

# **Saint George the Martyr, New Mills**

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

### **Principles**

St. George's Church supports the principle of equality, diversity and community cohesion in our service delivery. The Church recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination.

All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. All paid employees and volunteers have a duty to co-operate with the Church to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. All working and supporting the Church should draw the attention of the Incumbent or Vice Chair of the PCC (Parochial Church Council) to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying, harassment, intimidation or any other inappropriate behaviour.

### **Statement of Intent**

St. George's Church welcomes everyone, asking that all respect and work within the context of our Christian beliefs.

The Church aims to create a culture where Jesus Christ is honoured and his love and mercy are evident in all our actions and relationships.

### **Implementation**

It is the responsibility of the PCC to review and develop the policy in the context of our Christian beliefs and witness. Each PCC member is responsible for their own compliance with this policy and appropriate training and guidance will be provided to support this.

### **Working in the Community**

We are committed to ensuring that individuals do not feel apprehensive because of their age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, married or civil partnership status.

In working in the community and in offering services, activities and facilities to the community the Church will:

- Ensure that they are accessible and provided fairly to people who seek our help
- Make sure that all service users are treated with dignity and respect, and that we recognise and value people's differences
- Make sure that complaints procedures are easy to use, and that we respond to complaints efficiently and promptly.
- Encouragement will be given to church members to attend training opportunities for their personal and spiritual development.
- It is the responsibility of every individual to participate in any equality and diversity training provided.

### **Disabled access**

The church currently has no disabled access, however, a portable ramp is available. We will try respond positively to requests made by visitors for specific aids and adaptations that are needed to enable them to have equal access to services, events or meetings.

### **Age equality**

We aim to provide an environment free from discrimination on the grounds of age and recognise the valuable contributions that all ages have to offer. We aim to treat all with dignity and respect. The only limit on activities will be on account of the potential danger of harming themselves or others because of their youth or frailty.

## **Use of language**

All should avoid and challenge the use of language which belittles or demeans others.

## **Bullying and harassment**

No one should be the subject of bullying or other forms of harassment. Harassment is unwanted/inappropriate behaviour which is intimidating, offensive or malicious and which undermines the confidence and self-esteem of the recipient:

- Verbal abuse, including belittling or 'putting people down' in front of others;
- Unwanted and unwarranted physical contact;
- Repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive;
- 'Stalking' behaviours, e.g. unwanted telephone calls, e-mails, uninvited calls to someone's home/workplace etc;
- Sexual/racist or disability innuendo or other forms of inappropriate physical contact including sexual abuse.

If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint to the Incumbent or Vice Chair of the PCC.

## **Dealing with complaints**

If anyone feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against they are entitled to pursue the matter with the Incumbent or Vice Chair of the PCC.

All complaints of discriminatory behaviour, including bullying, harassment, intimidation or any other form of inappropriate behaviour will be treated seriously. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious and dealt with immediately, objectively, and fairly. Genuine concerns should be raised rather than hidden.

## **Procedure**

In the event of a formal complaint being lodged a note of the time, date, place and other relevant data should be taken along with a note of any witnesses, or persons in the immediate neighbourhood who may be able to corroborate the facts. Under the Criminal Justice Act 1994 harassment is a criminal offence punishable by a substantial fine and/or a prison sentence of up to six months, and under the Protection from Harassment Act of 1997 unlimited fines and imprisonment for up to five years can be imposed.

## **Our ambition**

We wish to build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create a cohesive, strong, confident and healthy community life here at Saint George's.

**Signed:**



**(Chair of the PCC)**

**Date adopted by PCC:** 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Review Date:** Annual APCM