the Scheme and this Plan are similar- in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations we will take the Welsh language into account alongside all the protected characteristics.

4 Pupils

4.1

St. Martin's will not discriminate through our admissions criteria in providing education and access to any benefit, service or facility either directly or indirectly, against anyone with a protected characteristic.

We will not discriminate on the grounds of:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- the Welsh language in Wales.

Age is the 9th protected characteristic. In a school context it applies to everybody except pupils.

Opportunities at St. Martin's School will be of equally high standard for everyone.

The school's duty to our pupils goes beyond formal education. It covers all school activities such as extra-curricular and leisure activities, after-school and homework clubs, sports activities and school trips, as well as school facilities such as libraries and IT facilities.

The school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. The duty is anticipatory. The school will ask disabled pupils whether they need any support or adjustments in advance e.g. produce the lesson notes in large print or in an electronic format before the lesson. In some cases a disabled pupil may receive support under the special educational needs (SEN) framework under Part 4 of the Education Act 1993.

4.2 How we deliver equality

St. Martin's will promote equality in providing education, access to benefits, service or facilities by making sure that people:

- Know the equality duties and the school's equality commitments
- Can access all the benefits of being at the school
- Know how to ask for help
- Are offered suitable support e.g. translation and interpretation, transport, technology, adaptations etc. where the lack of these services would place a person at a disadvantage on the grounds of a protected characteristic – to meet a need, not only a preference
- Understand that the impact upon the person involved is of great importance in determining what is reasonable

4.3 What support can you expect?

The school can only refuse to deliver support or adaptation if the school can prove that service is 'unreasonable' or 'impractical'. However this can only apply to particular and unforeseen circumstances.

4.4 Positive Action

The school can take proportionate positive action to address disadvantages faced by pupils of a protected characteristic, or where it would enable or encourage participation by an under represented group. An example of this is engaging male role models to work with all children (as well as small groups of boys) in order to engage FSM pupils in their learning experience and raise aspirations. Any 'positive action' will be preceded by research and evidence.

4.5 Communication

The school will communicate with people in a way that is suitable for them:

- Design materials that are easy to read- clear language and clear layout
- Use images that reflect the school and our local community
- Ask people of their preferred method of communication, where we can record it and use it e.g. email rather than letters to parents and carers
- Provide information in a variety of formats including large print, Braille, local languages etc. where needed
- Attach full contact details to make it easy for people to contact us
- Train and support employees in communication

St. Martin's School recognises British Sign Language as a language in its own right. The school will promote Deaf culture and identity and make use of suitable BSL interpretation and recordings.

We will aim to train relevant staff in deaf equality and BSL skills and make it known to all staff which members of staff have the relevant skills to deal with pupils, visitors, parents and governors.

4.6 Curriculum, resources and involvement

St. Martin's promotes equality through the curriculum in our choice of diverse and challenging materials and activities. We support children and young people in examining their own lives and personal identity in the light of people's experiences which are both similar and different to them.

The images we use will reflect the diversity of society in a positive way to meet the third duty of the Equality Act - to promote good relations between people. We will not omit or avoid certain equality issues because to do so would be to promote a false picture of society.

St. Martin's welcomes people across the protected characteristics to our school to share their skills and experience.

4.7 Buying goods and services and working in partnership

The school will pass on its equalities duties to any person or body who:

- works for us or with us,
- delivers goods for us,
- whether they are paid, voluntary or partnership workers.

All school contracts will state that they have to meet the equalities standards as set out in this Plan. The impact of this is that school related activities will be fair and equal for all employees, pupils and parents.

4.8 Engagement

The school consults and involves all the school's stakeholders on matters that concern them. Communicating with members of the school community gives us evidence to work out how well we are doing in delivering equality.

St. Martin's has procedures for finding out how pupils think and feel about the school.

4.9 Training

St. Martin's School ensures that all people involved with the school know our equality commitments and their personal duty under it. Suitable training for all staff and pupils is provided. Where issues or potential issues arise e.g. social tensions, we'll continue to address matters through the curriculum and where it's needed use targeted external interventions, for example Changing Minds.

We will encourage employees and governors to continually develop their learning and experience of equality matters through a range of methods including study, shadowing, partnerships and twinning work.

4.10 Complaints and comments

If any member of the school community or the public has a concern or complaint they should tell a teacher or school employee, telephone, write to or email us. The concerned party will be offered an appointment with a relevant person. The concerned party is entitled to bring a friend or colleague for support if required.

When we deal with a concern or complaint we endeavour to keep all relevant parties informed and consulted. Advocacy and personal support is available for children and young people who need it.

5. Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

5.1 Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination. St. Martin's School will implement the Act to prevent discrimination against any person or people on the grounds of a protected characteristic. Human Rights are applicable to all people in relation to the school.

Four kinds of illegal discrimination are defined in the Equality Act 2010, they apply to service delivery and employment across the protected characteristics:

1. **Direct discrimination**– where a person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic e.g. refusal to admit a child because they are Roma.
2. **Combined direct (dual) discrimination** - where a person is treated less favourably because of a combination of protected characteristics e.g. a school excludes a pupil because they are black and male.

Discrimination based on association is now illegal. Direct discrimination occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic e.g. their brother is a disabled person.

Discrimination based on perception is now illegal. Direct discrimination also occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because you mistakenly think that they have a protected characteristic e.g. discrimination against a young person who is believed to be gay, even if they're not.

3. **Indirect discrimination** – when a policy or practice is apparently neutral but the effect places a group of people at a significant disadvantage e.g. a rigid school dress code which does not account for items of clothing linked to religion.
4. **Discrimination arising from disability** – where a person is treated less favourably because of something related to their impairment e.g. a pupil with a learning disability disciplined for not obeying a rule that they hadn't understood because they didn't understand the sign.

5.2 Harassment including bullying

The school's work around personal and social education will help build a school community that understands and enjoys equality and diversity.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from harassment. Harassment is unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

The school has responsibility to protect pupils, prospective pupils, former pupils, employees etc. from harassment. The school will be pro-active on protecting people by raising awareness, training teachers and pupils, encouraging people to report harassment and will deal with problems as they arise.

Harassment now includes **harassment based on association** i.e. a friend of a disabled person, **or perception** i.e. mistakenly believed to be a Muslim.

Where there are instances of bullying in and associated with the school we will deal with instances promptly and sensitively. We recognise that instances that are motivated by prejudice against people of a particular characteristic, or bullying that affects one group of people in particular, has a negative effect, both for the people involved and for the school community.

5.3 Victimisation

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from victimisation on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics. Victimisation is when a person subjects another person to detriment because they have done, or believed that they will do, a 'protected act.'

A 'protected act' are acts that include giving information or evidence under the Equality Act 2010, bringing proceedings, or making an allegation in relation to the Act, as long as they have done so in good faith- that is they thought they were being honest.

5.4 Discrimination

Name calling, physical attacks, threats, the spreading of false rumours in person and on-line are all made more serious where a person is victimised for who they are. We know that discrimination and prejudice are particularly damaging to the individual and to family, friends and the school community. The school will take incidents of discrimination seriously and sensitively. False allegations are also taken seriously.

St. Martin's takes an active role where discrimination is identified and it involves our employees, pupils or premises. Incidents 'on the bus' or 'outside school' negatively affect our pupils as much as incidents in school and we tackle it where it is known.

Discrimination involving adults is treated differently to those involving children and young people. All adults are fully responsible for their actions. Children and young people may need support and education in matters to do with prejudice and discrimination and as such we will try to find solutions that involve the whole group and avoid criminalising individuals because of their actions. We will work with partners to find solutions, in particular where incidents are complicated or involve a wide group of people.

6 Performance/ standards - how we deliver the policy

6.1 Leadership and Management

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school fulfils its legal equalities responsibilities. A member of the Governing Body has a watching brief for equalities matters. With assistance from the Headteacher, the Governing Body will ensure that this Plan is implemented.

The Governing Body has equalities issues as regular items on the agenda of Governing Body meetings and there is a governor with responsibility for equalities.

The named persons with responsibility for dealing with reported incidents of discrimination or bullying are Mr Lee Jarvis, Headteacher and Mrs Jo Underwood, Assistant Headteacher and Equality Co-ordinator. The school will make sure that all incidents of discrimination relating to the school, its pupils and staff are reported and recorded in a register. Neither the school nor the local authority will ever publicly identify individuals involved in incidents.

The Equality Coordinator is a senior member of staff with special responsibility for implementing and promoting equalities matters and this Plan.

6.2 Taking decisions and Equality Impact Assessments

Impact assessment refers to the review of all current and proposed plans and policies in order to help us act to promote equality and to ensure no person is disadvantaged by school activities through discrimination. Impact assessments are an on-going process to ensure that the school's plans and policies are developed in an increasingly inclusive and equitable way.

As part of this school's compliance with the specific duties of the Act, we will continue to undertake impact assessment of all new policies and plans prior to them being implemented. Similarly, we will impact assess our existing policies and plans whenever they are reviewed. As such, impact assessments are incorporated into the school's planned review and revision of every policy.

6.3 Identifying and publishing equality information

St. Martin's will identify, publish and use equalities information each year to show how we are delivering the equality duty. The information we publish will be easy to find and easy to understand.

For pupils and school performance we will be publishing information on:

- Composition broken down by year group, ethnicity and gender and by proficiency in English / Welsh
- Composition broken down by types of disability and special educational needs
- Inequality of outcome and participation connected with ethnicity, gender and disability, and with proficiency in English / Welsh
- Instances of discrimination
- Complaints.

We will be sensible in producing information. We realise that if the data group is very small then a breakdown of that data will not give us useful information e.g. looking at the academic achievement of two individuals in a year group cannot tell us about the performance of Chinese pupils in general. No data published will identify any individual.

Other matters including language needs, behavioural needs, poverty, schooling history etc are taken into account when analysing data and developing strategies to address equality differences.

7 Employment

7.1 Employment

St. Martin's aims to be a fair employer and promote a friendly working culture. Without committed enthusiastic, skilled and empowered people the school cannot succeed. St. Martin's aims to be a healthy, safe and supportive work environment where people are respected for who they are and employees can perform at their best.

We want our workforce to reflect society in Caerphilly County and Wales. It is illegal to discriminate either directly or indirectly against people in selecting and employing people, in the terms of employment, access to training, promotion, transfers, retirement, dismissal, and other benefits on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics.

School employees are covered by the St. Martin's School pay policy which ensures that we have robust pay scales, performance management and commitment to continual professional development for employees through all employment levels.

7.3 Requests in relation to a protected characteristic

We will make every reasonable endeavour to meet employees' requests relating to a protected characteristic, including dress, food, holidays, prayer times, work patterns, leave, support, physical adaptations etc. in order not to discriminate.

7.4 Positive action in Employment

Positive action measures can be used to counteract the effects of past discrimination so that people in such groups can achieve their potential. We will evidence that we believe such disadvantages or under-representation exist before taking action.

7.5 Monitoring information on employment

We will monitor equality information on our workforce.

8 Action Plan

Equality and diversity is a normal part of the school's everyday business. This action plan sets out the school's main equality projects. There may be more or different work needed as opportunities arise.

	What we are going to do	How we monitor it	What is a successful outcome	Person responsible
Equality objective 1	Reduce difference in attainment between eFSM and non eFSM pupils and other vulnerable groups of learners as	Data analysis of external and internal examinations, National Tests, EAPS, FFT for all Year groups	Information disseminated to HODs and subject teachers for use in planning and teaching. Difference in attainment to be	MY

	identified in local data (See SIP)		reduced in analysis of external examination results	
Equality objectives 2	Increase pupil involvement through Learner Voice (See SIP)	Student Council feedback	Learner Voice groups to be set up and linked to all departments. Student Council observation teams to give feedback on lessons	CM/ER
Equality objectives 3	To promote equality and celebrate diversity through the curriculum and pastoral provision	Audit of Pastoral SOW by HOLs	Revised and updated SOW with equality – linked tasks	LJ/MY/KP/GE/CM AND ALL HoLs
Other action points	Communication and stakeholder engagement	Annual report and Pupil wellbeing questionnaires	Both documents to be made available on X-drive and website	JU/LJ
	Access plan and arrangements for AEN pupils	SIP	Access plan reviewed by site team and ALENCo in light of new entrants to school	KR/JU
	Training	Training feedback Staff handbook	Staff confident in dealing with equality issues and promoting equality. Staff to know Designated Equality officer	JU
	Complaints and comments	Behaviour and pastoral logs	Log to show that all equality related complaints dealt with promptly and sensitively	MY

	Anti-bullying and good relations	Review of Pastoral SOW by LP and HoLs	Revised and updated SOW with equality – linked tasks	JU CM
	Leadership	Staff handbook SIP annual and half-year reviews	Equality officer to be member of SLT.	JU

Reviewed by: Date:	JU May 2016
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