



ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, NEWRY

Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy

Revised June 2021

Rationale:

Community relations within St. Mary's helps students gain an understanding of their own tradition, a respect for others and an appreciation for the importance of equality by enabling them to look for and celebrate their similarities as well as understanding and respecting diversity. As a Rights Respecting School, a Welcoming School and a Global Learning School, St Mary's promotes good community relations, equality and diversity helping all students to be at ease with difference in all its forms, promoting their own personal development and enriching the communities to which they belong. Community relations and respect for equality and diversity reflecting the school's mission statement, its status and core purpose of being a Rights Respecting School, a Welcoming School and a Global Learning School along with fulfilling relevant equality legislation;

The school's Missions Statement states:

"We will work in collaboration with other educational institutions and in partnership with parents and students to maximize academic and creative potential of students, enabling them to achieve the highest educational standards, thereby enriching their lives, the community and the economy".

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 29

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and others cultures, and the environment.

Equality Legislation: - Northern Ireland Act (Section 75, Schedule 9)

Public authorities in carrying out their various functions have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity;

Connected Education Policies

- *Every School a Good School*
- *Supporting Newcomer Pupils*
- *Traveller Education*
- *Special Educational Needs and Inclusion*

Aims of Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Education:

CRED in St. Mary's aims to;

- Provide students with opportunities to learn about difference and to develop the skills they need to respond positively to diversity;
- Help students gain an understanding of and respect for rights, equality and diversity of all;
- Prepare students to live and participate in a changing world, so they value and respect difference and engage positively with it;
- Support the development of student's self-esteem and their knowledge of equality and diversity through a range of learning experiences across all Key Stages;

- Equip students with the skills and positive attitudes needed to develop mutual understanding and recognition of, and respect for, difference;
- Gain opportunities for contact in both formal and informal settings to learn about different backgrounds and culture, to respect other peoples' beliefs and to appreciate what they have in common with others in addition to their differences;
- Prepare students with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives as independent and responsible citizens;
- Have a positive impact on their own school and wider community through self respect and respect for others and their environment, promoting equality and striving to eliminate any forms of discrimination or negative attitudes or actions;
- Give students the necessary knowledge and skills to recognise prejudice and respond in a positive way to negative influences;
- Develop necessary skills and resilience to deal with prejudice;
- To address existing and new Community Relations, Equality and Diversity issues as they arise in the local, national and global community;
- Strengthen collaboration and partnerships with other learning providers, youth groups, training organisations in a way that meets the needs of all learners;

The CRED Policy ensures equality of opportunity regardless of religion, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability and between persons with dependents and persons without as outlined in the Northern Ireland Act (1998) – Section 75.

Organisation and Structure – Delivery of CRED:

- **Rights Respecting School**

As a Rights Respecting School, the core purpose is an inclusive learning environment where all students and staff members feel safe, supported and valued. This environment is based on respect for self and others where diversity is cherished and promoted. As a Rights Respecting School we aim to educate and support students to help them recognise prejudice, to overcome it and to respond in a positive way to negative influences. Through a range of learning experiences students develop the skills and resilience to deal with prejudice such as sectarian attitudes and behaviour, homophobia, racism or negative attitudes to people with disabilities.

- **Local and Global Citizenship**

This programme explores the range and extent of diversity in both local and global societies and provides students with opportunities to investigate how identity, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination can contribute to conflict but also to enable students to develop the skills necessary to manage and resolve conflict peacefully.

- **Personal Development Programme**

The Personal Development Programme provides opportunities for the promotion of equality and diversity, development of self-esteem and positive relationships with others.

- **Curriculum Links**

Many subjects at all Key Stages explore relevant issues and theme which helps students to develop the skills needed to build effective relationships and to promote equality. (Curriculum Mapping)

- **Global and Community Links**

Through our Global Links with St Mary's Primary and Secondary School, Nigeria and extensive fundraising activities for local and national causes, students gain a sense of concern for others and active participation to improve their life chances and rights.

Morals and Values:

The CRED Policy is also underpinned by morals and values, reflective of the core purpose of being a Catholic and Rights Respecting School;

- respect themselves and others
- distinguish between right and wrong
- taking personal responsibility for own actions
- understand the long and short term consequences of their actions for themselves and others
- Understand Catholic Church teaching on morality and personal relationships with other people.

Skills:

The CRED programme in St. Mary's enables students to develop the skills necessary to form and maintain positive relationships and to make informed choices and decisions based on mutual respect in an ever changing world. Pupils will also develop skills to critically evaluate a wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values. Through a range of learning experiences students develop the following skills:

- + Communication Skills – learning to listen to others points of view, putting their own views forward clearly and appropriately, giving and receiving feedback, handling and resolving conflict appropriately and being assertive.
- + Decision making and problem solving – the steps in making personal decisions and sensible choices in the light of relevant information, making informed judgments about what to do in actual situations and putting these judgments into practice, promoting respect for self and others. Students are encouraged to develop a sense of resilience into thought and action and forming and defending their own moral and value framework.
- + Interpersonal and Leadership skills – for managing a range of relationships with others in a respectful manner.
- + Self Reflection – being able to positively assess previous actions, evaluate them and to draw conclusions which will guide further actions.

Responsibilities:

Leader of Learning: - Senior Leadership

The Leader of Learning has responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the CRED Programme;

- Leading the strategic development of CRED across all key stages including the revision of the CRED Policy at regular intervals;
- Map the delivery of CRED across curriculum areas;
- Monitor and evaluate CRED provisions;
- Report to the Principal and SLT in relation to all aspects of CRED.

Citizenship Coordinator

The Coordinator for Citizenship – Miss Sile Bartlett is responsible for ensuring the Citizenship Programme in school is inline with the CRED Policy and when necessary makes recommendations as to changes that need to take place including the resources to promote community relations, equality and diversity education.

The co-ordinator will regularly:

- review the CRED Policy;
- co-ordinate, monitor and review all Citizenship education and activities;
- Promote the CRED Policy by collaborating with a broad range of community based agencies to enhance resources and organise related activities.

Heads of Department

- Facilitate whole school mapping of CRED themes within their own curriculum area and indicate CRED within Schemes of Learning;
- Support department members in the delivery of CRED including the provision of adequate resources;
- Promote CRED themes within their department teaching.

Subject Teachers

- All teachers in St Mary's are responsible for the creation of a supportive, rights respecting learning environment where all students feel safe, respected and valued, promoting respect for others, diversity and equality;
- Teachers deal with all sensitive issues in a responsible manner, acting as positive role models;
- Identify areas within their own subject where relevant themes can be addressed or learning strategies used to promote CRED;
- As part of the Positive Behaviour Policy and Procedures, challenge any views or actions that do not respect diversity and inclusion.

Use of External/Support Agencies:

We acknowledge the importance of a range of external groups in promoting CRED within the school but also the importance of ensuring that such agencies adhere to the values and ethos of our school.

Current external/support agencies include:

- Social Services
- School Counsellors
- School Age Mums (SAM)
- xL Princes Trust
- Women's Aid
- Life Conference
- Related Theatre groups/productions
- Religious Retreat Teams/Programmes
- PSNI
- STEPS Programme
- EWO Service
- Behaviour Support Team
- CARA Friend
- NGOs – St Vincent de Paul, Habitat for Humanity
- Eco Committee
- PTFA

Related School Policies:

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- ✚ Pastoral Care Policy
- ✚ Child Protection Policy
- ✚ Drugs Education Policy
- ✚ Anti-Bullying Policy
- ✚ Behaviour Policy
- ✚ Internet Policy
- ✚ Personal Development Policy
- ✚ RSE Policy
- ✚ Health Education Policy
- ✚ E-Safety Policy

Dissemination of the Policy:

Pastoral Policies are shared with Year 8 parents and are available on the school's website. An overview of Pastoral Policies is sent to all parents at the start of each academic year.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

Mr. Fitzpatrick, Vice Principal and Miss Bartlett, Citizenship Coordinator (Senior Leader) are responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the CRED policy.

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Principal: _____

Date: _____

Date of Review: __September 2024_____