

## **ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

1. St Mary's PCC is committed to equal opportunities for everyone involved at St Mary's whether in worship, both in employed or voluntary work.
2. St Mary's PCC is committed not only to the letter of the law but also to good practice and to equality of opportunities for all involved with St Mary's Church. In this context, it may from time to time be necessary to encourage applications from, and the development of, groups which are underrepresented in St Mary's Church.
3. No employee/Volunteer member of St Mary's Church or job applicant will be treated less favourably because of his/her gender, age, marital status, creed, responsibility for dependants, race or ethnic origin, sexuality or disability.
4. St Mary's PCC accepts that an equal opportunities policy is in the best interests of employees/volunteers and of those who worship in or visit St Mary's Church.
5. This policy will apply to any person who acts on behalf of St Mary's PCC, the Parish Priest or the Church Wardens in all matters which affect employees/volunteers/ members or visitors to St Mary's Church.
6. Any employee/volunteer/member of St Mary's or any applicant for a job may complain to the Parish Priest or Church Wardens about any act of alleged discrimination. Such complaints will be dealt with under the equal opportunities complaints procedure.
7. Any breach of this policy by an employee/volunteer or member of St Mary's Church will be investigated.
8. The Parish Priest and Church Wardens will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy and keeping under review all aspects of policies and procedures.
9. This policy will be reviewed annually by St Mary's PCC and any proposed changes will be subject to consultation with all the members of St Mary's Church.

## **ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH CODE OF PRACTICE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This Equal Opportunities Policy provides a basis for good practice and management of St Mary's Church.
2. The implementation and review of this policy will be ongoing; therefore the effects will be long term.
3. This document is intended for the benefit of all employees/volunteers and members of St Mary's Church. St Mary's PCC will ensure that all employees/volunteers and members of St Mary's are aware of the policy and code of practice, and that the Parish Priest and Church Wardens will implement the policy and code of practice on a day to day basis.

### **ATTITUDES**

1. All employees/volunteers and members of St Mary's Church will not discriminate on the basis of notions that individuals, because of their gender, age, marital status, responsibility for dependants, creed, race or ethnic origin, sexuality or disability, possess characteristics or are subject to circumstances which would make them less favourable or able than others.

### **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

1. The Parish Priest and Church Wardens must ensure that all who are responsible for recruiting and appointing employees/volunteers are made fully aware of St Mary's Church's equal opportunities policy.
2. Applicants/volunteers for posts will be given clear and accurate information about vacancies including copies of the job description and person specification.
3. All interviews will be thorough, conducted on an objective basis and will deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job and ability to fulfil the job requirements.
4. The reasons for acceptance or rejection of all candidates must be recorded and the records kept by the parish office for a minimum of 6 months.
5. Where candidates request reasons for their rejection, this must be made available to them either in writing, by interview, or both.

6. All applicants/volunteers will be informed that St Mary's PCC operate an equal opportunities policy.
7. Appointments will be made on the basis of the justifiable requirements of the job as defined in the job description and person specification.
8. Vacancy bulletins will be displayed on notice boards or in the Parish magazine or both.
9. If the job/voluntary position requires a woman or a man or a particular racial or ethnic group, this is known as a "Genuine Occupational Qualification" (that is where discrimination would be lawful).
10. The above is to be read in the context of the Canon Law of the Church of England, which in tightly defined circumstances, permits lawful discrimination on the grounds of faith, gender or lifestyle.

### **EMPLOYMENT WORKING PRACTICES**

1. The provision (or absence) of general staff facilities (for example toilet facilities) should not be allowed to cause discrimination against any disadvantaged group or person. St Mary's PCC has a responsibility to make provision for adequate staff facilities and should be consulted where a need is identified.
2. The Parish Priest should examine whether patterns of work, work arrangements or hours of work are discriminatory, except where provided for by statute.

### **PUBLICISING THE POLICY**

1. Induction procedures for new employees/volunteers should include information about the Policy.
2. All employees/volunteers and members of St Mary's Church must be informed of the Policy. Guidance and instructions must be given to ensure that discriminatory attitudes or practices are to be avoided at St Mary's Church and in dealing with the public.

### **COMPLAINTS**

1. The complaints procedure for any act of alleged discrimination under this Policy is included in this document. Action under this Procedure does not prejudice any statutory rights of complaint to an employment tribunal where applicable for those employed by St Mary's PCC.
2. No employee/volunteer member of St Mary's or job applicant who makes a complaint under this complaints procedure, or who provides

information in relation to a complaint, will be victimised for their actions. It is the responsibility of the Parish Priest and Church Wardens to ensure that employees/volunteers and members of St Mary's Church are aware of this, and that victimisation is unlawful under the Race Relations Act; Sex Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

1. All complaints, whether from an employee/volunteer or member of St Mary's or an external person, about any act of alleged discrimination matters, should be addressed in writing to the Parish Priest who will acknowledge receipt to the complainant and inform them that the complaint is being investigated.
2. In cases involving the Parish Priest, the complaint should be addressed in writing to the Vice Chair of St Mary's PCC who will then appoint a Church Warden to investigate the complaint on behalf of the PCC.
3. The Parish Priest or Church Warden will interview the complainant, who has a right to be accompanied. The Parish Priest or Church Warden will undertake any other investigation that may be deemed necessary and appropriate.
4. If the matter cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the Parish Priest or Church Warden will submit a report to St Mary's Church PCC together with comments from the complainant and/or representative(s). The report may contain recommendations.
5. St Mary's PCC having received the report will invite the complainant, his/her representative and the Parish Priest or Church Warden to appear before it. The complainant has a right to be accompanied by a representative or other person.
6. The decision of St Mary's PCC will be communicated in writing to the complainant. If the complainant does not accept the decision of St Mary's PCC, the complaint will be passed on to the Rural Dean or Archdeacon.
7. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times by all parties.
8. This procedure will not prejudice any statutory rights of complaint to an employment tribunal where applicable.

***NB: Employment tribunal only applies to employees who are in paid employment by St Mary's Church PCC.***