



# The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust

## Equality Policy

Agreed by the DCET Trust Board on: 20.05.2026

Review Date: May 2030

Version Number	Author	Purpose/Change	Date
1	HT		
1.1	RS	Review in line with policy schedule	20.05.26

*This policy applies to all academies within the DCET*

## 1. Purpose of policy and guiding principles

- The purpose of this policy is to define The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust's (DCET) commitment to equality in everything that we do.
- DCET is committed to equality in both employment and education provision. We recognise the diverse nature of our locations and services and aim to ensure that pupils, parents, governors, employees, contractors, directors and those who may potentially join the DCET community, are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- The Trust opposes all forms of discrimination and it is our policy and ethos to promote equality to all, irrespective of:
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Sexual orientation
  - Race (including nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
  - Religion or belief
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
  - Carer responsibilities
  - Domestic circumstances
  - Trade Union affiliation.
- DCET undertakes not to discriminate unlawfully, or treat people less favourably, on the grounds of any protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010 (and any future amendments to the Act), or any other ground that cannot be justified.
- DCET Trust recognises that it is also unlawful to discriminate by association or perception, e.g. treating a pupil unfairly based on the protected characteristics of their parents or other family members.
- This policy recognises the four types of unlawful behaviour. **Appendix 1** provides these definitions.
- Every possible step will be taken into account in the aim of ensuring individuals are treated fairly and decisions are based on objective criteria.

## 2. The DCET vision statement

As a community of Catholic Schools we aspire to give children an all-round education rooted in Christian values in a nurturing environment where they flourish, become lifelong learners and fulfil their potential.

- Equality Objectives 2026 – 2030

DCET will continue to monitor and assess its processes, to ensure it continues to promote equality of opportunity for all.

To demonstrate this commitment, we have developed the following equality objectives which will help us take forward equality and diversity matters as an educator and employer, over the next 4 years:

- to use performance data to monitor pupil achievement and respond to variations between groups of pupils, subjects, key stages, trends over time and comparisons with other schools
  - to raise the awareness and skills of staff to promote fairness, equality and good relations in the context of their role
- to provide an environment that welcomes, protects and respects diverse people
  - to ensure that all pupils and other stakeholders are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to school life
- to increase pupil awareness and understanding of different communities through assemblies and other events
  - to raise awareness of the impact of bullying, especially where this relates to protected characteristics
- to monitor the incidence of policy breaches

### 3. Equality into policy and practice

#### Teaching and Learning

- use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils
- monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps
- take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping.
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice.
- provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
- seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education
- encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect social stereotypes, expectations, and the impact on learning
- include teaching and classroom based approaches appropriate for the whole school population which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils
- seek to involve the community around the schools in the celebration and raising awareness of cultural issues

#### Provision of Single-Sex Spaces and Lawful Exceptions

The Trust recognises that the Equality Act 2010 permits the provision of single-sex facilities and services in certain circumstances, where this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, such as ensuring privacy, dignity, and safeguarding.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Toilets and changing facilities
- Participation in sport and physical education

The Trust will ensure that all decisions relating to the provision of single-sex spaces are made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the needs and rights of all pupils and staff, including those with

the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

Where appropriate, alternative arrangements may be considered to support individuals, ensuring that they are treated with dignity and respect, and are not subject to unlawful discrimination.

#### Employment

- DCET is committed to ensuring that employees have equal access to recruitment and career opportunities, training, and professional development.
- DCET recognises that the Act extends beyond the protected characteristics of an individual employee and has broader responsibilities to employees and situations that may be covered by the Act. For example, an employee with parental or caring responsibilities for a disabled dependent may have rights under the Act which the Trust, as their employer, would need to consider.
- All recruitment will be within the provisions of the Act and applications will be monitored to report recruitment activity, in line with the Act.
- We will make every effort in creating equality of opportunity for employees, ensuring these are accessible and fair to all. Where necessary we will implement reasonable adjustments or additional support, to ensure equality of access to the working environment and opportunity to undertake the job role successfully.
- HR policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to improve, adapt or amend current practices to promote equality of opportunities. All HR and employment policies will be applied consistently and fairly and refer to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010.
- Employees who are in breach of this policy will be dealt with under the staff disciplinary policy.

The Trust recognises that the Equality Act permits provision of single-sex services where this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim (e.g. privacy, dignity, safeguarding). Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## 4 Roles and responsibilities

#### The role of Directors and Local Governing Committees:

- Directors will approve this policy and are committed to ensuring that this policy is applied and fairly.
- The Local Governing Committee will ensure that this policy is applied consistently and fairly in all aspects of school life.
- The Local Governing Committee will monitor, evaluate and review policies in line with statutory and best practice guidelines.
- The Local Governing Committee will nominate a SEN Governor with responsibility for monitoring the quality of the academy's SEN provision.

#### The role of the academy and Trust leaders:

- The role of CEO is to ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently across the Trust.
- The role of a Headteacher is to ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently across each school.
- School senior leaders will be responsible for ensuring that their school offers an inclusive curriculum, which promotes equal opportunity and good relations across all groups of students.
- School senior leaders will be responsible for ensuring that their school has in place a SEN policy and a Behaviour policy, all of which will promote equal opportunity and good relations

across all groups of students.

- School Senior Leaders will be responsible for ensuring that their school develops teaching and learning strategies and quality CPD that ensure all staff are able to deliver inclusive learning.
- The Trust is responsible for all employment policies and ensuring the principles of this policy are reflected in all our employment practices. The Head will deal, in the first instance, with complaints raised under the grievance policy.
- Within each school the SENDco is responsible for the day-to-day management and coordination of education to students with special, or disability related needs.

The role of the employee/other staff:

- The role of all staff is to adhere to this policy, and the spirit of the law.
- Complaints from parents, students and the community will be dealt with in line with the academy's complaints procedure, and as such appropriate staff will deal with the relevant stage of the complaint.

#### 4. Complaints

- The Trust will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful (or potentially unlawful) discrimination.
- Any complaints will be investigated in accordance with the grievance or complaints policy, whichever is appropriate.

#### 5. Breaches of the Policy

- All breaches of this policy should be reported using the appropriate procedures. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant policy.

#### 6. Related policies and documents

- DCET SEND policy
- DCET Admissions policy
- Anti-bullying policy – school based policy
- DCET Behaviour policy
- DCET Supporting children with medical conditions policy
- Accessibility plans – school based
- DCET Complaints policy

#### 7. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the trust board or relevant committee every four years or following legislative or procedural change, or following any event that demands retrospective action.

This policy is informed by the Equality Act 2010 and the latest Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) technical guidance for schools (updated 2023–2024).

The Equalities Act 2010 defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

**Direct discrimination** occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination – for example if a school were to refuse to let a student be a prefect because she is a lesbian, or an employee was refused a promotion because of their race.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. An example might be holding a parents’ meeting on a Friday evening, which could make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend, or arranging the weekly CPD sessions for teachers on days when no part-time staff are available for work. It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”. This means both that the reason for the rule or practice is legitimate, and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate.

**Harassment** has a specific legal definition in the Act - it is “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.

Where schools are concerned, the offence of harassment as defined in this way in the Act applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. It is very important to recognise that this does **not** mean that schools are free to bully or harass pupils on these other grounds - to do so would still be unlawful as well as unacceptable. Any case against the school would be on grounds of direct discrimination rather than harassment.

**Victimisation** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. Even if what a person

did or said was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, they are protected against retaliation unless they were acting in bad faith. The reason for this is to ensure that people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation.

As well as it being unlawful to victimise a person who does a protected act, a child must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or a sibling in relation to the Act. This means that a child must not be made to suffer in any way because, for example, her mother has made a complaint of sex discrimination against the school, or her brother has claimed that a teacher is bullying him because he is gay, whether or not the mother or brother was acting in good faith.