



St Matthias
ACADEMY



Equality Policy 2021-2022

We will provide a learning environment that empowers, challenges and encourages individual success and social responsibility.

St Matthias Academy actively promotes the principles of equality and inclusion for all its students.

**Date: September 2019
Reviewed Date: September 2021
Next review: September 2022**

St Matthias Academy operates an equal opportunities policy which treats all pupils and staff within the Academy as individuals irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation or disability. St Matthias Academy recognises that it would be failing the pupils if it did not prepare them for an integral part in society; this may involve challenging negative stereotypes both in the Academy and in our wider community.

The welfare and happiness of each individual is the concern of all, and the needs of the community are the responsibility of the individual. We want all our pupils to feel safe and positive about themselves; indeed the overall aim is to raise their achievement and self-esteem by empowering pupils to discover in their learning and enjoy their learning. This is achieved by holding to values where we value respect for one another and property, hold responsibility for actions. To achieve this we operate a clear and successful Equal Opportunities policy.

To successfully reach our aim, the following practice will be implemented and practised throughout the Academy:-

The Academy Council will ensure that the aims of this policy are adopted by all members of the academy community.

The Academy Council, Head Teacher and Senior members of staff will actively support the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Aims.

The Academy will seek and value the support of parents/carers and the local community in developing the aims.

Pupils, Teachers, LSAs, Professionals, the community and all others involved in academy life should be aware of their own assumptions about Gender, Culture, Sexual Orientation, Disability and Social background. Individuals should be supported in challenging and seeking positive action to overcome these assumptions where needed.

All Academy Staff members should recognise that their expectations of pupils contribute towards the achievement, behaviour, self-esteem and status of pupils.

The Academy's curriculum will aim to support the Equal Opportunities Aims and ensure that every pupil has access to a full, broad and balanced curriculum that recognises each pupil's individual needs.

The Academy's learning resources and environment will aim to support the Equal Opportunities Aims.

The Academy will recognise, value and resource the needs of those pupils whose first language is not English.

The Academy will respect the cultural and religious practices of all members of the academy community.

The Academy will not ignore, tolerate or in any way show approval of language – oral or written, or graffiti which is offensive on grounds of gender, sexual orientation or needs of the individual, ethnic origin or disability.

Any abuse, harassment or discrimination in contravention of this statement by Academy Councillors, staff, pupils, parent/carers or associated agencies will lead to the implementation of the Academy's Grievance Procedures and/or Learning and Engagement (Behaviour) Policy.

The Academy recognises and respects that pupils have a grievance procedure through the pastoral care system of the Academy Council if they feel there has been a contravention of the statement of intent through abuse, harassment or discrimination.

Pupils will have an entitlement to effect changes in the Aims of the Equality Policy through Academy Council.

Equal Opportunities Statements of Action

1 Academy Councillors, Staff and Pupil Support

- All Academy Councillors and all staff will be consulted and then actively involved in the implementation on Equal Opportunities (E.O.) issues and reviews.
- It will be the responsibility of all staff to ensure that all pupils are aware of the importance of E.O. issues throughout their Academy lives, and the relevance of E.O. issues in adult life.
- The Academy Council can be used by the pupils to take on their grievances and complaints.

2 Teachers and Other Establishment Staff - Expectations

- All establishment staff will be urged to examine the ways in which their expectations of different gender groups or those with disabilities, or different social or ethnic groups may be affecting the achievement, behaviour and status of these students. E.O. should be an underlying theme of all training and resources should be appropriately allocated to this area.
- The good management and supervision of groups should ensure that they do not lead to inequality between gender groups, those with disabilities or different social or ethnic groups.

3 Support from Parent/cares and the Local Community

- The E.O. Aims will be circulated to parent/carers, who will be given the opportunity to respond at an appropriate time verbally and in written form. The statements will also be published in the Academy prospectus.
- Local Community: When the Academy is visited by members of the public, it will be apparent that the Academy gives high priority to E.O. issues.

4 The Establishment Curriculum

The curriculum; a definition:-

The curriculum in its fullest sense comprises all the opportunities for learning provided by the academy. It includes the formal programme of lessons in the timetable: the so called extra-curricular and out of academy activities promoted by the academy: the climate of relationships, attitudes, styles of behaviour and the general quality of life established in the Academy community as a whole. Whatever formal programme is adopted, account has to be taken of that other less formal and seemingly less structured programme, and the interaction between the two. (A view of the Curriculum - 1979)

- Every pupil will have entitlement and access to a broad and balanced and differentiated curriculum which will offer opportunities for pupils of both sexes and will counteract gender stereotyping. The planning and delivery of programmes of study in all curriculum areas should reflect and reinforce this policy.
- E.O. issues will permeate the whole curriculum and PSHE will have a significant role in the delivery of these fundamental issues including the role of the Academy Council in the Academy.
- The curriculum will create an understanding of different environments, societies and cultures across the world.
- The curriculum will include study of the reasons for inequality on the basis of disability, gender and race.
- Academy assemblies and festivals will include the celebrations of different cultures across the world.

5 Learning Resources

- Learning resources will present positive, non-stereotyped images of men and women, of ethnic minority groups and of people with disabilities.
- Resources across the whole establishment (e.g. textbooks, worksheets, video's, multi-media, etc) will reflect the fact that pupils are living in a multicultural society. Those

responsible for ordering and purchasing new resources will do so with reference to a multi-cultural society.

- Staff should have equal access to all resources within a framework of effective management and monitoring of these resources.

6 Pupils- Linguistic Diversity

- All staff should be made aware of the dialect and linguistic needs of their pupils.
- All staff will give pupils the opportunity to speak, hear and read their first or second language and dialect within the establishment. It will be necessary to ensure that appropriate support is available through advisers and interpreters.
- All staff will regard bi-linguicism as an advantage.
- The establishment will seek to have access to a properly funded translation and interpretation service when necessary, particularly for EHCP's.

7 Cultural Practices

- The establishment will provide meals acceptable to the culture and religion of pupils.
- The establishment's policy will be sensitive to cultural dress practices.
- The establishment will show respect for the cultural and religious practices of different groups of students, and will take reasonable steps to ensure that pupils are able to access and take part in religious worship and cultural festivals.

8 Racism

- Whatever the nature of the local community, pupils are growing up in a wider multicultural and multiracial society where they are subject to various attitudes towards minority groups, and also certain images of these groups portrayed by the media. Racial prejudice and hostility exists as much, or more, in the 'all-white' parts of Britain as in the multiracial areas.
- The Academy stands against racism and all forms of discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion, gender or disability

8.1 Aims

- To promote justice, equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all and thereby allow all pupils, irrespective of their ethnic origin, to achieve the level of success and self-respect which they deserve, whilst retaining their cultural identity.

- To instil in pupils an awareness of racism and to establish an environment where the academy becomes effective in reducing prejudice and raising self-esteem.
- To prepare children for living in a complex multicultural society.
- To promote an understanding of a variety of cultures, valuing the positive contribution these make to the community, e.g. pupils should understand the differences in dress, hairstyles and diet.
- To provide a safe and welcoming place for all of its members.
- To provide an environment where racist assumptions, attitudes and behaviour are continually challenged.
- To provide a curriculum which emphasises the positive aspects of all cultures and to give children the confidence that racism can and must be eradicated.
- To support the Local Authority in its multicultural and antiracist policies, and to take the appropriate action to deal with any form of racism within the Academy.
- To recognise that the pupils themselves are often the most important multicultural resource within the classroom and their experiences are valued and shared.
- To recognise in our teaching the contributions to the development of Science, Technology and the Arts which have been made by different cultures.
- To adopt the view that cultural diversity is a positive advantage. Pupils are often the most valuable multicultural resource in the classroom. Pupils' own experiences of festivals, food, dress, etc. should be shared.
- To contribute towards imparting a sense of citizenship in the pupils.
- To avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society by the teacher's careful use of language and choice of resources.

8.2 Identifying Racist Behaviour

Racist behaviour may be defined as any hostile or offensive act or expression by a person of one racial and ethnic origin against a person of another racial group or ethnic origin or any incitement to commit such an act in such a manner that it interferes with the peace and comfort of the aggrieved person.

8.3 Categories of racist behaviour

In order to identify racist behaviour in our Academy the following categorisation of types of incidents has been produced.

- Physical assault because of colour and/or ethnicity.

- Derogatory name calling, insults and racist jokes.
- Racist graffiti.
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges or insignia.
- Bringing racist materials such as leaflets, comics or magazines into the academy.
- Verbal abuse or threats.
- Incitement of others to behave in a racist way.
- Racist comments in the course of discussion in lessons.
- Ridicule of individual for cultural differences e.g. food, music, dress etc.
- Refusal to co-operate with other people because of their ethnic origins.

9. Homophobic Incidents

Any incident, which is perceived to be homophobic by the victim or any other person (that is directed to impact upon those known or perceived to be Lesbians, Gay men, Bisexual or Transgender people). This includes verbal abuse, property damage, threats and actual assaults.”

We recognise that incidents involving young children do happen, and teachers and professionals within our Academy need to respond to them proactively and work to prevent their occurrence. We also recognise that young children may unknowingly use derogatory homophobic terms such as “Gay” without having any understanding of their meaning and without intending to offend. They may also behave in ways which are homophobic, i.e. refusing to sit next to, or refusing to play with other children because of differences in their interests or mannerisms. They may have heard homophobic or gender stereotypical comments at home which they repeat like “boys can’t kiss boys” or “girls can’t play with cars”. It would be a mistake to disregard or play down such behaviours because ‘they didn’t mean it’ or ‘she didn’t really understand’ or ‘it’s only a name’, as the impact on the child who is the victim may still be hurtful and damaging. We also recognise that young children may have same sex parents or carers, or have relatives or family friends who are LGBT, and may already be aware of the prejudice they can face. It can be really difficult for them if their family relationships or home culture is negated or ridiculed by other children or by adults whose views they respect. We therefore give parents/carers an opportunity to disclose information about their family relationships, so we can be sensitive to the child’s circumstances, without being obtrusive. We respect confidentiality and allow parents/carers the limit who they want to be aware of their sexuality. St Matthias Academy does not discriminate any person based on sexual orientation and aims to eliminate discrimination including stopping harassment and victimisation” on a number of grounds, including sexual orientation. In order to achieve this, St Matthias Academy aims to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and find opportunities across the curriculum to address homophobia and promote equality of opportunity for young people and adults. Pupils will be challenged

to think about their attitudes, misinformation should be corrected, and awareness raised of prejudice and discrimination at every possible opportunity. This is most often done through Tutor time, assemblies, PSHE and Citizenship. Through planning, there may be opportunity to incorporate the teaching of Homophobia through other subjects.

9.2 Categories of Homophobic Behaviour

Homophobic incidents can involve any of the following activities:

- The regular use, consciously or unconsciously, of offensive and discriminatory language, particularly the widespread misuse of the term “Gay” as a generic insult or term of abuse
- Verbal abuse and threats – name calling is the most common expression of homophobia - sometimes viewed as trivial, although its effect on children can be profound
- Homophobic graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as a frightening look or stare
- Bullying through mobile phones, texting, internet etc is also emerging
- Homophobic comments during discussions in classroom
- Spreading rumours that cause a young person’s sexuality to be questioned, ridiculed or insulted - this is more recently happening through the use of internet websites
- Public ridicule e.g. of mannerisms, dress etc
- Homophobic jokes, insults and comments
- Physical or sexual assault against a person or group because of their sexuality
- Incitement of others to behave in a homophobic way
- Refusal to cooperate/work with someone because of their sexuality or perceived sexuality
- Isolation or exclusion from social groups.

10 Anti-Bullying

Bullying is repeated behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened whether this is intended or not. Bullying is about power. Victims feel powerless to stop it. Others, such as parent/carers for instance, may feel powerless to know how to help. Bullying is not acceptable at St Matthias Academy.

10.1 Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)

- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Special Educational Needs – because of learning or physical disabilities
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing because of appearance.
- Cyber - all areas of internet use, such as e-mail and internet chat room misuse
- Mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

10.2

The characteristics of some children may make it more likely that they:

- (a) bully
- (b) are bullied

- lack close friends
- be shy
- have an over-protective family environment
- belong to an ethnic group
- have a disability
- have special educational needs
- display anti social/poor behaviour, intrusiveness or a tendency to spread gossip
- be arrogant
- have a background of poverty/wealth

10.3 Possible signs of Bullying

- A pupil may indicate by signs, words or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. To those who know the student this may simply be a feeling that 'things aren't quite right'. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a pupil:
- Is frightened of walking to or from Academy

- Doesn't want to go on the Academy / public bus
- Insists on being driven to the Academy
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to Academy after previously enjoying being part of the academy community
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in Academy work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or unexpectedly go missing
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

10. 4 Encouragement to Tell (Disclosure by pupils being bullied)

It is important that we create an atmosphere in Academy where anyone who is being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to, and that action taken will be swift and sensitive to their needs. Disclosure (telling an adult) can be direct and open or indirect. Everyone must realise that not telling means that bullying is likely to continue.

11 Steps in dealing with Racist / Homophobic and bullying incidents.

11.1 Guidelines for Incidents

The following major steps may be taken in dealing with racist / homophobic and bullying behaviours:

- Identifying the racist / homophobic / bullying behaviour.
- Dealing with the perpetrator.
- Supporting the victim.
- Dealing with the impact of incidents in the whole Academy and the community.
- Monitoring.

11.2 The Academy curriculum

The Academy curriculum will be used to:

- Raise awareness about bullying / homophobic and racist behaviour and about the Academy's Equality Policy.
- Challenge attitudes about bullying / homophobic and racist behaviours, increase understanding for bullied and victimised pupils and help build an anti-bullying, equal opportunities ethos in the academy. There are many opportunities within the curriculum to raise awareness, to teach relationship management, to enunciate policy and to discourage homophobic / racist bullying via:-
 - Assemblies
 - PSHE/Drama/English lessons
 - Tutor time
 - Group work/circle time/befriending/mentoring/mediation/assertiveness development

11.2 Procedures

11.2.1 Parent/Carers

- If parent/carers suspect their child is being bullied they should contact the academy. Parent/carers should be prepared to talk about the signs and symptoms and any suspicions they have regarding those carrying out the bullying.
- Parent/carers must leave the initial investigation to the Academy. Any attempt to resolve the issue themselves may inevitably make the matter worse.
- Parent/carers should encourage their child to talk to a member of staff in the first instance.

11.2.2 Pupils

- If a pupil thinks they are being bullied they must tell an adult, parent/carer or other member of staff and be prepared to explain what form the bullying is taking and how it affects them.
- Pupils who witness bullying must tell an adult, parent/carer or other member of staff.

11.2.3 Staff

- If bullying is reported to a member of staff they will record the details as presented to them and deal with any issues that have arisen. ALL staff have a responsibility to deal with incidents of bullying. If they are unsure staff need to liaise with their Line Manager/member of SLT.
- Following a reported incident staff will investigate using a restorative approach, with the support of other members of staff as appropriate:
 - What has happened? Could it have been different?
 - How can we try to ensure this doesn't happen again?
 - How we put things right between those involved?
- In serious cases parent/carers should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
- Time out/ reflection time may be used if deemed appropriate. The level of time out will be determined by the severity of the incident and in line with the Anti Bullying and Behaviour Policies.

11.3 Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff they feel comfortable talking to
- Reassuring the pupil
- Offering continuous support with a designated member of staff
- Restoring self-esteem and self-confidence
- Referral to a support staff if appropriate
- Offering continuous support and advice to parent/carers.
- Being informed about the outcome of the investigation in to their concerns

11.4 Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the pupil became involved
- Establishing the wrong-doing and the need for change
- Informing parent/carers to help change the attitude of the pupil
- Attend a restorative justice meeting with the effected student to resolve issues and prevent recurrence
- Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by St Matthias. However, the Academy recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies in line with our Anti Bullying and Behaviour Policies.

11.5

Bullying of any nature, whether racist / homophobic or other incidents of bullying will not be tolerated. Please refer to the Anti Bullying and Behaviour Policies and model below for steps in dealing with incidents. All incidents of bullying are recorded on Trustee racist / homophobic / bullying form, a copy of which is sent off to the CEO of the MAT and another copy retained centrally in the administration office.

12 Complaints

If a parent/carer is dissatisfied with the nature or swiftness of a response made by the Academy following a reported incident of bullying, he/she may wish to make a complaint. The complaints procedure for a case of bullying follows the guidance of the Academy's Complaints Policy. The underlying principle of the policy is that any concerns raised should be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. If however the informal procedures are unsuccessful and the complainant wishes to take the matter further, formal measures will have to be taken.

13 Monitoring

- To measure the effectiveness of actions taken in responding to racist /homophobic /bullying incidents.
- To obtain a full picture of the frequency, trends and nature of racist / homophobic /bullying incidents and to gather intelligence to inform preventative measures.
- To target resources to combat racist / homophobia / bullying.
- To identify repeat victims or perpetrators of racist / homophobic / bullying.
- To provide the Academy and the MAT with a statistical base for analysis of racist /homophobic and bullying incidents and inform future action planning.