

RWST Equalities Policy

Last updated	November 2020
Next update	November 2022
Reviewed by	RWST Trust Board
Responsibility	CEO
Related documents	School Antibullying Policy

1. Aim

Our schools aim to promoting equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination in all its forms. We believe that discrimination is unacceptable. All students should have access to the whole curriculum and be able to take part fully in school life, regardless of race, culture, religion, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation. Opportunities are offered for all to develop to their full potential and achieve success. We similarly respect the equal rights of our staff, families and other members of our school community. We are opposed to and will challenge all forms of discriminatory, racist, disablist, sexist or homophobic language or behaviour.

- All governors and staff should know what the policy is on equalities and follow it when discrimination is reported.
- All young people, parents and carers should know what the policy is and what they should do if discrimination arises.
- All members of the school community will challenge and act on all forms of discrimination that are witnessed or reported.
- We aim to prepare our students for life in a culturally diverse society, free from discrimination and prejudice.

Definitions

Discrimination: behaviours, practices and institutions which disadvantage groups or individuals on the ground of race, culture, religion, disability, gender and sexual orientation.

Harassment: behaviour that ridicules, degrades, demeans, humiliates or intimidates someone or some group on the grounds of their colour, nationality or citizenship, religious beliefs, physical or mental wellbeing, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. It may take the forms of verbal, actions or physical and/or cyber harassment.

Racial Incident: any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

2. Legislation and guidance referred to in the development of this policy

- Every Child Matters 2005
- Race: Race Relations Act, 1976 (amended 2000).
- Disability: the Disability Equality Duty (DED) came into force in December 2006.
- Gender including Trans-Gender: the Gender Equality Duty (GED) came into force in April 2007.
- Sexual orientation: Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
- Religion and belief: Racial and Religious Hatred Act, 2006 bill January 2006
- Age: Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- 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 maintained schools to promote community cohesion

Responsibilities:

Governors and Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school complies with the relevant equality legislation
- Ensuring that the school Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed
- Ensure that the policy is reviewed yearly. There is a named governor with responsibility for equalities

The Head teacher and Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed
- Ensuring that the policy is reviewed yearly
- Ensuring that the race, disability and gender equality plans are readily available and that all members of the school community know about them
- Ensuring that all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support to carry these out effectively
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination to investigate all incidents of bullying, whether it is racist, disablist, homophobic, sexist or related to gender or religious beliefs

All staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with racist, homophobic and other hate-related incidents
- Recognising and challenging bias and stereotyping
- Promoting equal opportunities and good race relations
- Taking up training opportunities and evaluating the impact of this training

The Curriculum:

We aim to make our curriculum full and challenging. We will audit resources to eliminate stereotypical images and ensure a variety of resources to model positive images and show a balanced view of the diverse and multicultural society of the school, the local community and the wider community.

- We aim to meet the needs of all students by differentiating appropriately.
- We monitor the progress of all students by ethnicity and provide specific support for students for whom English is an additional language, with guidance from the central EMTAS service

The purpose of this policy

At RWST schools we are committed to equal opportunities for all. Our Equalities Policy must be clearly communicated to all students, parents, staff, governors, trustees and other individual or agencies that make a contribution to the life of the school. We acknowledge, however, that members of our community may experience discrimination, harassment and prejudice both inside and outside school. It should be the concern of everyone in our community to challenge such attitudes and behaviour, taking a stand against it, committing oneself fully to our policy of challenging prejudice and discrimination.

We expect everyone involved in the school community to demonstrate a commitment to equality through acceptance of a code of practice which:

- a) encourages respect for the individual
- b) encourages individual and collective action to challenge prejudice and the structures which perpetuate it
- c) challenges negative and stereotypical images and in their place promotes positive images
- d) declares as unacceptable any language, action or expressed belief that is prejudiced or which encourages prejudice in others
- e) challenges institutional or organisational structures which have prejudicial or discriminatory effects

It is the responsibility of all members of the RWST community to uphold this policy.

Statement of our Principles of Equality

We recognise, welcome and celebrate the diversity of our school community.

- We are committed to the pursuit of equality of opportunity for all members of our school community and are opposed to all forms of discrimination that may hurt or disadvantage individuals or groups in school.
- We recognise our legal responsibilities sited in Appendix 1.
- We recognise that there is no hierarchy of prejudice and that individuals may be subject to direct or indirect discrimination on a variety of grounds, for example:

- ability / disability
 - age
 - ethnicity
 - gender
 - gender identity
 - HIV-positive / AIDS status
 - home language
 - marital status
 - physical appearance
 - politics
 - religion
 - sexual orientation
 - socio-economic status (class)
 - trade union activity
- We aim that everyone should take part in maintaining a caring community in which there is mutual respect and understanding of others' cultures, beliefs and individuality through courteous and considerate behaviour at all times.

Student attainment

- All examination results are fully analysed and compared with results nationally and in similar schools. Student attainment is also analysed on the basis of ethnicity, free school meals (FSM) and Special Education Needs (SEN).
- If attainment below that expected is identified for a particular student group, this will be highlighted as a priority for action on the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and in school improvement plans.

Participation

- All members of the school community are encouraged to participate in the full life of the school.
- For students this includes participation in sports and exercise, performing arts, access to IT facilities, undertaking positions of responsibility and taking part in trips, visits, the Easter Revision Programme and Summer Schools.
- For staff this includes being given opportunities for career development through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and encouragement to seek opportunities for career progression, including promotion.
- Examples of encouraging participation in action include:
 - informing parents how to apply for financial help and ensuring that the application process is straightforward and confidential

- comparing registers of participants for events against lists of students receiving FSM or on the SEN register to ensure that such students are proportionally represented and are not being excluded
- consulting students and parents, for example through the student council and surveys, to ensure that extra-curricular provision meets their needs

Action against bullying

The Anti-Bullying Policy aims to establish RWST schools as safe and secure places where bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. In addition to this, sexist, racist and homophobic behaviour will be challenged in the curriculum.)

Implementation

- The Trustees and Governors give full support and commitment to the implementation of this policy.
- All procedures for the recruitment, appointment and retention of staff will be in accordance with the principles set out in this policy and in the recruitment policy.
- The professional development of all staff through appraisal and training will be in accordance with the principles set out in this policy.
- The school Suitability and Accessibility Plan will be drawn up in the light of legislation, finance and the needs of students, staff, parents and visitors to the school. The Suitability and Accessibility Action Plan will be part of the School Improvement Plan and, as such, will be reviewed and updated annually.
- All staff, governors, students, parents and partner organisations will be expected and encouraged to support and demonstrate the policy in practice.
- All subject teachers and all departments are responsible for implementing this policy through their Departmental Action Plans, Schemes of Work and Programmes of Study, drawing on the rich diversity of backgrounds and cultures from which members of our school community come.
- Displays and school events, including dance, drama and music productions, should reflect and celebrate the diversity of our school community.
- All incidents of unfair discrimination in school will be taken seriously.
- Incidents involving students will be dealt with through the school's established disciplinary procedures.
- Incidents involving staff will be dealt with through RWST Procedure and Policies.
- This policy will be made available to all members of the school community when appropriate and upon request. It will be published on the school's website and edited versions will be displayed around the school and in classrooms.

Appendix 1

Equalities Duties on schools:

Race:

Since the introduction of the Race Relations Act, 1976 (amended 2000), schools have to have due regard to:

- promote the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

In order to meet the requirements of this duty, we will monitor race equality within our Equalities Policy and assess the impact on students, staff and parents of different racial groups. We will report progress annually to the Local Governing Body and review every three years. We are required to report racist incidents to the Local Authority termly.

Disability:

Since September 2002 it has been unlawful for any school to discriminate against disabled students in regard to admissions, education and associated services and exclusions. We will:

- publish a disability equality scheme and action plan and we will involve disabled people where possible, in producing these
- demonstrate actions and outcomes
- report on progress and review every three years

The Disability Equality Duty (DED) came into force in December 2006.

This was brought in to ensure the elimination of unlawful discrimination on the grounds of disability and to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, including accessibility to buildings and publications.

Reasonable adjustments should be considered to ensure that the members of staff are fully supported in the workplace. These could include adjustments to the physical environment and / or adjustments to the timetable.

Gender including Trans-Gender:

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) came into force in April 2007. It requires all public authorities, including schools, to:

- Promote gender equality of opportunity between men and women
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate harassment

In order to be compliant with this duty, we will:

- Publish a gender equality scheme and action plan and involve stakeholders in producing these
- Demonstrate actions and outcomes
- Report on progress and review every three years

Sexual orientation

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods and services. Admissions and recruitment procedures should be non-discriminatory and ensure equality of opportunity.

Religion and belief

Parliament approved the Racial and Religious Hatred Act, 2006 bill on 31 January 2006 that made it a criminal offence to use threatening words or behaviour with the intention of stirring up hatred against any group of people defined by their religious beliefs or lack of religious beliefs. We will monitor all incidents of harassment alongside our monitoring of racist and bullying incidents.

We will ensure that our curriculum is non-discriminatory and includes equality of opportunity for learning about a variety of religious beliefs.

Age

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 prohibits unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age. Bullying and harassment in any of the above areas should be monitored through anti-bullying reporting and the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy.

Community Cohesion

“The curriculum for all maintained schools should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students at the school and of society, and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life”
(Education Act 2002, Section 78)

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 maintained schools to promote community cohesion. Every school – whatever its intake and wherever it is located – is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of cultures, religions or beliefs, ethnicities and social backgrounds.

By 'Community' we mean:

- the **community around the school** – the local community of people who live and work there
- the **wider community of Britain**
- the **global community** – formed by EU and international links.