



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy 2026/2028

This policy adheres to and should be applied with due consideration to the College's commitment to the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education.

This policy has been reviewed in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mission Statement:

Our mission inspired by the Christian tradition is to be a community based on faith, hope and love; developing each individual intellectually, emotionally and spiritually to achieve their full potential.

- To achieve this, we will:
- Provide a welcoming, supportive community where everyone is valued.
- Provide a high quality, meaningful education which encourages the development of the whole person, inspired by the Notre Dame tradition.
- Promote a caring environment, rooted in the virtues of service, kindness, gratitude and respect.
- Work together for the benefit of each person as well as the wider community.
- Recognise, celebrate and treasure, without exception, the unique gifts and dignity of each person, ensuring equality and fairness for all, as found in the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Students thrive in a culture of high expectation and ambition. Staff create an ethos in which every student is supported to reach their academic and personal potential, regardless of their starting points. This ethos is firmly rooted in the college's Catholic values and a commitment that every student becomes the 'best they can be'. Students appreciate their place at the college and are proud to study in a welcoming, inclusive and diverse community.

OFSTED SEPTEMBER 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As a Catholic Sixth Form College, Notre Dame is built on Christian principles and values. Notre Dame has long been committed to the promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at every level of the organisation. All stakeholders work to ensure that all associated with the College engage with diverse, multi-cultural Britain in a positive way.
- 1.2 We celebrate diversity amongst all our students and staff and seek to nurture the gifts of each individual through high-quality teaching, learning and assessment, and dedicated pastoral care. Mutual respect is seen as essential in a community where students are encouraged to recognise their responsibilities to self and others, and to the society in which they live. *The College seeks to create a culture in which every student, member of staff and visitor experiences dignity, safety, respect and a sense of belonging, and is able to participate fully in College life.*
- 1.3 In support of the College Equality Objectives 2023-2027, Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College will:
 - create, sustain and celebrate an inclusive and diverse College community; promote equality of opportunity and maximise the potential of every student and member of staff;
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct; provide timely and effective reasonable adjustments;
 - monitor outcomes and experiences for different groups, particularly students with SEND, disadvantaged students and underrepresented groups;
 - ensure equality considerations inform policy development, decision-making and quality assurance; and
 - foster a culture of dignity, respect, belonging and inclusion across all aspects of College life.

2. Aims and purpose of this policy

- 2.1 Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College is committed not only to preventing discrimination, but also to actively promoting equality, inclusion, belonging and social justice. Through curriculum design, pastoral provision, enrichment, staff development, employment practice and strategic decision-making, the College will seek to remove barriers, celebrate diversity and enable all students and staff to thrive. The College aims to ensure all students and staff experience a sense of belonging and are able to participate fully in the life of the College.
- 2.2 Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College is dedicated to ensuring that all members of the College and the wider community are treated equally, fairly, and with respect by the College and by each other. This applies to the College as a place of education, a business, and an employer.

- 2.3 Prejudice, discrimination, and victimisation are not tolerated, and we work hard to instil in our students a strong understanding of right and wrong, including the importance of inclusion, acceptance, and compassion towards others.
- 2.4 The College's main priority is to provide the best education and care that we can, and establish a cooperative working relationship between home and College, so as to aid the development, progress, and needs of all the students in our care.
- 2.5 The College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and fostering an inclusive environment for all members of its community. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the College will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of any protected characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 2.6 The College aims to comply with this duty, in both the delivery of its services and the employment of its staff.
This policy has been approved by the Governing Body and supports the College's wider framework of policies, including those relating to SEND, admissions, behaviour, safeguarding, bullying and harassment, and staff conduct.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 Creating a College environment that promotes equality and denounces discrimination is a whole-College responsibility and requires all members of the College community to be actively involved in breaking down barriers to learning.
- 3.2 Individuals in the College are expected to take responsibility for supporting and promoting equality in College above and beyond the responsibilities listed below.
- 3.3 **The Governing Body** is responsible for ensuring that the College complies with Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty and for approving and reviewing the EDI Policy and its implementation.
- 3.4 **The Principal** is responsible for giving a consistent and high-profile lead on equality issues, promoting the EDI Policy inside and outside the College and ensuring the policy is followed, challenging incidents and taking action where appropriate.
- 3.5 **The SLT, the DSL, the HR Manager and all managers and leaders** are responsible for putting into practice this policy and its objectives, for making sure that staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support to carry this out if required. They will also follow the relevant processes and take action against staff or students who do not follow this policy.
- 3.6 **All staff** are responsible for ensuring that they are able to recognise bias and stereotyping, and to challenge or report it if they witness it. They are responsible for promoting equality and good relations, for ensuring they do not discriminate against others and taking up training and development opportunities to keep up to date with legislation and best practice.

- 3.7 **Students** are responsible for ensuring they do not discriminate against anyone, ensuring that they are able to recognise bias and stereotyping, and to challenge or report if they witness it.
- 3.8 **This policy is available to students, staff, parents, carers, governors and visitors via the College website.**

4. Examinations

- 4.1 Notre Dame College works as flexibly as possible to accommodate and support all learners when sitting exams and follow the JCQ guidelines to ensure that the process is fair to all candidates.
- 4.2 Requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered promptly, sensitively and on an individual basis. The College will take reasonable steps to anticipate and remove barriers, record agreed adjustments appropriately, protect confidentiality and review arrangements when circumstances or needs change

Access arrangements are agreed before any assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

- 4.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled, within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.
- 4.4 The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. (JCQ Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations) Further details can also be found in the College Exam Access Arrangement policy.

5. Recruitment of staff and students

- 5.1 Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair. Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, nationality, gender, religion, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation. Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College acknowledges that unfair discrimination can arise on occasion and so will ensure that the equal opportunities policy outlined in this plan is the foundation for all its activities.
- 5.2 Accessible recruitment information, reasonable adjustments at every stage, structured shortlisting, consistent interviews questions and equality monitoring is part of the College's overall recruitment procedures.
- 5.3 Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel it will be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection

panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to.

5.4 The College will:

- appoint and promote staff on the basis of merit and ability;
- seek to attract a diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves;
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- respect religious beliefs and observance where reasonable and lawful; and
- provide appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion training for staff.

5.5 The College has a distinctive Catholic character and welcomes students and staff of all faiths and none. Any faith-related admissions criteria or occupational requirement will be applied transparently, consistently and only where lawful, objectively justified and proportionate. Further detail is set out in the relevant Admissions and Recruitment Policies.

6. Equal opportunities for staff

6.1 As part of its commitment to equality of opportunity, the College will:

- comply with equality legislation and employment law;
- promote equality, diversity and inclusion throughout its employment practices;
- provide fair access to recruitment, promotion and professional development opportunities; and
- monitor workforce data and take appropriate action where inequalities are identified.

6.2 Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College is committed to ensuring that all College staff are treated fairly and consistently and this is held to account through our Staff Code of Conduct, Capability and Grievance Policies Support procedures.

6.3 Concerns that a member of staff may have acted inconsistently with this policy will be addressed promptly, fairly and proportionally under the relevant College policies.

6.4 The College's staff Appraisal policy provides more information on how the College monitors staff performance.

7. Monitoring, review and reporting

7.1 Reports to the Governing Body should include, where data is reliable, lawful and proportionate:

- progress against the published equality objectives and associated actions;
- student achievement, progress and value added by relevant group;
- attendance, retention, destinations and progression by relevant group;
- complaints, reported incidents, bullying, harassment and victimisation themes, with confidentiality protected;
- staff recruitment, retention, development and progression information;
- training completed by staff and governors; and
- priorities and accountable actions for the following year.

7.2 The College will monitor and respond to differences in achievement, progress, value added, attendance, retention, participation and wider student experience between groups. Where disparities are identified, leaders will investigate contributing factors, consult relevant

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stakeholders, agree proportionate actions and review impact through the quality assurance cycle

- 7.3 The Principal will ensure that progress against the College equality objectives are reviewed within the EDI SAR and reported to the Governing Body
- 7.4 Monitoring will draw on appropriate quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to students, staff and stakeholders. Data will be handled lawfully, reported proportionately and presented in a way that protects confidentiality.
- 7.5 Where artificial intelligence is used to support teaching, learning, assessment or decision-making, the College will take reasonable steps to ensure its use is ethical, inclusive and accessible to all members of the community.

8. Related documents and legislation

- Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, Equality Objectives 2023-2027.
- Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2026/2028.
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Current annual JCQ regulations on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, to be verified at the point of approval.

Appendix 1: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Definitions

1.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and to meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The College will:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The College seeks to ensure that all staff, students, governors, volunteers and visitors are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and are able to access opportunities, services and support without discrimination.

1.2 Institutional Racism

Institutional racism is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their race, colour, culture or ethnic origin. It may arise through processes, attitudes or behaviours that disadvantage particular ethnic groups, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

1.3 Sexism

Sexism refers to prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination based on a person's sex.

1.4 Prejudice

Prejudice is a preconceived opinion, assumption or judgement about an individual or group that is not based on reason, evidence or personal experience.

1.5 Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic.

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice applies to everyone but disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic and cannot be objectively justified.

Discrimination by association occurs when someone is treated unfairly because of their association with a person who has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by perception occurs when someone is treated unfairly because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic, whether or not that perception is correct.

1.6 **Protected Characteristics – Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics. Individuals must not be discriminated against, harassed, or victimised because of any of the following:

Age

A person belongs to a particular age group. Protection applies to people of all ages.

Disability

A person has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Employers and education providers have a duty to consider reasonable adjustments where required.

Gender Reassignment

A person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process to reassign their gender.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

A person is married or is in a civil partnership.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Protection applies during pregnancy, maternity leave, and the period after birth as defined by law. This includes protection from less favourable treatment because of pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or maternity.

Race

Includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or Belief

Includes any religion, religious belief, philosophical belief, and a lack of religion or belief.

Sex

A person's legal sex, whether male or female.

Sexual Orientation

A person's sexual orientation towards people of the same sex, the opposite sex, or either sex.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment may be physical, verbal, written, non-verbal or online and may occur as a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

Examples may include offensive comments, jokes, derogatory language, intimidation, exclusion, unwanted physical contact, inappropriate images or messages, or behaviour that undermines an individual's dignity and wellbeing.

1.8 **Bullying**

Bullying is behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or abusive, which undermines, humiliates or injures another person.

Bullying may be carried out face-to-face or through digital communication and may include verbal abuse, spreading rumours, exclusion, threatening behaviour, misuse of authority or online harassment.

The College does not tolerate bullying in any form.

- 1.9 **Homophobia**- Anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination refers to prejudice, discrimination, harassment or victimisation directed towards individuals because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender reassignment.

1.10 **Occupational Requirements (OR)**

The College may apply a lawful occupational requirement where permitted by equality legislation and where this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim

1.11 **Positive Action**

Positive action refers to lawful steps that the College may take, where supported by evidence, to address disadvantage, meet different needs or encourage participation among people who share a protected characteristic.

Under the Equality Act 2010, positive action may be used where the College reasonably believes that people who share a protected characteristic:

- experience a disadvantage connected to that characteristic;
- have needs that differ from those who do not share that characteristic; or
- are underrepresented in particular activities or areas of College life.

Any positive action taken by the College will be proportionate, evidence-based and lawful. This may include encouraging applications from underrepresented groups, providing targeted support, or promoting participation in educational, enrichment or employment opportunities.

Positive action is distinct from positive discrimination. The College will appoint, recruit, admit and assess individuals on merit and in accordance with the law.

- 1.12 **Reasonable adjustments** are changes or adaptations that help remove or reduce barriers experienced by a disabled person.

The College has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider and implement reasonable adjustments where a disabled student, applicant, employee or visitor would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with others.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- changes to procedures or working practices;
- adjustments to teaching, learning or assessment arrangements;
- provision of support, equipment or assistive technology;
- adaptations to the physical environment; or
- the provision of information in accessible formats.

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The College will consider requests for reasonable adjustments on an individual basis, taking account of the person's needs, the effectiveness of the adjustment, and whether it is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.