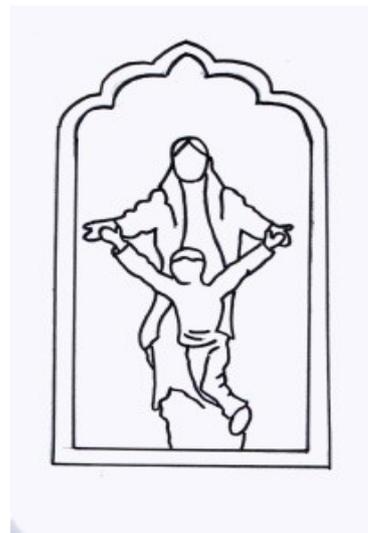


# The Parish of St Mary the Virgin Ringmer

Registered Charity No 1131869

**Address:** Church Hill, Ringmer, Lewes, East Sussex  
BN8 5JX



## Equality, diversity and inclusion policy

1. Preamble
  2. Aim
  3. Responsibilities and Commitments
    - 3.1. Clergy, volunteers and employees
    - 3.2. Members of the congregation and visitors
    - 3.3 Church commitments and their administration
  4. Further Information
- Appendix - the Inclusive Church Network

### *1. Preamble*

We believe that all people are created equal in the sight of God, and we seek to promote all the organisation's activities in ways which recognise and encourage that principle.

The Church is therefore committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and eliminating unlawful discrimination, with respect to our workforce and volunteer base, as well as amongst our congregation, and all users of the church and its facilities. We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and have made the decision to adopt a formal equal opportunities policy. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

### *2. Aim*

The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant, employee or volunteer, member of the congregation or any other visitor to the church, is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.

With respect to our workforce and volunteer base, our aim is, as far as possible, to be truly representative of all sections of society, and for each person to feel respected and able to give their best.

### *3. Responsibilities and Commitments*

#### *3.1. Clergy, volunteers and employees*

Everyone who is part of the Church has individual responsibility under this policy to ensure that the service they deliver and their behaviour towards other staff, volunteers, church members, and all those with whom they come into contact in the course of their duties is both fair and lawful, irrespective of the position held by them.

The Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Ringmer, is thus committed to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment or offering help as a volunteer, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

Notwithstanding the above, it may be a requirement for some paid and volunteer roles within the Church that the applicant be a practising Christian, under the “occupational requirement” regulations of the Equality Act.

#### *3.2. Members of the congregation and visitors*

It is also the responsibility of all members of the congregation and visitors to the church to treat all other member of the congregation and visitors, and all clergy, employees, and volunteers, with similar respect. Disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated, and those guilty of it will be asked to leave the premises of St Mary’s, and further action (e.g. reporting a criminal offence) will be taken if appropriate.

#### *3.3. Church commitments and their administration*

The Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Ringmer, further commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion

In order to ensure and enact that commitment, the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Ringmer will:

- Ensure that everyone who is part of the Church should use language, and adopt behaviour, and create a working environment that is non-threatening and non-discriminatory, so as to preserve dignity and respect for all, regardless of race, religion, sex, sexuality, marital status, age, employment status, political persuasion, mental or physical health, or criminal convictions.
- Create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all employees and volunteers are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, volunteers, church members, beneficiaries, guests, suppliers and the public.

- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to staff and volunteers.
- Make decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the

Equality Act).

- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce and volunteer base regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

- Ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and volunteers, and made known to all applicants for employment.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice.

#### *4. Further Information*

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by senior management. Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found at [www.ringmerchurch.org.uk](http://www.ringmerchurch.org.uk) under **Policies: Complaints Policy and Disciplinary Procedure**. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

#### *Appendix - the Inclusive Church Network*

Saint Mary the Virgin, Ringmer, is a member of the Inclusive Church Network.

The Network's Statement of Belief:

We believe in inclusive Church – church which does not discriminate, on any level, on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality. We believe in Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of

Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

1. As a member of the Inclusive Church Network, the PCC endorses the Network's 'statement of belief' and ensures that all church members, and those volunteering or working for the church, respect this statement through their activities within the church:

2. As a member of the Inclusive Church Network, the PCC believes in

(a) the equality of opportunity and values all individuals, and seeks to promote diversity and to respond to the needs of all in a fair and equitable manner,

(b) that all people have a right to employment, volunteering opportunities and services which are free from direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality.

The PCC works to ensure all church members, and those volunteering or working for the church respect these values through their activities within the church, seeking thereby to reduce unfair discrimination in society and to eliminate such practices within the church.

3. The PCC will seek to meet its responsibilities in relation to the laws prohibiting discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion, as well as its broader commitment to justice and equality.

4. All individuals at every level within the church have some level of responsibility for ensuring that this Policy is carried out, and breaches of this Policy will be regarded as disciplinary offences. Training in promoting equality and respecting diversity will be sought, when and as appropriate, for church officers and other church members.