

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

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### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AT St BEDE'S COLLEGE**

1. Central to the ethos at St Bede's College is the notion that we are members of one community. The life of the College is firmly embedded within the tradition of Christian belief and practice. Inevitably and naturally, therefore, a policy of equality in opportunity, respect and treatment should be a routine part of our daily lives.
2. Each and every member of the community deserves the full respect and consideration of others. This applies regardless of differences in ethnic background, custom, language, religion, gender, age, ability or physical prowess. It is never acceptable to allow prejudice or discrimination to come into play, either covertly or overtly, in dealings between members of this community, be they staff, governors, pupil or parents.
3. Adherence to the principle of equality depends chiefly on an attitude of mind rather than routines or material facilities. Nonetheless, management has a part to play. In particular the College takes steps to:
  - a. recruit staff and pupils from a full range of ethnic and social backgrounds, without regard to gender and in the case of staff, to age. The College has a long and proud history of providing education to many challenged parts of society.
  - b. welcome members of staff and sixth form students of other denominations. Since September 2000 the admission policy has invited applications from Christians of all denominations. All members of the College, whether staff or pupils, are expected to support the Catholic ethos of the College and pupils are expected to follow the RE curriculum and attend whole school Masses and Assemblies. Clergy always extend a welcome to all participants at Mass, irrespective of denomination and invite those of other faiths to receive a blessing during the distribution of the Holy Eucharist. The College endeavours to be sensitive to individual needs in this respect.
  - c. encourage and develop equal opportunity in the promotion of staff to positions of increased responsibility.
  - d. give exposure to the question of equality in all its forms, together with appropriate guidance, in the course of the College's PSME programme, General Studies and Religious Education.
  - e. give full support to community service programmes, as opportunities allow.
  - f. welcome warmly the enrichment given to College life by a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds.
  - g. encourage and guide the staff and pupils of the College in considering others both in the College and in the wider community.

4. It goes without saying that in the unfortunate circumstances that any individual, whether adult or child, might feel subject to prejudiced or discriminatory views, they should seek appropriate support. Adults, whether teaching or non-teaching, should draw the attention of their line-manager to any failure to observe equal opportunity and pupils should report incidents to any adult in the College. They should do so whether their concern is personal, or over an action (or attitude) with respect to another adult or a child. At the more senior level the Headmaster, Deputy Heads and /or Bursar would wish to be aware of any concerns over a lack of equal opportunity.
  
5. Equal opportunity and equal treatment are the outward and visible signs of respect for the value of all God's people.

### **RACIAL AWARENESS**

In a Christian community all are of equal value and therefore the College must display an Anti-Racist/Multi-cultural perspective in that it actively challenges stated negative stereotypes and aims to foster respect and acceptance. The College is proud of its racial mix and will do all within its power to promote tolerance within its community. Young people can sometimes be naively, but none the less dangerously, bigoted in their responses to minority groups and the College will seek to counter these prejudices through education. Opportunities for this exist in almost all areas of the curriculum, but particular efforts can be made through PSME, Complementary Studies and Religious Education.

The College, by the attitude it portrays, will seek to promote and enhance the self-esteem of all pupils and remove the ignorance and misconceptions that underpin prejudice.

### **GENDER AWARENESS**

The College acknowledges its obligation to provide all students and staff with equality of opportunity and will endeavour to do so irrespective of their gender. It will review, from time to time, its policies and procedures so that it fulfils its responsibilities.

### **DENOMINATIONAL AWARENESS**

The College has always welcomed members of staff and sixth form students of other denominations and since September 2000 the admission policy has invited applications from Christians of all denominations.

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Clergy always extend a welcome to all participants at Mass, irrespective of denomination and invite those of other faiths to receive a blessing during the distribution of the Holy Eucharist.

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