



# Equalities Statement

<b>Responsibility</b>	Trust Board	
<b>Ratification date</b>	29 03 2022	
<b>Review cycle / date</b>	1	Spring 2023
<b>Reference</b>	019/4	

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## **1 Ethos and Values**

At the Richmond upon Thames School (RTS), we strive to ensure that all students are valued as individuals, who are recognised for their talents, fully included within the school community and provided with every opportunity to achieve 'excellence'. We expect all students to emerge as confident, resilient individuals, who can build positive relationships and demonstrate commitment in everything they do.

We communicate our core beliefs as six guiding values:

- Community
- Participation
- Confidence
- Readiness
- Kindness
- The power of effort

## **2 Equality into policy and practice**

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

### **2.1 Quality of Education**

We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students
- Collect and analyse data on:
  - The school population by gender and ethnicity,
  - The % of students identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability,
  - Each year group – in terms of ethnicity, gender and proficiency in English and
  - Inequalities of outcome and participation, related to ethnicity, gender and disability and proficiency in English.
- Analyse data in relation to the standards reached by different groups at the end of each data collection.
- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets.
- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society.
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability, without stereotyping.
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice.
- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education.
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning.
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our students.

## **2.2 Admissions and exclusions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability, ability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and accounted for.

## **3 Equal Opportunities for Staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at RTS. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we will strive, wherever possible, for the staffing of the school to reflect the diversity of our community.

### **3.1 Employer duties**

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff,
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff and
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

## **4 Equality and the law**

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation from the Disability Equality Duty (2005), Equality Act (2006) and the Equality Act (2010).

### **4.1 Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is wider than the previous equality duty in that it now covers the following "protected characteristics":

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief and sexual orientation

The PSED also applies to marriage and civil partnership but only in respect of the first aim of the general duty detailed below.

A person's age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment, and in regard to the provision for goods and services. However, the PSED in respect of age does not apply to functions relating to the provision of education, and so the school is free to arrange students in classes based on their age group with materials appropriate to them.

## **2.2 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the school must have due regard to the need to:**

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a prohibited characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is defined further in the Equality Act 2010 as having due regard to the need to:

1. Remove or minimize disadvantage
2. Take steps to meet different needs
3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

### **2.2.1 For schools, having due regard means:**

- When making a decision or taking an action a school must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- It should consider equality implications before and at the time it develops policy and takes decisions, not as an afterthought, and it needs to keep them under review.
- It should consciously consider each aspect of the duty (having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination is not the same thing as having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity).
- It should assess the risk and extent of any adverse impact that might result from a policy or decision and the ways in which the risk may be eliminated before the adoption of a proposed policy.
- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of a school's functions. The analysis necessary to comply with the duty should be carried out rigorously and with an open mind – it is not a question of just ticking boxes.
- Schools need to do this themselves and cannot delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else. The steps they take to meet the duty must be recorded.

## **4.3 Race Equality**

The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

## **4.4 Disability**

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Strategy.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities.

Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well-recognised”, although the person must still demonstrate a long term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

#### **4.4.1 Legal duties**

The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people,
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability,
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people,
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people and
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty, we will:

- Prepare and publish an **Equality (Accessibility) Plan** which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them and
- Review and revise this Scheme every four years.

#### **4.5 Gender Equality**

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male students and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty, we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every four years.

#### **4.6 Sexual Orientation**

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools, this means admissions, benefits and services for students and treatment of students.

### **5 Community cohesion**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion.

Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between students from different races, faiths/beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

## **6 Consultation and involvement**

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, students and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from the bi-annual parent-voice questionnaires, parents' evenings, parent-school forum meetings, pre-event question request-forms
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings, CPD/INSET evaluation
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school (PASS) and the CEIAG Programme including the recent school reopening 'wellbeing survey' undertaken in Autumn 2020
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Student Support Plans, mentoring and support
- Feedback at Trust Board meetings

## **7 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 The role of trustees**

- The Trust Board has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to students and responsive to their needs based on the protected characteristics.
- The trust board seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of the protected characteristics. The trustees take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and students.
- The trustees welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The trust board ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability, gender, religion and belief or the fact that they are pregnant or are undergoing gender reassignment.

### **7.2 The role of the Head Teacher (or senior leader responsible for Equalities)**

- To implement the school's Equality objectives/plan and s/he is supported by the trust board in doing so.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- To ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- To promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- To treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

### **7.3 The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching**

- To ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy and objectives.

- To strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- To challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Head Teacher.
- To support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

## **8 Tackling discrimination**

Harassment or victimisation on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping, and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.

### **8.1 Direct and indirect discrimination**

Staff and trustees should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage.

### **8.2 Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying**

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher, Line Manager, SLT/ Head Teacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Head Teacher and racist incidents are reported to the trust board and local authority on a termly basis

#### **8.2.1 What is a discriminatory incident?**

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person".

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably, than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a prohibited act") in connection with the Act. Eg. Making an allegation of discrimination.

##### **8.2.1.1 Types of discriminatory incident**

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

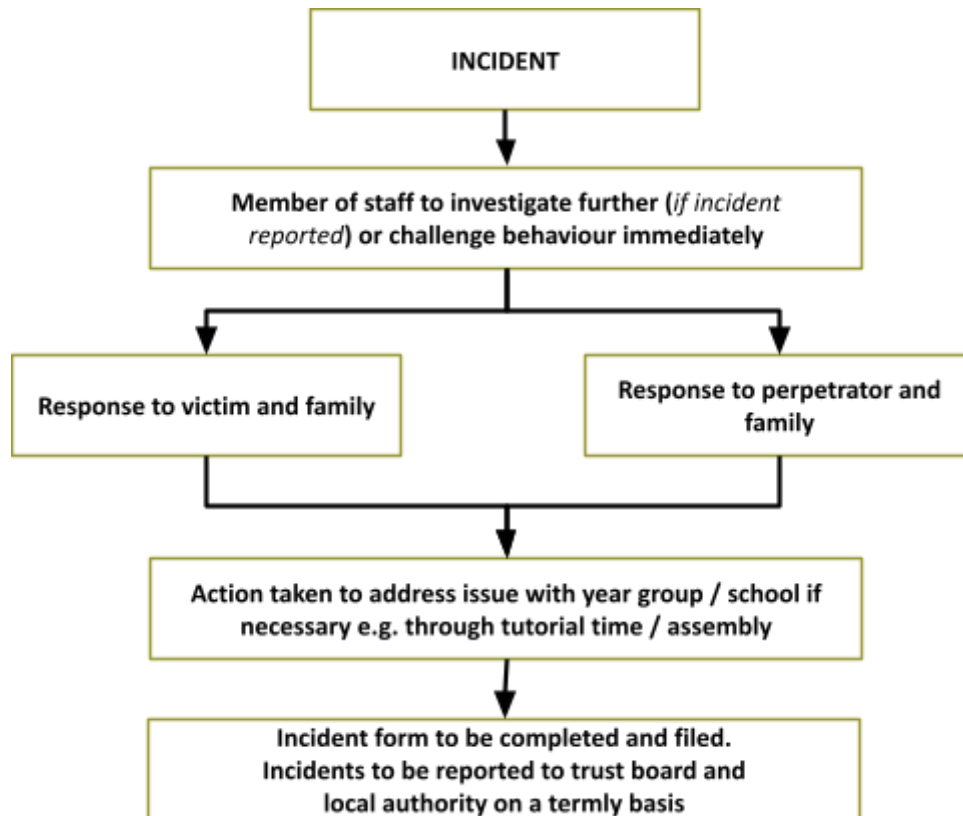
- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;



- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress, accent, etc;
- Refusal to cooperate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

### 8.3 Responding to and reporting incidents

It should be clear to students and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.



## 9 Review of progress and impact

The objectives have been agreed by our trust board.

We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact.

In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality objectives annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on a four year cycle.

We make regular assessments of students' learning and use this information to track student progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of students are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

## 10 Publishing the plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the PSED and to prepare and publish objectives, we will:

- Publish our objectives on the school website,
- Raise awareness of the objectives through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications and
- Make sure hard copies are available.

Publication of information in future years will include evidence of the progress made against the objectives set. The information released can for example include minutes from trust board meetings that demonstrate progress.

## Appendix A - Equality Statement

At RTS we are aware of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and of our Public Sector Equality Duty introduced by the Act, which extends to these protected characteristics:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Age (of employees)

The Equality Act 2010 gives us three general duties:

- to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- All of our trustees and staff are made aware of the need to have due regard to these general duties when making a significant decision (including the development of policies) and to assess whether it may have particular implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- This Equality Statement will be reviewed annually by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and by members of the Trust Board.
- Inclusion is integral to the RTS ethos. We strive to ensure that all students are valued as individuals, who are recognised for their talents, fully included within the school community and provided with every opportunity to achieve 'excellence'. We expect all students to emerge as confident, resilient individuals, who can build positive relationships and demonstrate commitment in everything they do.

The Act gives us two specific duties:

- To publish information which shows we have due regard for equalities, as defined by the Act; and
- To publish at least one equality objective every four years. This should be specific and measurable and further the aims of the equality duty.

### Examples of how we are meeting each of the three elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (2021-2022)

#### Eliminating discrimination

- The school's Code of Conduct for staff and Behaviour for Learning policy for students outline the expected behaviours.
- Our Equality Opportunities statements outlines our commitment to eliminating any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act
- Assemblies led by staff, student and visiting organisations raise students' awareness about differences such as disability, racism and sexual orientation
- Across our curriculum, students explore issues such as civil rights and equality between human beings. In this way, through activities such as our Holocaust Memorial Assemblies 2020-2021, Art Project 2017-2018 and

the Battlefields English Trip 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, visiting speakers during Black History Month 2020-2021 help us to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

- Our whole school guided-reading literature choices encourage students to examine themes such as religious persecution ('Children of Willesden Lane') and marriage in different cultures '(un) arranged Marriage'.

### **Advancing equality of opportunity**

- We use attainment data to assess how students with different characteristics are performing and we identify and address barriers to the participation of particular groups in learning and enrichment activities.
- We ensure the inclusion of non-stereotypical images across the curriculum and in displays around the school and also in the books that our students read.
- We raise students' awareness of gender equality through assemblies and LGBTQ+ History Week. As part of our International Women's Day Science programme, we invited women who demonstrate, through their career and personal achievements, our motto "Excellence Through Endeavour." In 2019, this included speakers such as Leah Lyons, Irish International rugby player and coach, and Rachael Prasher, Managing Director of Haymarket Automotive; and in 2022 included Perdi Williams and Jean Morris, research scientists from the National Physical Laboratory.
- Our Black History Week programme of activities included assemblies and theatre in education. The programme also informed our whole school guided-reading literature choices; 'Noughts and Crosses' and 'To Kill a Mockingbird'.
- Throughout the school year, students with additional needs are assessed and provided with additional time in exams as necessary and specialised apps are purchased to support SEND students, in conjunction with our 1:2:1 device policy for all students.

### **Fostering good relations**

- Our curriculum promotes tolerance and friendship and the understanding of a range of religions and cultures. It promotes and supports students to be accepting of one another's lifestyles and beliefs.
- The curriculum is supported by resources that reflect the diverse communities of modern Britain.
- Speakers in school assemblies have promoted positive images of equality, including the whole school International Women's Week programme which celebrated women's contributions in STEAM and internationally.
- A Safer Internet use programme in 2021-2022 to coincide with Safe Internet Day, included visitors from Parent Zone and YouTube who worked with a cohort to promote more positive use of the internet
- Harlequins FC have led rugby coaching for girls from 2017 onwards and in 2018-19 the RTS Girls' rugby team successfully won the Borough and London regional Rugby League competition and qualified to represent London at a national Rugby League competition held in Leeds. The U15 girls have continued to be successful on the pitch in 2022, coming top of their league, and then winning the Middlesex Plate in February 2022. This qualified them for the London Youth Games - which they also went on to win.
- STEM trips have taken place to raise the profile of STEM careers for girls, for example in 2019-2020, 20 of our Year 8 girls had the privilege of visiting the EDF Energy Trading Centre in Victoria for a STEMettes conference. We had the opportunity to meet some traders, do some live trading and create websites using coding. The girls left feeling inspired and made an excellent impression on all the staff we met. We hope to offer many more opportunities like this in the future.
- Research project with NACCE, The Education Technology Association, and the Department for Education on gender-based participation in Computer Science designed to explore and change girls' perceptions of Computer Science

- The school joined the 'Be Her Lead programme' in 2021-2022, an initiative focusing on empowering women in teaching to build resilience, foster well being and raise the aspirations of girls in their schools via workshops, training network projects and external guests to meet with the girls.
- The 'RTS Her Hub' has been launched under the EDI umbrella and sits alongside the Be Her Lead programme to extend forums and opportunities to support the student voice for girls.
- A Book Club for girls has been started in the English department via direct request from Year 10 girls
- Girl-led forums held last year providing student voice space to discuss and raise awareness about consent.
- Students with SEND are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. In 2018-19, they competed in the SEN School borough sports tournaments.
- Appropriate accessible equipment is available in all classes and there are dedicated resources including dyslexia-friendly fiction texts in the school library.
- The assemblies programme includes topics on SEND: Respect and Tolerance, Equality: 'I'm a bit odd'.

## **Appendix B - Equality Objectives 2021-2024**

### **Equality Objectives 2021-2024 and how we are working towards them**

As part of the School Development and Improvement Plan - will ensure that these two objectives are achieved:

1. Opportunities for disadvantaged girls to develop their talents and interests are delivered to an exceptionally high quality.
2. Absence rates for SEN, PPG and White British students, in particular boys, are in line with or above national averages.

The school's senior leaders will report on how we are working towards these objectives at Trust Board meetings throughout the year.