

Parish of Southlake St James  
Equal Opportunity Policy

We affirm that every individual is made in the image of God, and has a unique contribution to make to the welfare of all, and of creation. We seek to affirm each person in their unique identity as created by God, and we recognise that in Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, neither male nor female' (Galatians 3:28) We need each other if we are to grow fully to become the people of God (Hebrews 11:40).

At St James, we reject all unlawful discrimination on the ground of sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, colour, religion, belief, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or family status, pregnancy or maternity or disability (Protected Characteristics). We also reject all unlawful discrimination on the ground of culture, class, political affiliation or moral choice.

The Parish is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment and all employees, workers and job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of any Protected Characteristics that may apply to them. However, in order to ensure the centrality of Christ in our teachings and actions, there will be circumstances justifying different treatment which is not immoral or unlawful, and the PCC affirms its right to appoint people who have chosen a Christian faith commitment (and are living this out in a way commensurate with the understanding of the Parish) to positions of responsibility within the Parish.

This policy applies to all aspects of employment within the Parish, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures and termination of employment.

Part-time and fixed-term employees will be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions, unless different treatment is justified. The Parish will take positive measures to combat unlawful discrimination (whether direct or indirect) against any employee, worker, volunteer, or against any user of any service that we offer. In practice, this will mean that, in so far as our user policy permits, we will:

- Take steps to ensure that our parish buildings are accessible and usable by all;
- Seek to encourage those sections of our community who are under-represented into a fuller participation in parish life;
- Ensure particular care is taken to properly deal with any complaints of discrimination.

In addition to the above policy the following applies to appointments and employment of staff:

1. Entry to employment and promotion or change of post is determined by personal merit and ability relevant to the purposes of the Parish.

2. The Parish aims to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal opportunity to enter employment. In doing so, it will fully consider reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises to ensure that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability. In addition, if staff members become disabled in the course of their employment, every effort will be made through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment to enable them to remain in the employment of the Parish.

3. The Parish is a Christian organisation committed to assisting in God's work of His Kingdom on earth. Accordingly, there are posts which can only be filled by Christians. Whilst the Parish is committed to adopting non-discriminatory practices to all employees, job applicants, and others whom we come into contact with, the nature of these posts, or the context in which they are carried out and their link to the ethos of the organisation give rise to an Occupational Requirement for the post holders to be Christians and are living this out in a way commensurate with the understanding of the Parish. All staff in these posts need to demonstrate a clear, personal commitment to the Christian faith.

4. It is the intention of the Parish that no individual or organisation connected with its activities shall hinder the positive implementation of this policy. Any form of unlawful discrimination is strictly unacceptable and will be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

5. Any employee may complain about discriminatory conduct using the grievance procedures of the Church of England. No individual will be penalised for raising a grievance unless it is proved to be untrue and made in bad faith in which case it will be treated as misconduct.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

– Approved by the PCC on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019.