

JOHN T. RICE INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

EQUALITY POLICY



Aim high and shine

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). For schools, this means that it is unlawful to discriminate against students or treat them less favourably because of their gender; race; disability; religion or belief; gender reassignment; sexual orientation; pregnancy or maternity.

Marriage and civil partnerships and age are also 'protected characteristics', but do not apply to our provision for students.

Under the Act, the school is expected to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This requires us to:

- ☑ Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ☑ Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- ☑ Foster good relations between different groups

As a public organisation, we are required to publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty. This is done via our Equality Policy and publish Equality Objectives, which are specific and measurable.

Our Equalities Policy is in line with national guidance and contains information about how the school complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We also give guidance to staff and outside visitors on our approach to promoting equality.

Our Equality Objectives reflect the school's priorities and draw upon available data and other evidence. Careful analysis of this is undertaken in order to ensure that we are working to achieve improved outcomes for different groups.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited below, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual identity.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised

- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual identity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds

- both women and men, and girls and boys.
- Gay people as well as straight.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, girls and boys
- gay people as well as straight.

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender.

Principle 9: Objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement in which we have been involved (principle 7), in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender.

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

John T. Rice Infant and Nursery School is situated on the Newlands estate which is part of the Forest Town area, on the eastern side of the Mansfield district. It is only a short distance from the Mansfield - Newark boundary.

The school serves an ex-mining community with approximately 55% of our children residing in Forest Town East (our catchment area), with the rest coming from out of catchment. The majority of these children reside in Clipstone. In comparison with national figures, both of these areas have a low level of adults in higher education and a low level of high social class households. The school has approximately 30% of children on Free School Meals and over 95% of the children are from White British backgrounds.

MISSION STATEMENT

At John T. Rice Infant & Nursery School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment, which champions respect for all. At John T. Rice, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

THE CURRICULUM/TEACHING AND LEARNING

Equality and diversity has been embedded as far as is possible in all areas of the curriculum and that pupils will be given opportunities to explore prejudice and discrimination, and to positively explore difference in relation to race/ethnicity, religion/belief, gender, disability etc. Subject specific policies also make reference to the resource materials available to reflect both the diversity of the school, local community and wider society as a whole.

Attainment and achievement data will be collected through the use of termly overviews as well as ASP and the Performance Portals for KS1 and Foundation Stage which will be used to inform planning and provision to support individuals and groups of pupils.

ADDRESSING PREJUDICE AND PREJUDICE-RELATED BULLYING

The school has a legal obligation to eliminate discrimination and harassment and victimisation, as well as the duty to foster positive relations between groups and individuals. We adhere to the following definition of a hate incident:-

“A hate incident is any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by the offender’s prejudice against people because of their age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or other reason.”

At John T. Rice, we take our obligations seriously and our procedures for dealing with incidents are outlined in our anti-bullying and behaviour policy. Racial incidents are reported to the local authority and Governing Body on a termly basis. They are then dealt with to ensure all parties have had an equal say and the racial incident has been addressed to ensure it does not happen again.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of governors

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child’s socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.

- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

The role of the headteacher

- Implement the school's Equality Plan with the support of the governing body.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- Ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- Promote the principle of equal opportunity, when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- Treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching

- All staff will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Plan.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the headteacher.
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

The role of parents/ carers

- Take an active part and interest in their child's learning.
- Promote equality and diversity at home.
- Challenge incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia and draw these to the attention of the head teacher.

This policy has been developed, agreed and shared with staff and governors. Parents/ carers are made aware of the policy and are able to see it if requested.

Any actions for development will be agreed with staff and governors. Details of how we are addressing issues relating to equality will be shared with parents in the newsletter.

Information relating to pupil characteristics such as the profile of pupils on roll; attainment data; attendance data; exclusions data; hate incidents etc. will be collated and form part of the Headteachers report to governors.

BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Any concerns or complaints relating to equality will be dealt with in accordance to the school's Complaints Policy which can be accessed from the school office and/or Headteacher.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring of equality data will be done on a termly basis in the form of the Headteachers report to governors as well as in termly tracking and assessment data.

Areas for development relating to equality will be included into the School Improvement Plan and actions will be taken to address these. The School Improvement Plan is then reviewed termly to see what progress has been made against these targets.

This policy was agreed by all staff and the Governing Body in Autumn 2024. It will be reviewed in Autumn 2025.