



3 March 2022

Formal position statement

In keeping with our Catholic faith, schools in the trusteeship or purview of the Archdiocese of Southwark, are required to welcome, safeguard and care for all pupils. As the Diocese with the most diverse pupil population in England and Wales we are proud of our schools' efforts to include pupils whatever their particular or individual characteristics, circumstances or needs.

Our schools are encouraged to tackle bullying of any sort robustly, including any form of conduct or behaviour based on disrespectful or prejudiced approaches to protected characteristics under UK civil law. Moreover, our schools are required to deliver a programme of relationships and sex education that is compliant with the Equalities Act 2010 and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. While we do not endorse any particular programme of study or textbook, we encourage schools to use materials to support pupils' learning in this crucial aspect of human development that have been tried and tested against these two important frameworks.

From time to time materials or events emerge for consideration that fall outside the scope of what is permissible in a Catholic school, because they do not comply with all aspects of the tests cited above – for example the protected characteristic 'religion' (Part 2 of the Equalities Act 2010) and all that that encompasses in our context. In such circumstances, we have no alternative but to affirm our unequivocal and well-known theological and moral precepts and to act in accordance with them. The book-signing event scheduled for 7 March 2022 at The John Fisher School, Purley is one such event and we have recommended that the school's leaders cancel it.

Dr Simon Hughes
Director of Education and Diocesan Schools Commissioner