



White Way  
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Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Ofsted have published information to schools regarding the teaching of Protected Characteristics at both Primary and Secondary schools.

*Guidance: Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools (Updated 27 September 2021) states 'All primary and secondary schools, whether state-funded or independent, should be able to demonstrate that no form of discrimination is tolerated and that pupils show respect for those who share the protected characteristics. Schools will not be able to demonstrate this by pointing to a general policy of encouraging respect for all people.' 'If a school does not promote pupils' awareness and understanding of all the protected characteristics effectively, this may result in a 'requires improvement' judgement for personal development, particularly if inspectors identify one or more other weaknesses in the school's promotion of and provision for pupils' personal development.'*

The following information is provided in supporting you as a family should your child have any questions. I have also included information within this letter as to how we teach and promote these characteristics within school.

## PROMOTING THE NINE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The Equality Act became law in 2010. It covers everyone in Britain and protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Everyone in Britain is protected. This is because the Equality Act protects people against discrimination because of the protected characteristics that we all have. Under the Equality Act, there are nine Protected Characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Race
5. Religion or belief
6. Marriage or civil partnership
7. Sex
8. Sexual orientation
9. Pregnancy and maternity

Under the Equality Act you are protected from discrimination:

- When you are in the workplace
- When you use public services like healthcare (for example, visiting your doctor or local hospital) or education (for example, at your school or college)
- When you use businesses and other organisations that provide services and goods (like shops, restaurants, and cinemas)
- When you use transport
- When you join a club or association (for example, your local tennis club)
- When you have contact with public bodies like your local council or government departments



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As a church school the two most controversial of the 9 Protected Characteristics are Number 3. Gender Reassignment and Number 8. Sexual Orientation. As a church school it is important to explain how we are meeting the expectation by the DfE and Ofsted to teach and promote Protected Characteristics within the Equality Act 2010 whilst also upholding the church values.

In terms of Gender Reassignment, we have taken the decision to explain this to the whole school as 'When someone is born a boy but feels more like a girl or when someone is born a girl but feels more like a boy' this not discussed in any more detail and there is no mention of how you go about 'changing your gender'. In upper Key Stage Two it is possible that during the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) sessions pupils themselves ask about this and if this comes from a pupil staff say 'it is possible but not something that happens very often or is done without careful consideration' with no further detail. Likewise, the discussion around sexual orientation is explained as 'sometimes a boy likes a girl and a girl likes a boy, sometimes two boys like each other, sometimes two girls like each other' Again in upper Key Stage Two during RSE pupils may bring this up in discussion. RSE focusses on loving and committed relationships and does not go into detail on how these relationships look or take place. It focusses on commitment within the relationship rather than the physical act; other than how a baby is made between a man and a woman. All of which is within the science curriculum.

The Relationships and Sex Policy has always been consulted on with members of Local Governance Committee who represent the church (Foundation Governors) and is consulted on with parents every 2 years. The next consultation is due to take place in academic year 2023/24. I would urge any parent to read the updated policy in September and attend the consultation should you have any concerns or questions regarding the teaching of RSE.

As a church school I am mindful that some of the religious beliefs of parents may differ or be in conflict with those in the Equality Act 2010. I am also mindful that it is a requirement that Protected Characteristics be shared with children and that as a school we have a duty to promote tolerance and equality. This academic year Mr Russell has started our journey as a school to achieve the 'Rights Respecting Award' which focusses on the rights of the child and links with the 9 Protected Characteristics.

I would suggest that should children raise any queries regarding Protected Characteristics at home that any parents who wish to, take the time to talk with their children and explain that the Equality Act 2010 may be in conflict with your own beliefs and that this is an instance of where the personal and professional may differ.

Yours sincerely,

*Emma Wilkinson*

Emma Wilkinson  
Headteacher



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