

**Our Lady of Lourdes  
Primary School**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES  
STATEMENT**

The Board of Governors is committed to promoting equality, good relations and diversity in Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School. Along with the Principal, teachers and non-teaching staff it will endeavour to promote these issues in school ensuring that no one is excluded by others from participating in the activities of society, such as education and employment, because of certain characteristics that make up their identity.

In Our Lady of Lourdes equality focuses on ensuring that individuals are not discriminated against by others. It involves preventing discrimination against children and adults because of certain characteristics that make up their identity, such as their sex, race, age, religious beliefs, disability, political opinions, marital status, dependants and sexual orientation as set out in Section 75 of the NI Act 1998. Equality also requires members of the school community taking proactive measures to promote equality for all.

The ethos, policies and practices of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School collectively and consistently value all individuals (i.e. children and adults), particularly those from minority communities and backgrounds.

The school strives to have an environment that:

- ✓ is positively welcoming to all, whatever their identity;
- ✓ treats every individual with respect and dignity;
- ✓ provides equality for all and fosters good relationships;
- ✓ is understanding of the way of life and cultures of different families;
- ✓ values the contribution of a diversity of cultures;
- ✓ ensures every learner fulfils their potential;
- ✓ recognizes and encourages parents as the primary educators.

Education for all the children attending the school is provided in an inclusive environment that is nurtured within the school community. All children will have access to the full NI Curriculum. They will be alerted to stereotyping and prejudice where it exists and challenged to question it. Boys and girls will be treated the same (e.g. classes will not be divided on the basis of sex when lining up). It will not be assumed that boys and girls have different abilities according to their sex (e.g. boys excelling at mathematics and girls at language). All children will have equal opportunities to participate in curricular and extra curricular activities (e.g. play, ICT and sports).

The promotion of good working relationships including support and encouragement for staff and opportunities for staff development are conducive to the effective operation of the school and whole school improvement.

Our Lady of Lourdes takes account of the requirement to promote a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with dignity and respect; and no person is subjected to harassment by conduct that is related to:

- |                      |                                 |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ✓ sex;               | ✓ disability;                   | ✓ dependants;             |
| ✓ race;              | ✓ political opinions;           | ✓ pregnancy or maternity; |
| ✓ age;               | ✓ marital status;               | ✓ gender reassignment;    |
| ✓ religious beliefs; | ✓ being in a civil partnership; | ✓ sexual orientation.     |

Adhering to the Joint Declaration of Protection (TNC 2009/3) Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School will promote a good and harmonious work environment by prohibiting:

- × the display of flags, emblems, posters, graffiti or the circulation of material or deliberate articulation of slogans or songs perceived to be of a divisive or sectarian nature and likely to give offence or cause apprehension to particular groups of staff.

Only the authorized display of flags and emblems which are in line with the spirit and purpose of the 'declaration' will be permitted.

There are some individual emblems and symbols that, through their history and associations, and whether intended or not, have come to have a significance that has the potential to make those of a different identity feel uncomfortable (e.g. badges, insignia, screensavers and ringtones linked to paramilitary or political organizations).

However, there are also symbols which are unlikely to disrupt a good and harmonious environment. There are many examples of such emblems, including:

- ☞ marks of religious observance, insignias associated with organizations attached primarily to one religion, community or culture (e.g. crosses, ashes, turbans, pioneer pins and fáinnes).
- ☞ marks of remembrance, celebration or communication (e.g. poppies and shamrock).

The Board of Governors knows that it needs to have regard to the following statutory acts:

1. Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970;
2. Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976;
3. Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
4. The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;
5. Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996;
6. The Education (NI) Order 1996;
7. Race Relations (NI) Order 1997;
8. Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (FETO);
9. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
10. The Human Rights Act 1998;
11. Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003;
12. Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SENDO);
13. The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2005;
14. Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006;
15. Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006;
16. The Education (NI) Order 2006.

The Board of Governors will monitor the workings of this statement and amend when required. They will take into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from children, staff and parents.