

St Mary and St Nicolas Parish Church – Equal Opportunities Policy



Introduction and Statement of Intent

St Mary and St Nicolas Parish Church exists to provide regular public worship which is open to all and offers a sacred space open daily for prayer and contemplation. Pastoral work is undertaken, such as visiting the sick and bereaved and provision of activities for parents and children and other community groups. We have teaching of Christianity through sermons and courses and taking of religious assemblies in schools. We provide youth work with a Christian ethos and support other charities in the UK and overseas

In line with this mission St Mary and St Nicolas Church seek to comply with our moral and legal responsibility to promote equality of opportunity in all of our work.

This policy aims to ensure that the following matters are considered/available to all, in an equitable way, without discrimination, and without anyone being disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown as justifiable:

- Recruitment and selection
- Training and consideration promotion
- Treatment in employment within our church, for both those who are paid and voluntary
- Access to membership of our councils, committees and other groups
- Access to benefits, facilities, and other services we provide

The Parish is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment, and all employees, workers and job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religious or political affiliation, lay or ordained status, or any other matter which cannot be shown as a necessary requirement of the job or office concerned. However, in order to ensure the centrality of our Christian faith, there will be circumstances justifying different treatment which is not immoral or unlawful, and the church council affirms its right to appoint people who have chosen a Christian faith commitment to positions where the nature of the post makes this appropriate.

Code of Practice – how we will implement our statement of intent

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for the implementation and operation of equal opportunities in the administration and activities of the parish. However, all staff, volunteers and members of the church community have a duty to do everything they can to ensure that the Policy operates in practice.

The PCC will review this policy annually to ensure effective implementation. Anyone connected with the parish, who considers that they are suffering from unequal treatment on any grounds may use this policy to bring it to the PCC's attention, for consideration and remedy. This process can be initiated by contacting the clergy, one of the churchwardens, or through the Parish Office.

The Parish will take positive measures to combat unlawful discrimination and will:

- Take steps to ensure that our parish buildings are accessible and useable by all.
- Seek to encourage those sections of our community who are under-represented into a fuller participation in parish life.

- Ensure particular care is taken to properly deal with any complaints of discrimination.
- Ensure entry to employment or volunteering is determined by personal merit only and ability relevant to the purposes of the Parish.
- Aim to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal opportunity to enter employment. In doing so it will fully consider reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises to ensure a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability. In addition, if staff members or volunteers become disabled in the course of their work with the parish, every effort will be made through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment to enable them to remain involved with the Parish.
- Work to make sure that no individual, or organisation connected with church activities, hinders the positive implementation of this policy. Any form of unlawful discrimination is strictly unacceptable.

Code of Conduct – making our expectations clear

During Parish activities we seek to uphold our Christian values and everyone is expected to:

- Treat people with dignity and respect, regardless of race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age.
- Value and respect the feelings of others. Language or humour that people find offensive will not be used eg sexist or racist jokes or terminology that is deemed derogatory
- Not harass, abuse, exclude or intimidate anyone, on the grounds of race, gender, age, nationality, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Implementation Date: October 2023

Review Date: Annually