



# Equal Opportunities Policy – September 2022

## Statement of intent

We have created this Equal Opportunities Policy because, unfortunately prejudice and inequality still exist in parts of society and can create barriers that 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 prejudice and ensure every child and young person that attends our school receives an education which offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential.

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher

Date:

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\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of governors

Date:

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Review date: September 2022

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## 1. Legal framework

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

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010

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

- DfE 'The Equality Act and schools' 2014
- DfE 'Promoting the education of looked after children' 2014

1.3. This policy is related to the following other school policies:

- **Special Educational Needs Policy**
- **Anti-bullying Policy**
- **Safeguarding Policy**
- **Behavioural Policy**
- **Data Protection Policy**

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The **headteacher** will implement this policy, ensuring that all staff and pupils apply its guidelines fairly in all situations.

2.2. The **headteacher** will conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.

2.3. 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.

2.4. The school will have measures in place to ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for pupils who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.

2.5. The **headteacher** will review and amend this policy, taking into account new legislation and government guidance, and previously reported incidents, in order to improve procedures.

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

### 3. Data protection

3.1. The school will adopt secure controls on sensitive personal data, ensuring all data is accurate, secure and processed fairly and lawfully.

3.2. The school will gain consent from the pupil and parents/carers before any sensitive personal data is processed.

3.3. The school will respect all pupils' right to privacy and will not disclose a pupil's trans\* status or sexual orientation to any other pupils, staff members or third parties.<sup>1</sup>

3.4. The school holds a **Data Protection Policy** containing further information addressing data protection.

### 4. Protected characteristics

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

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment

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

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

### 5. Sex

5.1. We 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Trans\* is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum.

- 5.2. There may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single-sex classes, such as sex and relationship education (SRE), 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.
- 5.3. Where a subject is taught in a single-sex class, pupils undergoing gender reassignment will be allowed to attend the single-sex class that corresponds with the gender role in which they identify.
- 5.4. Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities.

### 6. Race and ethnicity

- 6.1. We will ensure that pupils 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.
- 6.2. 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 actions will always be viewed as direct discrimination.
- 6.3. We may, however, take positive action to address the particular challenges affecting pupils of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

### 7. Disability

- 7.1. We will ensure that pupils with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other pupils simply because they have a disability, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.
- 7.2. We will 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 (for example, making physical fitness a basis for admission), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- 7.3. We will ensure that we do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for him/her to get in and out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- 7.4. We will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of pupils with disabilities, especially where the child also has a special educational need (SEND), but does not have a SEND statement or education, health and care (EHC) plan.

- 7.5. We will meet our duty to undertake accessibility planning for pupils with disabilities, and ensure that any accessibility plan is duly implemented, and reviewed where necessary.
- 7.6. The school holds a **Special Educational Needs Policy** containing further information addressing equal opportunities for pupils with SEND.

### 8. Religion and belief

- 8.1. We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their religion or belief, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.
- 8.2. We will ensure that pupils are provided with the appropriate space in which they can practice their faith, e.g. to perform their daily prayers.

### 9. Sexual orientation

- 9.1. We will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents/carers, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.
- 9.2. We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where gay, lesbian and bi-sexual pupils can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

### 10. Gender reassignment

- 10.1. 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 have trans\* parents/carers, regularly checking our school practices to ensure that they are fair.
- 10.2. We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and support of trans\* pupils by external sources. Any such absences will be recorded accurately and sensitively by the **headteacher** to ensure the privacy of the pupil.
- 10.3. Pupils have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code, outlined in our **School Uniform Policy**.
- 10.4. Pupils who face discomfort using a shared changing space will be provided with a safe and non-stigmatising alternative, such as a separate changing schedule.
- 10.5. We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where trans\* pupils can discuss issues of gender without fear of discrimination.

### 11. Looked after children

- 11.1. Looked after children (LAC), and previously looked after children (PLAC), will be given the highest priority for admissions, as per the requirements of our **Admissions Policy**.
  - 11.2. 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.
  - 11.3. A personal education plan will be created, and implemented, for all LAC and PLAC, to ensure that their education and development needs are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.
  - 11.4. We will ensure that any SEND that a LAC or PLAC has, are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.
12. The curriculum
- 12.1. We believe that pupils should be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, however challenging or controversial, and will not make any unjustified changes to our curriculum content on the grounds of any protected characteristics that a pupil may have.
  - 12.2. We will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way as to prevent discrimination, and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.
  - 12.3. The observation of inclusive teaching strategies is a key aspect of the school leadership team's annual programme of monitoring.
  - 12.4. We will respect the right of parents/carers to withdraw their child from religious education classes.
13. Promoting inclusion
- 13.1. We will promote inclusion and equality at our school through:
    - Ensuring that pupils are called by their preferred names, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
    - Ensuring, as far as possible, that our governing body and school staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
    - Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
    - Instilling in pupils an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.
    - Providing a variety of educational and residential visits which expose pupils to a wide range of cultural experiences.
    - Taking care in the use of language and the 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 characteristic that they may have.
- Communicating our policy to parents/carers to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
- Consulting and involving those affected by inequality in the decisions Rufforth Primary School takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (affected people could include parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community)

## 14. Supporting pupils with medical conditions

- 14.1. 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 Policy**.

## 15. Pupils that have left school

- 15.1. 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 related to our previous relationship with the pupil, such as the provision of references.

## 16. The Public Sector Equality Duty

- 16.1. 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 four years) outlining how we may further equality in our school.

- 16.2. 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.

## 17. Bullying and discrimination

- 17.1. Our **Anti-bullying Policy** will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.
- 17.2. Any incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our **Safeguarding Policy**.
- 17.3. It will be up to the **headteacher** to decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services, and/or the police, of any incident.
- 17.4. Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our **Complaints Policy**.



## 18. Staff training

- 18.1. New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their induction.
- 18.2. Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training and on an annual basis the school leadership will:
  - 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 understandings 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 that the school is aware of, and participates in, relevant awareness days, such as Black History Month, World Disability Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, PRIDE, and International Women's Day.

## 19. Policy review

- 19.1. This policy will be reviewed by the **headteacher** on an annual basis, updated where appropriate, and duly communicated to staff members.
- 19.2. This policy will next be reviewed in **September 2023**.