

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School

Gender Equality Policy and  
Action Plan

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Bishop Vaughan's policy is informed by the school's Catholic ethos. The policy also follows the statutory Code of Practice produced by the Equal Opportunities Commission.

## **Gender Equality at Bishop Vaughan Catholic School**

### **Legislative Context**

The Equality Act (2006) amended the requirements of the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). It added to the duty to eliminate sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, the duty to promote gender equality.

### **Social Context**

We understand that despite thirty years of individual legal rights to sex equality there is still widespread discrimination and persistent gender inequality. Both sexes suffer from the stereotyping of their roles and needs and such stereotyping has to be understood, challenged and overcome.

### **School Context**

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive voluntary aided school within the City and County of Swansea Unitary Authority (UA) and the Catholic diocese of Menevia. The gap between boys' and girls' performances in external examinations has been reduced by the application of a range of strategies to address the problem. However, a continuing reduction remains a major focus of the school.

### **School Mission Statement**

Bishop Vaughan School is committed to the provision of a Christian education for all its pupils in accordance with the principles and teachings of the Catholic faith. Learning experiences will embrace the various aspects of a broad education: academic, emotional, aesthetic, physical, social, moral and spiritual.

The school is not the only area but is a very important one in each young person's life where growth and development in his or her journey of faith take place. This religious growth and development, while being the basic aim of religious education, is not confined merely to RE lessons. Rather, it is to be part of the whole school experience to which every single teacher and every activity (pedagogical, social, pastoral or liturgical) contributes. In the words of Cardinal Hume (1988): "Unlike a county school which is necessarily pluralistic, the Catholic school has a single Christian vision, an integrated concept of what makes a fully authentic and mature human being". This unity of purpose will both support and inform all our endeavours.

Teachers at Bishop Vaughan School will see their work here as part of their vocation as members of Christ's Church to help build the Kingdom of Christ on earth and it is

the responsibility of every member of the school community to contribute to the Christian aims of the school. The distinctive nature of our Catholic School is, indeed, its sole inspiration and justification.

The underlying and overriding principle of our faith is Jesus Christ binds us together in love, understanding and mutual enrichment.

'You are, all of you, sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. All baptised in Christ, you have all clothed yourself in Christ and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.'

***(Galatians 3: 26-29)***

The Gospel itself leaves us in no doubt that our belief in its values should place us in the forefront of the movement for equality between men and women.

Governors and all who work at Bishop Vaughan are aware of the need to review continuously, policy and practice in the matter of gender equality.

### **The General Duty**

In accordance with our school's mission statement and values, we welcome the statutory Gender Equality Duty. In compliance with the General Duty, Bishop Vaughan School has due regard for the need to, and works to:

- Eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination
- Eliminate sexual harassment
- Promote gender equality

By unlawful sexual discrimination we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could be done directly but that it could also occur indirectly. Indirect discrimination means that a particular policy or practice may impact more negatively on one gender than on the other, or may favour one gender to the disadvantage of the other.

By sexual harassment we refer to behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. We see such behaviour as also damaging to the perpetrator.

We understand 'sex' to refer to the **biological** differences between males and females and 'gender' to refer to the wider **social** roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognize and help overcome

those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.

We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage.

We will take steps to counteract the effects of any past discrimination in staff recruitment. Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender we will seek specialist advice.

We understand the three parts of the duty to be different, but that they should normally support each other. However, we are aware that achieving one may not lead to achieving all three.

In taking due regard we will exercise the principles of proportionality and relevance. By this we mean that the weight we give to gender equality will be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. The greater the relevance of a function to gender equality, the greater regard we will pay to it.

### **The Specific Duties**

We welcome the responsibility to think and act more strategically about gender equality. To meet the specific duties, and guided by the Code of Practice prepared by the Equal Opportunities Commission, we have prepared, published and implemented, and will maintain, a Gender Equality Action Plan which contains our current objectives. This is attached to and forms an essential part of this policy.

We are working to develop our understanding of the major gender equality issues in our school's functions and services. In order to do this we:

- Collect and analyse school data and other gender equality relevant information, including data about our local area
- Publish our Gender Equality Policy on the school website
- Review all our school policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality
- Ensure governors, staff, pupils, parents and others in our school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality
- Assess and address the causes of any gender pay gap

- Publish and implement the Action Plan with our proposed objectives and actions

We will:

- Set out the results of reviews, consultations and impact assessments
- Report on progress annually and set further objectives where necessary
- Review and revise the Policy and Action Plan at least every three years

### Responsibilities

All governors, staff, volunteers, pupils and their families need to develop an appropriate understanding of, and act in accordance with, the school's Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan. In addition:

**The school governors** are responsible for ensuring that the School prepares, publishes, implements, reports on and reviews a Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (including budget requirements), and in particular the employment implications of meeting the Duty.

**The Headteacher works with the SLT** to ensure that –

- the Policy and Action Plan are implemented
- staff recruitment, training opportunities and conditions promote gender equality
- all staff, pupils and their parents are consulted regarding, and are aware of the school's responsibilities to meet, the Gender Equality Duty
- existing and planned policies and activities are assessed for the ways in which they impact on gender equality
- incidents of sexual/gender bullying or harassment are dealt with according to our Behaviour/Anti-Bullying policy

*All staff have a responsibility to uphold this and other policies.*

These and other responsibilities are outlined in detail in our Gender Equality Action Plan which is attached to and forms part of this policy.

We believe that having this gender equality policy and action plan will:

- support us in our decision-making and policy development
- give us a clearer understanding of the needs of staff, pupils and their families
- enable us to provide better quality services which meet varied needs
- help us target our resources more effectively
- help promote increased confidence in our school
- make more effective use of our workforce

We recognise that both sexes can suffer from sexual stereotyping and that sometimes the same policies and practices can impact differently on men and women and boys and girls. We will make appropriate adjustments if this is found to be the case with any of our policies and practices.

We also recognise that girls and boys, and women and men, can experience different forms of discrimination depending on, among other things, their ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, age or disability and we will take this complexity into consideration.

In these ways we will strive to improve the situation for, and the relationships between, men and women and boys and girls within our school and wider community.

### **Single Sex Provision**

Where we provide for one sex only, this is to help meet the different needs of boys and girls (men and women), needs often arising out of historical and current stereotyping and unjust gender discrimination, or where there is an issue of physical intimacy or embarrassment to be considered. We do not provide activities, classes, facilities, benefits or services for one sex only if this would amount to less favourable treatment of the other sex, or where it would promote gender stereotyping and gender inequality.

We do not deny one sex the same opportunities as the other and where we provide for one sex only we ensure there are equivalent and proportionate facilities, benefits or services for the other sex. We do not offer different curriculum choices to boys and girls, and where there are curriculum options we ensure that these are not offered in such a way that boys and girls are steered into making choices based on gender stereotypes.

If requests for additional single sex activities, facilities or provision which appear to maintain or promote gender inequalities come from pupils, families or the community, these will be considered and legal advice sought.

### **Breaches of the Gender Equality Policy**

We understand that eliminating gender discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality is in part an education function and a matter of cultural change. Where possible, breaches of the policy will be dealt with in a manner appropriate to the level of the breach, and with the intention of bringing about the relevant changes. More serious breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our school's anti-bullying and harassment procedures, and the disciplinary procedures for staff.

Where safeguarding issues based on sex and gender come to the attention of the school these will be dealt with according to our child protection procedures.

### Consultation; publishing; staff, pupils and parent development

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with governors, staff, pupils, parents and members of our local community. These consultations have contributed to developing the awareness among governors, staff, pupils and parents of the ongoing need to eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination and harassment and to promote gender equality. We have also drawn upon earlier consultations,

Copies of this policy are available on our website, in staff/department policy folders and can be made available on request.

We will continue, as outlined in our action plan, to develop awareness of what constitutes unlawful gender discrimination and harassment, and of the need to eliminate this and to promote gender equality.

Gender Equality Action Plan follows & attaches to this policy

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*Copies of this policy are available on our website, in policy folders on the school network and can be made available on request.*

Date: October 2016

**Review Date: June 2019**

Next Policy Review Date: June 2021

## BISHOP VAUGHAN SCHOOL GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

| Requirements to meet the Gender Equality Duty (GED)  | What is to be done/achieved?   | Who is to lead on it?                   | Training or other actions needed?<br>Budget needs?   | Action by/Review by date - and further actions? |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inform staff, pupils, parents and community about the Gender Equality Duty and consult them to inform proposed action</li> <li>▪ GE policy produced and published</li> <li>▪ GE Action Plan prepared and published</li> <li>▪ Impact of GE policy monitored and assessed</li> </ul> | <p>Understand the Gender Equality Duty and its relevance to the school's functions.</p> <p>Acquire/download copy of the legislation and <b>the EOC Code of Practice (www. eoc.org.uk)</b> and Union briefings</p> <p>Review gender relevant aspects of previous consultations.</p> <p>Make the Duty known to and consult with staff, pupils, parents, community</p> <p>Look out for developments in the legislation and guidance</p> | <p>C Walker – Assistant Headteacher</p> | <p>Provide training as appropriate</p> <p>Discuss at Governors' meetings and appoint member of the Pastoral Committee to lead on GED</p> <p>Discuss at SLT and appoint member to lead on GED</p> <p>Consider GED group</p> <p>Gather national and local gender equality data from EOC, Fawcett, Womens' Resource Centre, Unions, DfES</p> <p>Consultations: teaching staff at staff meetings; other staff in relevant ways; parents at coffee mornings or through newsletter; pupils - age appropriately, PSHE&amp;C</p> |   |

| Areas to be considered for their Gender Equality relevance   | What is to be done/achieved?  | Who is to lead on it?              | Training or other actions needed? Budget?  | Action by/Review by dates - and further actions? |
|--|---|------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Employment Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff Recruitment</li> <li>- CPD/training</li> <li>- Conditions</li> </ul>   | <p>Ensure there are appropriate male and female role models across staff</p> <p>Look out for and adopt LA policies that have been changed</p> | <p>Governors and E Pole (Head)</p> | <p>Audit who does what, and costs</p> <p>Encourage under-represented gender <b>to apply</b> for posts (but note that <b>selection</b> will not depend on gender)</p> <p>Safe Recruitment and Selection training provided by LA (or similar) to ensure avoidance of bias/stereotyped assumptions in selection and interviewing procedures</p> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screen all policies &amp; practices for relevance to gender equality</li> <li>• Revise policies to include a gender equality dimension</li> </ul> | <p>Agree a list of all gender equality-relevant policies and practices (as below)</p>   | <p>L Owen</p>                      | <p>Training provided at schools through staff meetings and other means as relevant</p> <p>LEA consultants or outside agencies brought in as relevant</p> <p>Equalities SA with LEA</p>   |  |
| <p>School Development/ Improvement Plan</p>  | <p>Show evidence of how you will meet the gender equality duty</p>  | <p>L Owen</p>                      | <p>Revise School Plan</p>  |  |
| <p>Teaching and learning</p>   | <p>Ensure all staff understand possible different gender-related learning styles</p>  | <p>L Owen</p>                      | <p>Web research, LEA training, external courses</p>  |  |

| Areas to be considered for their Gender Equality relevance | What is to be done/achieved?  | Who is to lead on it?         | Training or other actions needed? Budget?   | Review by date and further actions? |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Assessment   | Ensure all staff understand a range of assessment methods to ensure pupils knowledge, abilities and needs are more accurately assessed  | L Owen                        |   |                                     |
| Behaviour, including sexual/gender harassment and bullying | <p>There is an agreed set of procedures which is understood by all staff. All incidents of sexual harassment and bullying are dealt with following the school's agreed procedures.</p> <p>Incidents reduced</p> | C Walker/<br>Director of PSE  | PSHE & C, tutor time and other areas of curriculum promote understanding of what constitutes sexist bullying and harassment and helps promote gender equality |                                     |
| Admissions and attendance                                  | <p>Staff and parents are aware of issues in single and mixed gender education, and take context-appropriate steps to promote gender equality</p> <p>Monitor attendance by gender</p>                            | Admissions Governors/<br>Head | Provide opportunities for pupils and parents to be made aware of the importance of both boys and girls attending school                                       |                                     |
| Governing body   | Ensure equal/proportionate gender representation, including senior positions where possible   | S Avo – Chair of Governors    | Encourage attendance at training for under-represented gender   |                                     |
| Curriculum   | Ensure sexist assumptions and gender stereotypes are removed from all materials and schemes of work   | Heads of Departments          |   |                                     |

| Areas to be considered for their Gender Equality relevance | What is to be done/achieved?   | Who is to lead on it?              | Training or other actions needed? Budget?   | Action by/Review by date and further actions? |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Partnerships with parents and community                    | Encourage fathers/male carers to participate as fully as possible in their children's education  | Pastoral Staff                     | Training to ensure all staff know agreed procedures if domestic violence is disclosed/discovered  |   |
| SEN  | Monitor all elements of SEN register by gender, assess and take any necessary action   | SENCO                              |   |   |
| PSHE & C   | <p>Consider (age appropriately) the ethics of unlawful gender discrimination and stereotyping</p> <p>Consider the social and emotional aspects of learning and how gender discrimination impacts differently on boys and girls</p> | Pastoral Leaders/ Head of Theology | Ensure pupils of all ages are aware (age-appropriately) of the negative impact on both boys and girls, and men and women, of unlawful gender discrimination |   |