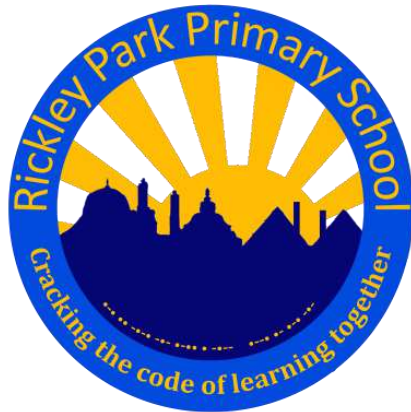


Rickley Park

Cracking the Code of Learning Together



Equality Policy

Date of Policy: January 2023

Date of Review: January 2024

Introduction

This Equality Policy addresses the statutory duties of the Equality Act 2010 (see appendix C). By harmonising all previous statutory duties in relation to race, gender and disability.

This document sets out how pupils with the following protected characteristics will be protected in our school from harassment and discrimination: -

- disability
- gender
- race
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation

The policy extends to cover all aspects of vulnerability, including those associated with socio-economic factors (e.g. pupils from low-income families).

As well as delivering high quality services to our pupils, the school is also committed to being an excellent employer and as such this scheme outlines how we meet our varied duties in terms of recruitment and employment practices. We are also committed to be fully inclusive of all community users, including parents and carers. As such, this scheme therefore also sets out how we will work to overcome any discrimination related to all protected characteristics.

However, it goes far beyond these strands to include the elements required under the new duty to promote community cohesion, therefore every aspect which has the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community such as against those with special educational needs or potential language barriers. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aims of Every Child Matters agenda, and these have informed and shaped this document.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice can tackle discrimination, promote inclusive practice and ensure that those in our community requiring extra support receive it.

Through this Equality Policy, at Rickley Park Primary School we seek to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents, guardians or carers or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief, gender and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, responsibility for children or other dependants, trade union or political activities, social class. The principles of this policy should apply to all members of the extended school community, pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members. Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. We aim to provide equal access to high quality educational opportunities and to ensure that everyone

feels that they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to provide a safe and happy environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

We aim to empower our pupils to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the school's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of this policy.

Success indicators:

As Rickley Park is part of our wider family of schools within the IFTL we will:

- We prepare pupils for life in a diverse society where personal identity is valued and respected.
- We adhere to the Human Rights Act, Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) and Equality Act of (2010) including upholding the characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 - age, disability, gender reassignment., marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Staff and pupils feel respected and staff within all areas of the IFtL Trust and the schools.
- We offer equal opportunities for all pupils and staff.
- We eliminate any form of discrimination within our settings. IFTL is a trust established by educationalists, with education and improving outcomes for children at the heart of all we do.
- All members of the IFtL community are protected from any form of bullying, intimidation, sexual harassment, discrimination and/ or abusive behaviour.

Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)

At Rickley Park we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) by directly eliminating discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring we foster good relationships with all people.

Rickley Park will strictly adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and will not tolerate any discrimination against someone because of any of the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and/ or sexual orientation). Any bullying related to any of the protective characteristics, is a 'non-negotiable' and will not be tolerated with or towards any members of our community - children, staff, governors, trustees, parents/ cares and any visitor.

Rickley Park will also consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and their Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to reasonable force. (KCSIE, 2022)

1) Elimination Discrimination

Rickley Park ensure discrimination is not welcome in any parts of our organization and in the unlikely event this does take place, clear systems are in place to manage this. In our schools, we eliminate discrimination through our work with our pupils throughout the whole school curriculum, especially in relation to SMSC. It underpins the Behaviour policy in school and ensures that discrimination is not tolerated. Within our staff recruitment, we ensure that no applicant is treated differently and within the trust we have our own HR Manager to support staff with this process ensuring the values of equality are adhered to at all times.

2) Advancing Equality of Opportunity

At Rickley Park all pupils are offered the same opportunities and inclusion is at the heart of what we do. This is particularly evident in the Inclusion Policy of the Trust and our Rickley Park Inclusion Policy. We also ensure that for all our staff development opportunities are fair based on merit and ability.

3) Engagement and Fostering Good Relationships

At Rickley Park, we understand the importance of positively working in partnership with families and communities. Rickley Park ensure clear communication with the wider community and stakeholders and strong community links are promoted. Our staff and governors also reflect the diverse society of Milton Keynes and this is actively celebrated.

Equality Objective

1. For our staff, including governance, to value and reflect the diverse society of the whole community, inclusive of the local communities.
2. To raise the attainment and quality of provision for all vulnerable pupils including those who are disadvantaged, SEND and those who are lower attaining, to enhance their life and educational opportunities.
3. To ensure quality and equitable provision and bespoke support for all vulnerable children including those who are potentially at the risk of internal inclusions, fixed term suspensions or permanent exclusion.
4. To safeguard and protect all children, swiftly identifying and effectively supporting them and their families, improving their life chances to be successful and achieve highly.
5. To ensure Human Resources procedures including recruitment, development and employee relations matters reflect the our school vision and values, promoting equal opportunities and non-discriminatory practices.

Duties, Roles & Responsibilities within our school community

Our Governing Body will:

- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- evaluate and review this policy every year

- ensure the school complies with all current equality legislation make sure this policy and its procedures are followed

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, students and visitors and contractors are informed about the Equality policy.
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy.
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy action plan.
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available.
- producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary.
- monitor the policy action plan and report to the Governing Body on an annual basis, with regard to the effectiveness and positive impact of the policy.
- ensure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents/carers know about it via the school website.
- making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out.
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have general responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy.
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy.
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues.
- seek ways through which subject leaders will ensure the curriculum provides community cohesion opportunities and promote equality.

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the ongoing development of the policy action plan.
- be fully aware of the Equality policy and how it relates to them.
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality policy.
- model good practice, dealing with racist incidents and being able to recognise and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- promote equality and good race relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, ethnic or national origins, language, culture, religion or belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or social class.
- Accurately and swiftly respond to and report any equalities incidents.
- Be familiar with the process for reporting racist or religiously motivated incidents.
- Be familiar with the process for reporting homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language incidents.

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the on-going development of the policy action plan

- have access to the policy via the school website (hard copies available on request, including translations)
- be encouraged to actively support the policy
- be informed of any prejudice driven incident which could directly affect their child:

Our pupils will:

- share input with staff on developing policies relating to this area. This may include the anti-bullying policy and developing school/class rules which challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- be involved in the ongoing development of the equalities action plan and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the policy

Equal opportunities in employment

The school and governing body will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

The governing body will consider any possible indirect discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the governing body considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The governing body will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations and will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

The school will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

Dignity at work

The governing body has adopted a separate policy that covers issues of bullying and harassment on any grounds and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by the school

The school will not discriminate unlawfully against customers (Including pupils and parents/carers) using, or seeking to use, goods, facilities or services provided by the school. Employees should report any bullying or harassment, which they experience from the wider community (parents, suppliers, visitors or others), to the Headteacher who will take appropriate action.

The responsibilities of the employee

Employees should be aware that they can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the governing body for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or parents and their families are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

If any member of staff considers that they have experienced unlawful discrimination, they may use the school's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If their complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the *Dignity at Work Policy*. The governing body will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. An employee will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is vexatious. Parents may complain to the Headteacher in the first instance if they have a grievance and may follow the school's complaints policy.

Use of the governing body's adopted grievance procedure does not affect an employee's right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months beginning with the act of discrimination complained of.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored periodically, jointly by the Headteacher and the governing body, to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. A particular focus will be given during the monitoring of the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion) and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and the policy will be reviewed in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with *The General Data Protection Regulation (2018)*.

Policy and planning

Equal opportunities implications, including race equality, will be considered and recorded whenever school policies are developed or reviewed. All policies will be regularly reviewed to provide a comprehensive and consistent process of monitoring and evaluation.

Employment matters

Appointments: in all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria.

Family-friendly policies: the governing body/school is a family-friendly employer and will do its best to respond to the changing needs of all staff by publicising existing schemes designed to support employees in combining work and other responsibilities (parental leave arrangements, job share opportunities, flexitime where appropriate, carers' leave provision).

HIV/AIDS: the governing body/school recognises that people with HIV/AIDS suffer not only from the purely medical effects of the infection but may also experience prejudice and misunderstanding leading to unfair discrimination and victimisation. The governors/school therefore will ensure that people with HIV/AIDS do not experience unfair treatment in relation to employment, as pupils or as other members of the school community. The school and governing body will follow the detailed guidelines regarding staff recruitment and pupil admissions set out by the LA.

Transgender employees and gender reassignment: *The Sex Discrimination Act* now expressly covers discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment. The current LA guidelines will be followed.

Training and development

The success of the Equality Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training. Governors will be encouraged to take up all relevant opportunities provided by the Local Authority's Governors Training Programme and other opportunities that are identified.

The school will endeavour to:

- enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status;

- provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all staff, including part time, based on their assessed training needs;
- promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution which staff, governors, parents/guardians and pupils can make;
- equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions, discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote anti-discriminatory behaviour generally.
- Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation. The school places great importance on the relationship between team leaders and their teams and will ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of the school's performance management system.

Pupils and the curriculum

The school follows local authority pupil admission policies that do not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as criteria for admission. The school's aim is to provide for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin. *The Education Reform Act 1988* stated that 'the school curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse society to which pupils belong and of which they will become adult members.' Pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which avoids stereotypes and provides good role models for all pupils. Equality of opportunity should inform the whole of the curriculum and will be reviewed regularly.

Equal opportunities issues will be taken account of in planning the curriculum. This should be reflected in curriculum planning documentation.

The school has identified several vulnerable groups (using government criteria) and tracks their progress. This enables us to see at an early stage, any lack of progress and to institute intervention programmes and schemes to ensure that all pupils make the maximum progress that is possible. These vulnerable groups are:

- SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)
- FSM (Free School Meals)
- EAL (English as an Additional Language)
- Minority Ethnic
- Summer Born
- Mobile
- Gender

Gender and LGBT+

At Rickley Park we accept our individuality and differences of everyone in the school community. Rickley Park values respect of ourselves and others. The children will learn about different families including LGBT+ families. By doing this all children are included and belong. In addition to this, children gain an understanding of themselves and the world around them. We recognise all genders and sexualities and provide children with a safe environment to be who they are and accept others for who they are and how they identify. As part of the RSHE curriculum the children will learn about gender identity (see year 6 "Identity") and understanding LGBT+. LGBT+ is taught as part of the year 6 curriculum. This is included within relationships education. Rickley Park recognises the importance of children and young people growing up feeling safe and comfortable in who they are as people. Furthermore, children being able to respect others for being who they are. Our values underpin the importance of this part of their education. The Equality Act (2010) recognises and protects the characteristics of sexual orientation, sex/gender and gender reassignment.

All children have the right to education, safety and happiness. If/when a child feels comfortable to speak to an adult in school about their gender identity and/or sexuality, we will support children with this process. A team of supportive adults in school will offer guidance and support for the children to be comfortable within themselves and have an environment that enables this. It is important to recognise that for any person, recognising how they feel with their identity can be a difficult process for them. At Rickley Park our children are supported with this process by listening to the child themselves and having their student voice as a key involvement to supporting them. A person who is acknowledging and/or exploring their gender identity will require accessible toilets that enable them to feel most comfortable within themselves. In each year group of key stages 1 and 2 there are three available individual toilets. These toilets are identified as boys, girls and accessible. This ensures all children feel included, comfortable and happy in their environment. All children are recognised and addressed by their preferred name and pronouns. We encourage our children and staff to be open with their pronouns creating a culture of inclusion for all. Although being LGBT+ is not a mental health condition, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language can put pressure onto a child or young person's mental health. Rickley Park have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination and bullying and create an environment based on the school values.

It is important to finally note that if a child/young person has spoken to a trusted adult at school about their identity or orientation, we will support the child to speak with their parents/carers about their feelings if they feel ready to do so. As per our safeguarding policy and following KCSIE guidance, we support children to be who they are and to feel comfortable and safe to talk to who they choose to talk to about it. During this conversation, the adult will ask the child if they have spoken to their family and, if not, how we can support them to talk to their families. It is important to note that being LGBT+ is not a safeguarding risk. We respect and support children, young people and adults to feel safe and comfortable to be themselves.

Gender Identity

A person's internal sense of their own gender, whether male, female, non-binary or other. How someone identifies can be different to the biological gender/sex they were born with.

Sexual Orientation

A person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person. This includes all sexualities.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

Monitoring is an essential aspect of this section, as it should provide important information by which the school can measure its performance against its aims and objectives. Statistical information can also enable the governors and the Headteacher to detect where potential or actual imbalances exist and to take steps to correct them. See Appendix C.

Monitoring with respect to employment will be undertaken in the following areas by sex, race, disability, grade and subject area:

- composition of the school staff;
- recruitment trends;
- take up of training opportunities;
- promotion patterns;
- use of complaints procedure;
- use of grievance, disciplinary, harassment etc;
- use of sanctions;
- take-up of family-friendly policies, e.g. flexible working arrangements.

Governors will ensure that the Equal Opportunities section is reviewed on a regular basis.

Rickley Park Primary School's policy on disability

Rickley Park is committed to complying with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) by:

- Maximising accessibility to the school's services and activities for staff, students, alumni, visitors, and prospective staff and students with disabilities, and to ensure that no-one is treated less favourably on the grounds of disability.
- Developing a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose a disability, should they wish to do so, and to discuss reasonable adjustments in order to promote equal participation in the school's services and activities. In adherence to the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA1998), such information shall be passed on only with consent and where there is a legitimate reason to do so.

- Reviewing, monitoring and revising, as appropriate, all School systems, procedures, facilities, services and buildings in compliance with the DDA and SENDA in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998(HRA), which includes the right to not be denied access to education.
- Creating, maintaining and disseminating information about services, support and facilities available for staff, students, alumni, visitors and prospective staff and students with disabilities.

Definition of Disability

For the purpose of this policy, the term “disability” has the same meaning as that given in the DDA and SENDA:

‘A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

In recognition of evolving case law, this includes, but is not limited to sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental illness, clinically recognised severe disfigurements, cancer, HIV/Aids, progressive conditions even at an early stage, conditions which are characterised by a few cumulative effects such as pain or fatigue and a history of disability.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995(DDA) uses a broad definition of “disability”. A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on pupils’ everyday lives.

An overview of the legislation supporting disabled pupils

There are three main strands of support for disabled pupils in school. The relationships between these different duties are important. Support is through:

- the SEN framework (Part IV of the Education Act 1996);
- the disability discrimination duties (section 28A – 28C of the DDA); and
- the planning duties (section 28D – 28E of the DDA)

Scope of the policy

It is estimated that 18% of 0–19-year-olds have a long-term illness or disability. (March 2004 figs from Office for National Statistics). About 2.1 million parents are disabled. (Equivalent to 7 pupils per class.) Just over 4% of teachers declare a disability. For pupils we need to consider those who suffer from

- Dyslexia
- Dysphasia
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Hearing loss
- Visual Impairment
- Pupils with SEN (especially at SA+ and statemented)
- Psychological conditions

For staff, parents and pupils the approach to be taken is not to ask, “Are you disabled?” but rather “what extra needs do you have?” This will then give the information needed to make “reasonable adjustments.” These can include making adjustments to:

- the curriculum
- teaching and learning
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- school discipline and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school sports
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- interaction with peers
- assessment and exam arranging
- school clubs and activities
- school trips..... all aspects of life

The reasonable adjustments duty:

- is anticipatory
- is owed to all disabled pupils, staff and visitors
- affects all policies, procedures, and practices
- involves early discussions with parents and pupils and staff
- involves early information from the LA, health and social services.
- is a continuing responsibility

The adjustments can include the content and pattern of certain curriculum areas, the teaching styles used, specialist or adapted resources as well as both human & ICT supports. The degree and level of these will depend on the level of need and the resources available.

It will also need to be balanced between the needs of the individual and those of the others in the school. The focus of all our work is the teaching and learning that is the rationale for the school's existence. This will always be paramount.

Please see our Accessibility Plan for further details regarding accessibility

Appendix A: Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation is illegal. However, for the school community, discrimination is also unacceptable on any of the other grounds referred to in this policy statement. Failure to comply with the policy will be fully and promptly investigated using the appropriate procedures.

There are four ways in which discrimination may occur:

Direct discrimination: This means treating someone less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex etc.

Indirect discrimination: This means applying a requirement or condition which cannot be justified to all groups but which has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group because the proportion of that group which can comply is smaller than the proportion of the group(s) which can comply with it.

Victimisation: This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other persons would be treated because that person has done a 'protected act' under the Equal Pay Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act or Employment Equality Regulations, for example, by bringing forward proceedings or giving evidence or information.

Harassment: Harassment can take many forms, from the most obvious abusive remarks to extremely subtle use of power. As with unfair or unlawful discrimination, harassment can be intentional or unintentional. However, the key issue is not simply the intention of the offender but the impact of the behaviour on the person receiving it.

Harassment may involve any of the following:

- physical contact or violence;
- offensive humiliating and intimidating remarks or actions;
- exclusion from participation in job-related or classroom-related discussions, training or social or other events;
- unfair work allocation;
- unjust or excessive or humiliating criticism of performance;
- offensive signs or notices;
- graffiti;
- repeated demands or requests for sexual favours.

These are merely examples and not an exhaustive list. Whatever the form, the school will provide support for any member of the school community, pupil or staff member who feels threatened or isolated because of such actions.

Appendix B: HIV/AIDS guidelines

The governors and school will:

- ensure that job applicants who are deemed to be medically fit to perform the job for which they have applied, are not denied an offer of work solely because they are HIV positive. In arriving at the decision, the school's normal recruitment criteria will be observed including the normal medical procedures;
- ensure, where possible, that resources are available to support employees or pupils with AIDS or other major health problems associated with HIV infection. The school's normal rules and procedures regarding ill health will apply in such cases. Equally the school will make appropriate arrangements for the provision of counselling (i.e. by referral to external agencies);
- consider applications for unpaid leave for those with responsibility for caring for people with AIDS-related conditions in accordance with carers' leave arrangements;
- treat any breaches of confidentiality as a serious matter to be dealt with in accordance with the normal disciplinary (or other appropriate) procedure;
- provide appropriate training in relation to AIDS in order to combat fears and prejudice and to enable the school community as a whole to function without risk to health.

Appendix C

For further information on the Equality Act 2010, please refer to:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act/>