



RISHWORTH
SCHOOL

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY for PROMOTION of EQUALITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION

Distribution: School Website, Staff Policy Library

Note: This document should read with all relevant Rishworth policies designed for Child Protection, Safeguarding and Human Resources

1. General

Rishworth School is committed to delivering equality of opportunity through the creation of an environment in which all pupils are treated as individuals on the sole basis of their respective merits and abilities. It is our expectation that this commitment is shared by children, staff, parents, governors and all members of the School community.

We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of race, skin colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, social background, trade union membership, disability, political views and religious beliefs.

We aim for all of our students to follow a broad and balanced curriculum and to experience success through development of skills appropriate to their abilities. For this reason, we encourage each individual to fulfil their personal potential, in line with the core values of the School:

Curiosity
Valour
Kindness
Individuality

We aim for all children to be made aware of their responsibilities within the school and the wider community, and to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of others.

We aim to celebrate the rich diversity of different cultures and to encourage greater knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

The School has old buildings and consequently many facilities which are not best suited to certain disabilities. Thus, for example, there are many steps, uneven surfaces and so on which would make conditions difficult for those students, staff or visitors with mobility issues. There is a commitment from the School to ensure that consideration is given to encouragement of inclusivity in all refurbishments and plans for future projects. There is also a five-year accessibility plan which is designed to raise awareness of issues such as these and to plan for reasonable accommodations.

2. We believe that fostering awareness of the importance of equal opportunities contributes towards safeguarding the welfare of children and all members of the School community.

We have due regard for legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and Government sponsored guidelines in this area: we have produced a SEND Action Plan and endeavour to carry out the obligations placed upon us as an independent school under provision of the various Disabilities Acts, even where specific duties are superseded by the Equality Act. We are especially mindful of ways in which these can have different regulatory requirements for boarders, for EYFS children within School and in Out-of-School Care settings.

Full consideration is given to all ways in which inclusion can be incorporated and demonstrated, including, for example, such issues as gender neutral toilet facilities; provision of prayer rooms; provision of foods in accordance with major religious and cultural traditions; time out facilities; celebration of different religious festivals (with recognition, support and encouragement); Pride celebrations; menopause support/training/awareness; facilities for learning needs and so on.

Some of the possible areas in which these aims could be compromised are included in the section below, *Areas of Possible Discrimination: Guidelines for Identification and Responses*

3. Areas of Possible Discrimination: Guidelines for Identification and Responses

3.1. Race

- We regard as racism any attitude held by a person or group of one ethnic origin towards an individual or group of a different ethnic origin that is offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual or group, with such opinions based upon considerations of racial or ethnic differences. We also consider racism to be behaviour, acts or expressions that reflect such attitudes; or any incitement to behaviour of that kind.
- Unacceptable behaviour would be, for example:
 - physical assault against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity
 - verbal abuse, derogatory name-calling, insults, threats and racist jokes
 - racist graffiti
 - issuing / wearing of racist materials e.g. leaflets, magazines, insignia
 - inciting others to behave in a racist manner
 - making racist comments or suggestions in the course of discussions or lessons
 - refusing to co-operate with others because of skin colour or ethnic origin
 - social isolation or segregation on grounds of colour or ethnicity
- We aim to ensure that there is a supportive and positive climate to enable any child who feels that s/he is the victim of racist behaviour to feel confident to inform the form teacher or another responsible adult within the School
- Should racist comments occur in the course of classroom activity, the teacher should immediately make it clear to the individual(s) responsible that such remarks are unacceptable. Where relevant, any offensive material should be removed or confiscated, a record kept of the incident and the perpetrators given a verbal warning. Persistent behaviour of this kind should result in parents being informed and asked to discuss the matter with form teacher and the appropriate member of SLT
- Any allegation of racism against a member of staff must be reported to the Head
- We recognise that the absence of overt racism is no guarantee that the School is free from racial prejudice. Account must always be taken of people's concerns and sensitivities so that no one is either falsely accused or unduly the focus of attention. Due regard must be given to the contribution cultural

diversity can make to the life and well-being of the school community.

3.2. Gender

- We consider sexism to be any attitude held by a person or group of one sex towards an individual or group of the other sex which is offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards that individual or group and based upon considerations of gender. We consider sexual harassment to be behaviour, acts or expressions that reflect such attitudes; or an incitement to behaviour of that kind.
- Members of staff should always conduct themselves in a professional manner and endeavour to avoid actions or situations that might be misconstrued.
- Sexual harassment would be, for example:
 - physical abuse against a person or group because of their gender
 - verbal abuse, intimidation, insults, threats
 - using lewd or suggestive vocabulary, pictures or writing to cause offence or humiliation
 - offensive reference to an individual's gender or sexuality
 - making sexist comments or suggestions in the course of discussion in lessons
 - refusing to co-operate with other pupils because of their gender
 - uninvited physical contact
 - conversation or behaviour which would make any other person feel uncomfortable, carried out without due regard for others in the space
- Sexual harassment of staff by staff
 - the victim (or a colleague) should make the perpetrator aware that the victim finds the behaviour unacceptable
 - if harassment persists the matter should be reported to the Head, who may decide to refer the matter to other authorities.
- Sexual harassment of a child by a member of staff
 - evidence of such harassment may take a number of forms; witnessed by another member of staff; reported by a child to another member of staff; formal complaint from parent or guardian
 - the matter must be reported to the Head or another member of the SLT
 - in such situations the Head, supported by SLT or members thereof, will also involve the child protection officer, in order to decide upon an appropriate response. This is likely to involve suspension of the member of staff alleged to have carried out the harassment.
- Improper conduct by a member of staff
 - Improper conduct is any behaviour including, but not limited to, any infringements of the code of practice laid down contractually or in other agreements – e.g. in job descriptions.
 - Any allegations should be fully investigated; the investigation should be directed by the Head. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy details action to be taken in such circumstances, or if an allegation is made concerning the Head.
- Sexual harassment of staff by a child
 - incidents should be dealt with by the member of staff concerned by a reprimand or a warning and referred to the Head.
- In the case of sexual harassment by members of the public during a school activity away from the premises, the teacher in charge must deal with the incident. It is recognised that a range of responses

could be appropriate, including contact with the police. In all such cases, the safety of the child is of paramount importance.

A member of SLT must be contacted as soon as possible and the event must be recorded and reported to the Head. Where harassment is alleged during an activity not directly supervised by a member of staff (e.g. activity week, education visit etc.), the Head should be informed and the child withdrawn from that activity with immediate effect.

3.3. Sexuality

- We further consider sexism to be any attitude held by a person or group of one sex towards an individual or group of the other sex which is offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards that individual or group and based upon considerations of sexuality - e.g. homophobia. We consider sexual harassment to be behaviour, acts or expressions that reflect such attitudes; or an incitement to behaviour of that kind.

3.4. Disability

- We regard as unacceptable attitudes held by a person or group towards an individual with a physical disability which are offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual, where such opinions are based upon considerations of disability. We regard as unacceptable behaviour acts or expressions which reflect such attitudes; or any incitement to make others adopt such attitudes.
- Examples of unacceptable behaviour would be:
 - physical assault against an individual because of his/her disability
 - verbal abuse, intimidation, insults, threats
 - reference to an individual's disability inside or outside lessons
 - refusing to co-operate with an individual because of his/her disability
 - conversation or behaviour which would make any other person feel uncomfortable, carried out without due regard for others in the space
- Minor incidents will be dealt with by the member of staff issuing a reprimand or a warning; the incident will be recorded.
- Persistent or serious incidents will be reported to the Head and recorded appropriately, using the appropriate facilities of the information management system (e.g. Conduct Manager on iSAMS)
- We aim to educate pupils through PSHCE, in assemblies and by other means to appreciate and celebrate people in differing physical and psychological states. As a School we recognise the importance of maintaining a current action plan to ensure that we are considering possibilities for inclusion of future pupils with various educational, physical and psychological needs.

3.5. Socio-economic

- We recognise that discrimination is possible on socio-economic grounds and that this might be particularly prevalent in a setting where many children are unusually well provided for in material terms. The School is committed to appropriate education and support for all students.

3.6. Pregnant Pupils

- We recognise the Equality Act's strictures outlawing discrimination against pupils who are pregnant or who have recently been pregnant. In the case of School age children, such conditions would trigger

action under child protection protocols. The School is committed to appropriate education and support for all students.

3.7. Transgender Pupils

- We recognise the Equality Act's strictures outlawing discrimination against pupils who are transgender or are considering gender reassignment. The School is committed to appropriate education and support for all students.

4. Mechanisms for dealing with incidents

4.1. Involving children

- Minor incidents will be dealt with by the individual teacher and recorded appropriately using the appropriate facilities of the information management system (e.g. Conduct Manager on iSAMS)
- Persistent minor incidents should be reported to the Deputy Head who will decide necessary further action. The incidents will be appropriately recorded.
- Major incidents or incidents likely to result in further action must be reported directly to the Head, who will follow the procedure stated below.

4.2 Involving staff

- All incidents where it is alleged that staff are at fault must be reported to the Head. The appropriate disciplinary procedures and safeguards will be followed in such cases, as detailed in the Staff Handbook and following safeguarding protocols.

5. Procedures

- All incidents reported to the Head will be recorded appropriately
- The Head and/ or any other nominated persons will interview the individual or group against whom the offence was committed. If the offence occurs away from school the interview should take place when the trip returns to school. Written statements will be taken at this interview.
- The Head and/ or any other nominated persons will then interview the individual(s) who is (are) alleged to have caused the offence. Written records will be maintained and stored appropriately.
- If the allegation is made against a member of staff, then the procedures followed will be those detailed in the relevant sections of the Staff Handbook.
- The Head and/ or any other nominated persons will interview other people as necessary to collect all the evidence.
- Parents/guardians of all children directly involved will be informed as appropriate.
- Using all the evidence the Head will decide on the action and sanction/s appropriate. The action will be using the appropriate facilities of the information management system (e.g. Conduct Manager on iSAMS). Members of staff, as deemed appropriate by the Head, will be informed.
- Victims of harassment/discrimination will be guided towards the appropriate support.

- **It is understood that the Head and/ or any other nominated persons may wish to involve other colleagues or agencies, as appropriate, at any stage of any investigation.**

6. Sanctions

6.1. Children

- The severity of the offence will determine the sanction – refer to *Behaviour Policy*

6.2. Staff

- Sanction will depend on the severity of the offence. Options include but are not limited to, informal warning, formal oral warning, written warning, notice of termination of contract or immediate dismissal.

7. Training

Staff will be encouraged to attend INSET sessions (inside and outside school) to:

- consider, clarify and develop their own perceptions of ethnicity and gender and to consider issues around inclusion, diversity and equality
- identify and explore the possibility of bias and inequality in their own classroom teaching and to exchange ideas about good practice which will enable them to reduce or eliminate these.
- discover, study and learn from good practice elsewhere
- raise awareness of disability discrimination issue

When available resources covering gender and ethnic/multicultural issues will be notified to staff by the appropriate members of the School

The Induction programme for new staff will include familiarisation with the Equal Opportunities policy.

8. Monitoring/Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated at regular intervals and in the light of incidents as and when they occur. There is also an official review date set, which can be found on the front sheet of this document.

9. Staff Recruitment

The School is an Equal Opportunities employer

There should be no discrimination in appointments on grounds of race, neuro-diversity, disability, gender, age or sexual orientation or any other irrelevant consideration.

The School also believes in equality of opportunity for promotion, regardless of race, neuro-diversity, disability, gender, age or sexual orientation or any other irrelevant consideration.

The School is also committed to ensuring that information on pay is examined to monitor that there are no discrepancies in pay for similar jobs over protected characteristics.

10. Policy Statements

10.1. Admissions

Gender, ethnic background or disability play no part in deciding upon admission to the School. There should be no discrimination in admissions on grounds of race, neuro-diversity, disability, gender, age or sexual orientation or any other irrelevant consideration.

Where a pupil with disabilities is wishing to apply for admission, consideration will have to be given to alterations to fabric or routine which can reasonably be made by the School to accommodate the pupil. Admission may be declined in circumstances where reasonable accommodation to the needs of the pupil cannot be made.

10.2. Curriculum

Children have an equal entitlement to the curriculum regardless of gender or ethnicity. It is recognised that there may be some areas in which gender specific instructions must take place – e.g. gender specific instruction in matters of sex education and sexual health; physical activities where the School operates a policy in line with that set down by the governing body of the sport or activity, etc.

10.3. Organisation

Colleagues should be aware of the need to use inclusive language.

Roles, responsibilities and rewards within the school must be allotted regardless of gender, sexual orientation, political opinions (in so far as these are neither advertised in School nor themselves would be considered in contravention of laws governing disability, racial discrimination and so on) or trade union affiliations, age or ethnicity.

10.4. Co-curricular, Enrichment and Extension Activities

Where possible and as appropriate, co-curricular opportunities are available to all children, regardless of gender, ethnicity or any other irrelevant factor. It is accepted that there are occasionally practical constraints (e.g. regulations of outside bodies imposing constraints on participants; regulations imposing a maximum quota of members of one sex in a group; safety constraints laid down by organisations regarding height or physical ability; safety constraints dictated by the size of the facilities; matters of common sense with supervision of children, especially on overnight trips etc.)

10.5. Links with the Community

The School will endeavour to ensure, where possible, that children come into contact with people from backgrounds reflecting social and cultural diversity. Our curriculum is designed to promote the concept that all individuals are of worth and that all can achieve to the very best of their abilities.

11. Monitoring

The School recognises the importance of monitoring measures to demonstrate promotion of the positive attitudes described above and to detect any deviation from the desired actions. Such monitoring may include, but not be limited to:

- Directed learning walks and lesson observations
- Examination of data on admissions, learning outcomes and examination results
- Examination of data in connection with pay and conditions
- Other census data, benchmarked against local and national data
- Questionnaires for all members of the community