RIVERSIDE SCHOOL

Equality Policy

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS

RESPONSIBLE PERSON – HEADTEACHER

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Statement of Intent

Riverside School understands that, under The Equality Act 2010, all schools have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality between different groups.
- Foster good relations between different groups.
- Promote mental health and wellbeing.

We have created this Equality Policy because we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity; removing barriers to learning; and to recognising and challenging, where possible, barriers which prevent the full access of children and young people to the rights and services which are guaranteed to them through both national and international law.

We hope that by establishing a clear framework in which to govern the treatment of all pupils at our school, we can remove human prejudice from the decision-making process and overcome any inequality, thereby ensuring that every child and young person that attends our school receives an education that offers them the best chance to be all that they can be.

We are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents, carers and all other stakeholders; irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, or socioeconomic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including but not limited to the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Gender Equality Duty 2006
- The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005
- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including but not limited to the following:

- DfE 'The Equality Act at schools' 2014
- DfE 'Promoting the education of looked after children' 2014
- DfE 'Gender separation in mixed schools' 2018
- DfE 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools' 2018

This policy is related to the following other school policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Children Looked After Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Regulation Support Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEN Policy

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board will:

- Be responsible for ensuring the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils and potential pupils will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:
  - the way the school provides an education to pupils
  - how pupils are provided with access to benefits, facilities and services
  - the exclusion of a pupil or subjecting them to any other sanction
- Ensure all policies are develop and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessment in collaboration with the headteacher.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with all levels of disabilities, and also strive to make communications as inclusive as possible for families.

The headteacher will:

- Implement this policy, ensuring that all staff and pupils apply its guidelines fairly in all situations.
- Ensure training is provided for all members of staff to raise awareness of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Review and amend this policy taking into account new guidance and any reported incidents.
- Ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for pupils and staff who require immediate interventions.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to the possible harassment of pupils, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment/ discrimination as the highest priority.

Teachers will have due regard to all sensitivities of all pupils, and not provide material that may cause offence.

All staff will ensure that pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will

maintain awareness of the school's policy.

All staff will strive to deliver material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.

3. Data Protection

The school will adopt secure controls on sensitive personal data, ensuring all data is accurate, secure and processed fairly and lawfully. The school will gain consent from the pupil and parents/ carers before any sensitive personal data is processed.

The school will respect all pupils' right to privacy and will not disclose a pupil's trans*[1] status or sexual orientation to any other pupils, staff members or third parties.

The school has a Data Protection Policy which contains further information addressing data protection.

4. Protected Characteristics

We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of their:

- Age.
- Disability which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage or civil partnership.
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or beliefs.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

The school will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent or carer with whom the pupil or prospective pupil is associated.

We will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if that belief is mistaken.

We will regularly review our school practices to ensure that they are fair with regards to all protected characteristics per the Equality Act 2010.

[1] Trans* is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum

5. Sex

Riverside School will ensure that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to pupils of other sexes, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

There may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single sex classes, such as relationship and sex education (RSE), but we will ensure that such classes do not give children an unfair disadvantage when compared to children of the other sex in other classes.

Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable opportunities in school, including sporting activities.

6. Race and Ethnicity

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Ensure that pupils, staff and other stakeholders of all races and ethnicities (including those who have English as an additional language) are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will not segregate pupils on the basis of their race or ethnicity, understanding that claims of 'separate but equal' cannot be sustained, and that such action will always be viewed as direct discrimination.

7. Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools requiring them to have a 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.
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's need, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably than other pupils simply because they have a disability, which includes mental health issues, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.
- Ensure that we do not discriminate against pupils with a disability by implementing a rule for all pupils that could have an adverse effect on pupils with disabilities only.
- Make any reasonable adjustments, and provide auxiliary aids where possible to secure full access to the curriculum for all pupils.
- Review accessibility planning needs and ensure any premises alterations take full account of the variety of needs of our pupils.
- Ensure the school has an SEN Policy in place containing further information addressing equal opportunities for pupils with SEN.

8. Religion and Beliefs

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably than other pupils because of their religion or belief, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

9. Sexual Orientation

We will ensure that any gay, lesbian and bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bisexual parents/ carers are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing the school's practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will ensure that we deliver RSE sessions in line with legal and ethical requirements appropriate for our pupils.

10. Gender Reassignment

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they have undergone, or are proposing to undergo, gender reassignment or because they have trans* parents.

11. Pregnancy and Maternity

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they become pregnant, or have recently given birth.

12. Children Looked After

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.

The school has a Children Looked After Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for CLA.

13. The Curriculum

We believe that pupils should be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, however challenging of controversial, and will not make any unjustified changes to our curriculum content on the grounds of any protected characteristics that a pupil may have.

We will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and that it is delivered in such a way as to prevent discrimination and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.

We will ensure equality, diversity and tolerance are taught and promoted. The observation of inclusive teaching strategies is a key aspect of the school leadership team's annual programme of monitoring.

We will respect the rights of parents/ carers to withdraw their child from religious education classes.

14. Promoting Inclusion

We will promote inclusion and equality at school through:

- Ensuring that pupils are called by their preferred names, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
- Ensuring insofar as possible that our governing board and school staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
- providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
- Instilling awareness of prejudice in pupils, where appropriate.
- Providing a variety of curriculum and educational visit opportunities which expose pupils to a range of cultural experiences.
- Ensuring equal access to opportunities such as extra-curricular activities in the curriculum.
- Taking care in the use of language and choice of resources, so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.
- Valuing the cultural experiences and contributions of all pupils, regardless of any protected characteristics that they may have.
- Communicating our policy to parents/ carers to gain their understanding agreement and support for its provisions.
- Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the school council.
- Promoting equality of opportunity within the wider society.

Please see our Equalities Statement for more information.

15. Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

We will ensure that any medical conditions related to a pupil with a protected characteristic is fully supported in line with our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in School Policy.

16. Pupils That Have Left School

Our liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left the school, but will continue to apply with regards to subsequent actions relating to our previous relationship with the pupil, such as the provision of references.

17. The Public Sector Equality Duty

We will meet our duty to publish:

- Annual information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding pupils who have any of the protected characteristics outlined in Section 4.
- Equality objectives (at least every 4 years) outlining how we may further promote equality in our school.
- There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and pupils will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

18. Bullying and Discrimination

Our Anti-Bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

Any incidents of a safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process outlined in our Safeguarding Policy.

It will be up to the headteacher/ DSL to decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services and/ or the Police of any incident.

Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our Complaints Policy.

19. Staff Training

New Staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their HR induction.

Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training, which will:

- Focus on staff specialisms in relation to equality, for example, a focus on

homophobic bullying to address a planned approach towards inclusion.

- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understanding relating to each of the protected characteristics.
- develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and pupils about any issues related to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure the school is aware of and participates in relevant awareness days such as Black History Month, World Disability Day and International Women's Day.

20. 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 board of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths / beliefs and socioeconomic backgrounds. The duty came in to force on 1st September 2007.

21. Tackling Discrimination

Any type of harassment on account of the protected characteristics listed in section 4 in 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 pupil's individual circumstances.

Racist, homophobic and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher/ headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing board on a termly basis.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors, such as socioeconomic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any person'.

Types of discriminatory incident

Types of discriminatory incident that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, age or gender.
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes.
- Racist, 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 discussions.
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups.
- Ridicule of an individual for differences e.g., food, music, religion, dress etc. #
- Refusal to cooperate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

22. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher and governing board, updated where appropriate, and duly communicated to staff members as well as being published on the school website.