



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction and Context

As a Christian worshipping community, St George's Church is committed to treating all people with love, dignity, and respect. In the collective life of the church, we will seek to promote equal opportunity and look to create an environment in which all can flourish, where everyone is treated with respect, and where diversity is encouraged and all are made welcome.

This Policy is written in the context of theological underpinning, the rules and structures of the Church of England, and the Equality Act 2010.

• Theological Underpinning

St George's church upholds the belief that every human being is valued as part of God's creation made in the image of God. Every person is loved by God who is the God of love. God so loved the world that Jesus was sent to break down all the barriers that divide us from that love and our love for each other. So love is the key to our understanding of how we relate and behave towards one another. As God loves all people unconditionally so St George's will seek to live out that unconditional love in every part of church life.

St George's will seek to find the most loving way in all its operations. Issues of equality, diversity and inclusivity will be critical in the search. The church will use the rich resources of scripture, tradition, and reason, along with prayer, to shape and guide our decision making.

The Church's liturgy and especially the sacraments are special channels of love where God in Christ meets God's people. St George's church seeks to be a place where all people can experience that love through worship and sacrament and all will be welcomed at God's table.

• The Church of England

St George's is part of the Church of England and the Anglican Church worldwide. As such we are under the authority of our Bishops and Archbishops and the synodical structure of the Church and we must follow the Church's laws and regulations. We seek to actively engage in and participate with the wider Church as we work together to share God's love for all people.

• The Equality Act

The Equality Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people on the grounds of protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race

- Religion and belief
- Sex and sexual orientation

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a basis for understanding and engagement, and to develop and encourage attitudes and behaviours that support equality, diversity, inclusion, and a Christlike welcome for all people.

All will be helped and encouraged to flourish within the Church to their full potential as unique individuals, loved by God.

This policy has been produced to:

- Ensure that the Church seeks to welcome everyone and is open to their involvement, irrespective of gender, gender re-assignment, race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, marriage, civil partnership or being single, and social demographic, religion or belief (with the exception of roles within the church which necessarily require commitment to the Christian faith). This will include making reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled people in accordance with the Equality Act. This needs to be clear in communications such as the website.
- Ensure no person using or seeking to use the services and activities of the Church is unfairly discriminated against either directly or indirectly. However, the PCC reserves the right to refuse the use of church premises which would bring the church into disrepute, or by any organisation deliberately opposed to Christianity.
- Create an environment in which all are fully encouraged to flourish and use their gifts and talents for God's mission and the benefit of others.

3. Aims

As a Church we will:

- demonstrate St George's commitment to treating all who come to be involved with, attend or visit the church, however infrequently, fairly and with respect;
- ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are fully reflected in its employment and volunteer practices and procedures;
- work to ensure St George's attracts and retains diverse representation throughout the life of the church in volunteering and other roles within St George's to be reflective of the parish and wider community;
- ensure that equality is given due regard from the outset of development of all policies and programmes and will ensure that the principles of equality and inclusion are understood by all;
- aim to challenge and eliminate discrimination in all its activities;
- promote a culture where all are treated with respect and dignity and recognises the value that a diverse church can bring;

- not discriminate, or in any way treat anyone less favourably, on grounds such as age, gender, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, marriage, civil partnership or being single, religion or belief (with the exception of roles within the church which necessarily require commitment to the Christian faith), race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origin, disability or social demographic within the context of our Christian beliefs and applicable Church of England laws and regulations.

4. Responsibilities

The EDI Policy must be upheld by the PCC and those in leadership positions, both ordained and lay, to encourage cultural change within the church and to ensure all are welcome.

5. Related Documents

Pastoral Principles (Church of England, 2020)

Living in Love and Faith (Church of England, 2020)

Safeguarding Policy (St George's, revised 2020)

Employment Policies of the Diocese of Oxford

(Discipline, Grievance, Maternity Policy, Whistleblowing)

Equal Opportunities (Recruitment) Policy (St George's, revised 2022)

6. Date of Review

The Policy will be reviewed by the PCC on an annual basis to take account of any legislative changes or national policy development.

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