



REIGATE ST MARY'S
PREPARATORY AND CHOIR SCHOOL

Equality Policy

Whole School including
Early Years Foundation Stage

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The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1 October 2010 replacing all existing equality legislation, such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. The effect of the law is the same as the previous legislation, in that “schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation”.

AIMS

This policy aims to promote inclusion, avoid discrimination, and promote equality for pupils and staff. It should be read in conjunction with our Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and our Accessibility Policy and Plan and the Early Years Inclusion Policy.

INTRODUCTION

Reigate St Mary's is opposed to any form of discrimination. It commits itself to the redress of any inequalities by taking positive action wherever appropriate.

This policy aims to promote inclusion, avoid discrimination and promote equality for pupils and staff. At Reigate St Mary's we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents, and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief, or socio-economic background.

We monitor the attainment of children by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. Through Values Education, Form Focus, PSHE and whole school assemblies, we will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all.

CHARTER OF VALUES

- We treat other people as we would like to be treated
- We forgive
- We are always honest, truthful and fair
- We listen to each other
- We are kind and helpful
- We do our best to be our best self

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Reigate St Mary's is a mixed ability Independent school in Reigate. The school is housed on a single site, catering for boys and girls from 2 – 11 years. Reigate St Mary's is a fee paying school, as a result most pupils come from more privileged backgrounds. There are currently no pupils from Traveller, refugee or asylum seeker families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and of those with Education, Health and Care Plans, is below average.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY?

Equality: making sure that all social groups benefit equally from our activities, irrespective of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief, or socio-economic background.

Diversity: recognises that we can only achieve equality by taking into account the differing needs of a range of communities.

Equality is impossible to achieve **without** recognising **diversity**.

WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?

Discrimination can be direct, indirect, intentional, unintentional, or institutional. Discrimination is unlawful. Individuals have a responsibility, in law, not to discriminate.

Direct discrimination is where an individual or group receives less favourable treatment for an unjustifiable reason because, for example, of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

Indirect discrimination is applying unjustifiable requirements and conditions that have a disproportionate impact on an individual or particular group due to their race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief, or socio-economic background.

Institutional discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their background or experience. It can be seen in our attitudes, behaviours' and procedures that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage people.

THE SCHOOL'S APPROACH TO PROMOTING EQUALITY

The overall objective of our Equality Policy is to provide a framework for staff and pupils to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, promote equality of opportunity, and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities. Through the Equality Policy, 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, where the person lives. The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community, pupils, staff, governors, and parents.

Teaching, learning and curriculum

Reigate St Mary's aims to teach pupils to understand others, to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights, to take responsibility to uphold and defend equality and diversity, and to develop relevant skills of participation and responsible action. We ensure children have the opportunity to explore and address issues of equality and diversity through our Charter of Values, Values Education, P4C, PSHE, Combined Humanities and assemblies.

Equality and excellence

We ensure equal opportunities for everyone to achieve success at the highest level possible, by removing barriers to access, participation in learning and wider activities, as well as eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.

Engagement and ethos

We aim to provide a means for children, young people, and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, countrywide, and internationally.

MEETING OUR DUTIES

Under the statutory duties all schools have responsibilities to promote race, disability, and gender equality:

Race Equality

Reigate St Mary's actively promotes good understanding of cultures and beliefs other than those the children experience in their own homes and will not tolerate any behaviour, speech, or curriculum content that is in any way, racist or presents a racist attitude. The school understands racism as any kind of race hatred, rivalry or feeling that suggests an inherent superiority of one racial group over another; or any discriminatory treatment based on such a belief. The general duty to promote race equality means that we must have due regard to: Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, Promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different racial groups. The curriculum will reflect the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom and include direct teaching of a wide range of cultural practices and beliefs. The cultural and language learning needs of all children will be addressed within the classroom so that every child has equal opportunity to access the National Curriculum and attain their full potential. All children will be assessed against National Curriculum standards and their attainment analysed to ensure no cultural bias is evident in outcomes.

Admissions

No child will be refused admission to Reigate St Mary's on the grounds of race, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief, or socio-economic background.

Staffing and Governing Body

No person will be refused interview, employment or a position on the governing body on the grounds of race, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief, or socio-economic background. All members of staff will have equality of opportunity for professional development.

Partnerships with parents and communities

Parents from various cultural and religious backgrounds are invited in to school as speakers or to demonstrate and celebrate different cultural practices.

Disability equality

The definition of disability under the law is a wide one. A disabled person is someone who has a "Physical or mental impairment that has an adverse, substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities." This includes people with a Hearing or Visual Impairment, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, mental health issues and incontinence. People with ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Downs Syndrome and Hydrocephalus are included. Medical conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis, severe Asthma, Diabetes, Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy, Sickle Cell Anaemia and HIV are deemed disabilities. Facial disfigurement, severe Dyslexia, gross obesity and diagnosed eating disorders are all included. If a person has been disabled in the past (for example, cancer recoverees and people with a history of mental illness) he/she remains covered by the legislation for the rest of their life.

The general duty to promote disability equality is owed to all disabled people which means that we must:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Eliminate disability related harassment.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- Take steps to take account of disabled peoples' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

Accessibility

There is specific disability legislation in relation to disabled pupils and accessibility which means we must plan strategically over time to:

- Increase access to the curriculum.
- Make improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access.
- Make written information accessible to pupils in a range of different ways.

We must ensure that disabled pupils do not receive less favourable treatment and to do this the school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments. (See Accessibility Policy and Plan)

Gender equality

At Reigate St Mary's we take positive steps to address gender inequality, but we understand that barriers exist that may prevent pupils and staff from achieving and making the most of the opportunities we make available. To promote gender equality in schools, it is vital that the differences between boys' and girls', male and female experiences, attitudes, and achievements are understood so that our policies and practices contribute to breaking down these barriers. The general duty to promote gender equality means that we must:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys.

Transgender

Transgendered people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty. The term transgendered refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender. The school will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within its school community.

Age, sexual orientation, religion, and belief

We must ensure that we do not discriminate on these grounds. At Reigate St Mary's we promote equality by:

- Promoting an understanding and interest in different environments, faiths, societies, systems, and cultures across the world.
- Giving all pupils and staff the opportunity to fulfil their potential, whatever their colour, culture, origin, belief, culture, gender or sexual orientation.
- Providing opportunities to explore and share the ideas, opinions and interests derived from their own particular cultural experience, for example, participation in religious festivals and celebrations.
- Providing the opportunity to challenge discrimination and to discuss and consider behaviour and attitudes towards each other.
- Recognising, respecting, and acknowledging the languages and dialects of all members of the school community.
- Recognising the importance of the religions, cultures, and beliefs of all in our school community.
- Maintaining high standards and expectations of behaviour regardless of sex or culture development.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body will ensure that the school complies with race, religion, disability, equality and gender relations legislation and that relevant procedures and strategies are implemented.

The Headmaster will implement this policy and related procedures and strategies, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support. He will take appropriate action in all cases of race, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief, or socio-economic discrimination. He will also have responsibility for dealing with any reported incidents of discrimination or harassment.

All staff will be proactive in promoting equality regardless of ability or disability, race and gender and will deal with any incidents that occur. They will keep up to date with equality legislation and research through training and development. They will know how to identify and challenge any racial bias or stereotyping and will promote racial equality, good race relations and keep up to date with race equality legislation and research through training and development.

All pupils are responsible for reporting incidents of discrimination of any kind to an adult and discussing sensibly and sensitively an equality and diversity issues that may be raised in class or through the School Council.

BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headmaster and Governing Body. Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be advised to follow the Reigate St Mary's Complaints Policy.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years in the light of experiences and best practice. This mechanism recognises that changes to legislation might require a review of the policy before the three years stipulated and will be in consultation with staff, Governors, parents and pupils.