

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets out our commitment to work within what is currently permitted by the Church of England to be an organisation that is as diverse, equal and inclusive as we can make it.

We are committed to being an equal opportunities employer and to creating a supportive and inclusive environment where each person in all their unique differences feels a sense of belonging and can flourish, irrespective of physical appearance, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic background, academic ability, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

St Giles believes that a church is the community of God's people and recognises that all people are of equal importance in the eyes of God. We are committed to the principles and practices of equality – fairly and consistently treating each person according to their diverse needs and valuing our differences.

St Giles Church will not discriminate or treat any individual less favourably on the grounds of sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. We will challenge discrimination in accordance with [the Equality Act 2010](#).

Sometimes we have to treat people differently, for example in order to accommodate a disability or to meet occupational requirements for a position. All employed posts and volunteered roles may give rise to an Occupational Requirement that the post-holder has [a commitment to the Christian faith](#). This policy is intended to address unlawful discrimination.

OUR VISION

St Giles believes that our ethos around equality, diversity and inclusion emerges from a desire and motivation to express Christ's love to those whom we serve and to reflect this love internally in our relationships with one another, understanding the role of self and others in the overall integrity where both the individual and the church community remain true to their values.

Our vision at St Giles Church is to see *'lives being changed by the power of Jesus, one person at a time'*.

Our vision and values are at the heart of everything we do in ministry and employment, alongside our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, within the theological imperative, do justice, walk humbly, have mercy, so that we provide opportunities for all our people to flourish and live life to the full.

DEFINITIONS

Protected characteristics refer to the nine characteristics that are protected in the Equality Act (2010). The nine protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Equality is about fairness. It is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that everyone's needs are met in different ways. It is based on the legal obligation to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. **Equality** protects people from being discriminated against on the grounds of protected characteristics.

Diversity is to recognise, respect and value the differences and the gifts that everyone has, and to embrace them to their fullest.

Inclusion is to foster a learning environment that allows and enables people with different backgrounds, characteristics, abilities, opinions and ways of thinking to work together, grow together and flourish.

Discrimination means treating a person unfairly because of who they are or because they possess certain characteristics. This is unlawful discrimination when based on protected characteristics. Discrimination can occur in the following forms:

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another not on the merits, but on the grounds of a protected characteristic they have. For example, overlooking a job applicant because of their gender or sexuality. It includes:

- Discrimination by association occurs when a person is directly discriminated against by association with another individual who has a protected characteristic;
- Discrimination by perception is when a person is directly discriminated against based on a perception that the person has a particular protected characteristic, even if they do not actually possess it.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a practice, policy or rule applies to everyone in the same way, but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified only if it can be shown that is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

- Harassment is "unwanted conduct, related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual" (Bullying and harassment at work, [ACAS](#) - June 2014);
- Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated unfairly or has suffered a detriment because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance.

Unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias) is when we make judgments or decisions about an individual or group of people on the basis of our prior experiences, our own deep-seated thought patterns, assumptions, social stereotypes or interpretations. Much of the time we are unaware that we are doing it, hence 'unconscious'. Actively choosing to judge or make decisions about someone because of who they are is prejudice.

Micro-aggression is a statement, action or incident that is regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised group, such as a racial or ethnic minority. It is, therefore, important to acknowledge and recognise discrimination, unconscious bias

and micro-aggression whenever they happen, as they can impact individual and or group relationships sometimes with detrimental consequences – whether it's at work, ministry or just in our lives in general.

Occupational Requirement – The Equality Act 2010 provides some exemptions that apply to the work environment which allow employers to require employees and volunteers to have (or not have) certain protected characteristics. These are called Occupational Requirements (OR), and the burden is on the employer to show that there is an occupational requirement attached to a particular job role. A typical example within the Church would be the post carries a genuine occupational requirement to be a practising Christian.

Reasonable Adjustments - Under the Equality Act 2010 (unlawful discrimination legislation), employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff. This means making changes to a disabled person's environment or the way their employment is structured to mitigate any disadvantages allowing them to work safely and productively. This may include removing physical barriers, providing extra support, and providing flexibility.

PURPOSE AND OUR COMMITMENT

Our aim is for everyone in St Giles to feel that they belong and are valued for who they are and what they contribute. This policy sets out our legal obligations and commitments within the framework of the Church of England, to acknowledge our diverse church and to better reflect the communities we serve, thus achieving our vision of being a more Christ-like Church; contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world, where:

- People are treated fairly and with dignity and respect;
- We create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for everyone;
- Equality of opportunity for learning and development is promoted for everyone;
- Discrimination is challenged including unconscious bias and microaggression;
- Everyone can flourish and reach their full potential, and we respond positively to different needs and circumstances;
- We ensure that the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within our recruitment, appointment and people management processes;
- We encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so we can apply corrective measures.

Current equality legislation and associated codes of practice are considered, including, but not limited to the: Equality Act 2010; Employment Rights Act 1996; Part time working regulations 2000; Rehabilitation of Offenders Act; Equal Pay Act 1970; Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended).

SCOPE

This policy covers all aspects of employment and ministry within St Giles, including the recruitment and appointment process, pay and benefits, terms and conditions or terms of service.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

St Giles has a legal obligation under the Equality Act (2010) to protect people from discrimination in the workplace.

St Giles' commitments

- We take seriously and deal with situations where anyone has breached the policy;
- We meet our legal obligations;
- We minimise the risk of discrimination by taking appropriate steps in our recruitment, selection, and management/supervision of employees, officeholders and volunteers;
- Have a zero-tolerance response to discrimination.

Individual commitments

Every individual within the scope of this policy is expected to:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy, ensuring that their practices and conduct are consistent with it;
- Be aware of their responsibilities and report any cases of discrimination and unfair treatment witnessed that breach this policy to the incumbent/safeguarding officer and churchwardens;
- Behave in a respectful way towards others and understand that views and opinions may differ;
- Engage with any training offered within this area.



MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

If you believe you have been subject to discrimination under this policy, then you are encouraged to raise the matter with the incumbent/safeguarding officer and the churchwardens.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. St Giles will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result.

SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

If you need any further help or support, please contact the incumbent or the safeguarding officer.

Approved by the PCC:	Date: March 2024
Review date:	Date: Sept 2025 Approved
Signed: PCC Chair	
Signed: PCC Secretary	

July 2025 – No amendments to original policy made by Policy Lead, Sarah Day. To be signed off at Sept 2025 PCC meeting

Distribution:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ministry/event leaders*
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Church wardens – incl in Role Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deputy wardens – incl in Role Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	Church Centre - Noticeboard
<input type="checkbox"/>	Church Building - Noticeboard
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Website
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ChurchSuite
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please state

*List can be requested from the parish office