

# **Saintfield High School**



## **Equality & Inclusion Policy**

**April 2022**

### **Aims and Objectives**

- ⇒ To highlight the school's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for all pupils irrelevant of individual circumstance.
- ⇒ To ensure that all pupils within our school community feel safe, happy and content to learn, free of fear or intimidation.
- ⇒ Encourage and foster a culture of mutual respect and tolerance.
- ⇒ Ensure all stakeholders within the school community are aware of the procedures to be followed if harassment or prejudice behaviour were evident.
- ⇒ Maintain an inclusive school approach in all aspects of school life.
- ⇒ Monitor the well-being and progress of pupils, where all members of the school community are of equal worth.

## **Introduction**

Saintfield High School is entirely committed to equality and inclusion. We recognise the value of diverse environments and strive to promote a culture in which all pupils, staff and members of the school community are welcomed and supported to fulfil their potential. There is an ethos and culture of inclusion in our school for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, gender, gender identity (e.g. transgender) and sexual orientation (LGBTQ+).

Saintfield High School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of all our children and young people and where all members of our school community are of equal worth. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove any barriers or forms of bullying. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and bullying and harassment (see Anti-bullying Policy and Appendix 1). As a school community, we recognise the need to champion equality and ensure inclusion for all pupils in the full life of our school.

Saintfield High School believes that education (both formal and informal learning) is fundamental to equality of opportunity. It prepares young people for life and is a powerful influence on access to and advancement in employment. All young people should be able to learn and develop fully in a truly diverse and inclusive environment.

Through this policy, and the wider practices within Saintfield High School we seek to empower our young people to embrace diversity and challenge discrimination, equip our Governors and staff to fulfil their legal responsibilities, ensure that our school's safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and inclusive, and enable robust monitoring of our progress as a school.

All our policies and practices are fully inclusive and supportive of a welcoming culture for all communities – and this will be evident by demonstration of our practices and procedures.

## **Saintfield High School Mission Statement and Pledge**

### **Saintfield High School Mission Statement**

*Saintfield High School, together with the community we serve, celebrates personalised learning in a safe, caring and stimulating environment.*

### **Saintfield High School Pledge**

*Individual success for all pupils - learning and achieving together.*

The statements above clearly illustrate our strong commitment to ensuring that each and every child within our school community is supported to achieve 'individual success' in a safe and caring environment, free from prejudice or discrimination. Saintfield High School will not tolerate, in any form, prejudice, discrimination or bullying and fully commits to work tirelessly to ensure such behaviour is never evident within the school community (see Appendix 2 for definitions - 'Discrimination, Reasonable Adjustments, Harassment and Bullying – what are they?').

This is supplemented by a range of other policies that as a school we feel are important to have for the well-being of our entire school community. It is our belief that equality and inclusion is central to **all** of our policies. Such policies include:

- Pupil Well-being Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- School Community Code of Conduct
- RSE Policy
- SEN Policy
- School Improvement Programme

We maintain an ethos that welcomes diversity and promotes equal opportunities for all, ensuring all of our pupils and their families feel valued and supported and that equality and inclusion are evident in everyday school life.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

School stakeholders responsible for ensuring diversity and inclusion include:

⇒ **Saintfield High School Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors have overall responsibility to 'promote equality, good relations and diversity and to comply with education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties in relation to the school' '*Every school a good school – the governor's role*' (Department of Education NI, August 2019).

Furthermore, they have a duty to manage the implementation of equality and diversity in our school.

⇒ **The Principal**

*The Principal* (and in her absence the Vice-Principal) is responsible for:

- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with equality legislation;
- ensuring the school implements policies and practices in line with the principles of equality and inclusion;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- ensuring appropriate training and awareness raising is undertaken with staff;
- ensuring that appropriate records are kept of any cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.

⇒ **The Leadership Team**

This team are responsible for:

- putting the school's equality and diversity policies and codes into practice;
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action where necessary.

⇒ **The School's Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Team**

- will manage the implementation of the policy in partnership with the Principal.

⇒ **All School Staff**

- Teaching and non-teaching staff have a responsibility for the day to day operation of this policy and will contribute to an inclusive and welcoming environment within the school.

⇒ **Pupils/students**

Pupils are responsible for:

- respecting others in their language and actions;
- following all of the relevant school policies and codes of conduct in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.

## **How do we promote Equality and Inclusion?**

Saintfield High School promotes equality and inclusion within our school through the following activities:

1. **School/Centre Practices and Procedures including staff training**
2. **Facilities**
3. **Curriculum**

### **School/Centre Practices/Procedures including staff training**

- A whole school culture of tolerance and acceptance are expected, always promoted and modelled by all members of staff;
- An inclusive mission statement and pledge incorporating success for every pupil in a safe and caring environment;
- An extensive range of resources and teaching approaches are utilised to accommodate a wide range of pupil needs;
- Staff and pupil are expected, at all times, to use appropriate and respectful terminology and language towards each other;
- Discriminatory language or actions are always challenged;
- Clear expectations about acceptable behaviour are clearly set out in the School Community Code of Conduct;
- A diversity and inclusion champion nominated from the prefect team each year;
- Diversity and Inclusion discussed at Board of Governor meetings;
- Diversity Training provided to **all** staff.

### **Facilities/Services**

- When necessary promoting and using interpreting service and using translated documents where available;
- Allocated accessible parking is available;
- Accessible toilets/changing facilities/main entrance is available within the school building;
- Signage, displays and resources reflecting all languages and cultures are displayed throughout the school;
- When planning trips and extra-curricular activities flexible payment schemes are available;
- Helping young people to access advice from support organisations including notice boards with clear and accessible information and contacts (see Appendix 3).

### **Curriculum**

- Themes around inclusion and diversity are embedded into topics within each curriculum area, specifically Learning for Life and Work and Religious Education;
- Inclusion and diversity themed whole-school assemblies occur throughout the school calendar – such themes are also encouraged during Junior and Senior School assemblies;
- Participating in Shared Education with other local schools, as well as local community initiatives;
- Staff with specific areas of responsibility, both inside the classroom and out, consider the implications of Equality and Inclusion in their teams, particularly within the sporting sector.
- Pupils/carers are informed of the external support agencies that are available

within the local community (See Appendix 4)

### **Monitoring the Success of the Equality and Inclusion Policy**

The policy will be monitored to ensure the robust nature and overall effectiveness of the procedures within the school, via a range of methods, these include:

- Governors to report on the successes and challenges in relation to inclusion;
- Team meetings to have Equality & Inclusion as an agenda item;
- Number of bullying incidents by equality characteristic to be monitored and appropriate action taken as necessary;
- Embedding of inclusion and diversity across curriculum areas to be monitored;
- Number of comments and complaints in relation to equality, inclusion and diversity to be monitored;
- Record of training/information presented to staff/pupils to be kept;
- Positive stories on equality and inclusion to be highlighted;
- Feedback from pupils, staff, parents and the wider community to be sought regularly.

### **Complaint's Procedures**

The school has a robust and transparent complaint's procedure. If a complaint is made regarding equality or inclusion, the complaints process will be fairly and systematically applied. Access to the complaint's procedure can be found on the school's website.

In conclusion, Saintfield High School is an inclusive and welcoming school environment in which every child is valued and cherished. All stakeholders within the school community seek to ensure pupils are afforded every opportunity to achieve their personal best and fulfil their individual aspirations.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Discrimination, Reasonable Adjustments, Harassment and Bullying – what are they?**

There are different types of discrimination. The main forms are:

**Direct Discrimination:** This is where someone is treated less favourably than others in the same or similar position based on a protected characteristic, for example their gender.

**Indirect Discrimination:** Indirect discrimination is where an organisation unjustifiably operates a rule or policy that looks the same for everyone but in effect disadvantages people from a particular protected group.

For example, you do not permit pupils to wear headgear as part of your uniform policy and this policy applies to every pupil equally. Due to the cultural values (often religious) of some minority groups in our community this could potentially be defined as indirect discrimination.

**Disability-Related Discrimination:** Disability-related discrimination is essentially a form of direct discrimination. It is very closely linked with the duty to make reasonable adjustments. Disability-related discrimination is much less likely to occur when the reasonable adjustment duty has been complied with.

### **What is the reasonable adjustment duty for disabled people?**

In certain circumstances the law places a duty on us to make reasonable adjustments for those pupils or prospective pupils who have a disability.

### **Harassment and bullying**

Harassment and bullying are terms used to explain certain types of unacceptable behaviour that pupils may sometimes be subjected to – see Anti-bullying Policy for school procedures.

## Appendix 4

### Helpful Numbers – Saintfield

Medical			
<i>In an emergency, remember to call 999</i>	GP Out of Hours (Belfast) 90796220	Ulster Hospital 90484511	Royal / Children's Hospital 90240503
Saintfield Health Centre 97510575	Comber Health Centre 91878391	Mater Hospital 90741211	Belfast City Hospital 90329241
Lisbane Medical Centre 9754 1466	Ards Community Hospital 9151 0000	Montalto Medical Centre Ballynahinch 97562929	Carryduff Health Centre 90812211
Mental Health			
<i>When someone's life is at immediate risk, call 999</i>	Lifeline 0808 808 800	Samaritans 90664422	Young Minds <a href="http://www.youngminds.org.uk">www.youngminds.org.uk</a>
Childline 0800 1111	New Life Counselling 90391630	Victim Support 90243133	Familyworks Counselling 91821721
East Belfast Community Counselling 90460489	Aware Defeat Depression 90321734	OCD UK 0845 120 3778	Mindwise 90402323
Action Mental Health 90629759	PIPS 90755070	27/7 Contact Youth 0808 808800	Cruse Bereavement 90792419
Mental Health Apps			
<i>Mindful Gnats</i>	<i>Mood Gym</i>	<i>Headspace</i>	<i>Rise Up and Recover</i>
<i>Mindshift</i>	<i>Calm</i>	<i>Smiling Mind</i>	<i>Super Better</i>
Safety			
PSNI 101	PSNI (Emergency) 999	Gateway Services (Social Services) 90507000	Barnados NI 90672366
Woman's Aid 0800 9171414	Childline NI 0870 336 2945	NSPCC 0808 8010722	CEOP (Online) <a href="http://www.ceop.police.uk">www.ceop.police.uk</a>
Local MLA Offices			
Mr Jim Shannon (MP) 9182 7990	Ms Kellie Armstrong MLA 91811414	Miss Michelle McIlveen MLA 91871441	Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA 91821587
Mr Peter Weir MLA 91810858	Mr Harry Harvey MLA 07531 815425		
Other Help			
Belfast City Council 90320202	Lisburn and Castlereagh Council 92509250	Housing Executive 03448 920 900	Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) 90231120
East Belfast Independent Advice Centre 90963003	Simon Community 90232882	Bryson Energy Advice Line 0800 142 2865	Foster Care Associates 0800 434 6000
The Larder Foodbank St Christopher's Church Mersey Street	NI Direct <a href="http://www.nidirect.gov.uk">www.nidirect.gov.uk</a>	Job Centre NI <a href="http://www.jobcentreonline.com">www.jobcentreonline.com</a>	Community NI <a href="http://www.communityni.org">www.communityni.org</a>
Ballynahinch Foodbank	Extern	ASCERT (Substances)	Benefits Office

97564404	90330433	92604422	0800 022 4250
East Belfast Community Development Agency 90451512	Cara Friend (LGBT) 90890202	East Belfast Mission 90458560	Disability Network 92667227
Store House (Food) 90332230	Fareshare (Food) 90332230	Family Support NI <a href="http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk">www.familysupportni.gov.uk</a>	Parenting NI <a href="http://www.parentingni.org">www.parentingni.org</a>