

Rugby High School Equalities Duty

Rugby High School is a school community which has care and respect for others at the heart of its ethos. This ethos informs all decisions, actions and interactions within the school community. The impact of this ethos is to create a school in which individuals are valued and appreciated for what they can contribute, in which their individuality is celebrated and in which tolerance thrives.

The governors of Rugby High School acknowledge the duties that they have under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantages
2. Take steps to meet different needs
3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low

for students and staff in relation to protected characteristics: race, disability, sex, age (in relation to staff only), religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. Governors acknowledge their duty to make reasonable adjustments for employees and students in relation to these protected characteristics. This document captures some of the ways in which they do this.

The governing body acknowledges its responsibility under the Act when making decisions and developing policies, to ensure that it:

- eliminates discrimination (direct and indirect), harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advances equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- fosters good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Governors will consider equality implications before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions; not as an afterthought, and will keep equality implications under review. The analysis necessary to comply with the public sector equality duty will be carried out rigorously and with an open mind and reported to the relevant committee of the governing body on a regular basis (at least yearly).

The governing body will publish information to demonstrate how it is complying with the equality duty annually. It will also publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives. In addition it will prepare a three year equality access plan. It will review progress towards meeting the plan's objectives at least annually.

Race

The racial diversity of the school reflects the multi-cultural community in which it is located. Students are encouraged to celebrate their diversity and to see this as a strength. Diversity is addressed in lessons across the curriculum as well as in PHSE and in special off timetable events (both within the school and within Warwickshire). The school monitors staff recruitment to ensure that no one is discriminated against on the basis of race.

Disability

The school welcomes applications from disabled students and potential members of staff. It encourages a culture which respects individuals' privacy but which also encourages transparency so that staff and students are able to articulate their needs and receive effective support. The school will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled students can access the curriculum on the same basis as their peers and will work with external agencies and providers where necessary to accomplish this. In planning trips and visits, staff are asked to consider the needs of disabled students and to make every effort to ensure their inclusion. In the event of this not being possible, an alternative arrangement will be made. The only exception to this are trips and visits e.g. fieldwork required to fulfil public examination requirements.

The school will make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled staff. These may include the purchase of specialist equipment, adjustments to working arrangements e.g. the facility to work from home on occasions, or to take rest breaks, or to have an adjusted timetable or to work reduced hours (with an appropriate adjustment to pay) or to be based in a specific location. In addition, it will be careful to distinguish between absence that is related to disability and other medical or sickness absence to ensure that disabled staff are not unfairly discriminated against. The school will not ask health related questions at interview or in references. It may ask health related questions following appointment in order to make reasonable adjustments. In making these adjustments, the school will be guided by its occupational health and human resources advisers.

Sex

Rugby High School is committed to challenging all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex, including sexual stereotyping with regard to careers and roles. All paid and volunteering roles within the school are open to men, women and those who are transgender. As a single sex school, Rugby High School does not admit male students. A partnership with Lawrence Sheriff School in KS5 allows students from both schools to access lessons at the partner school. Normally, a student may study one subject at the partner school. The school is committed to working with Lawrence Sheriff School to ensure that visiting students are fully included and are not discriminated against or harassed in any way.

Age

The school is committed to appointing the best person for any role advertised irrespective of age. It has no set retirement age.

Students are exempt from the provisions of equality legislation with regard to age. The vast majority of students are in classes with peers of the same age. In exceptional circumstances, the governors may agree an exception to this.

Religion or Belief

The school respects the rights of students and staff with regard to religion (including the freedom not to believe). The school has no dedicated facilities for religious worship but it is willing to make space available for any student of any faith who wishes for a quiet room in which to pray or reflect at lunch time. Students should approach a member of the Senior Leadership Team if they want to request this facility. As a secular school, students will be given opportunities to reflect on moral and religious issues and to share their experiences of religious festivals, not just in assembly but in lessons across the curriculum. Students who wish to do so may form groups for the purpose of discussing their beliefs e.g. Christian Union. Any group must be open to all students (whether or not they share that faith or lack of faith) and must not be used as a vehicle to attack any other faith (or lack of faith).

The school uniform policy allows students, who wish to do so to wear trousers. In addition, students and staff who wish to wear a hijab or, in the case of male members of staff, a turban may do so provided that they remove it for PE if requested to do so by staff. Similarly, students and staff who wish to wear a crucifix, Star of David or other religious symbol may do so provided that it is removed for PE.

Sexual Orientation

The school respects individuals' rights with regard to sexual orientation, including their right to privacy. It condemns any kind of bullying, harassment or discrimination, including that linked to an individual's sexual orientation.

Pregnant Staff

Staff who are pregnant will be risk assessed to ensure that potential risks to their health or their unborn child's health are effectively managed. Staff are entitled to paid leave of absence to attend antenatal appointments. Colleagues taking maternity leave are entitled to return to the same post at the same grade as when they originally took the leave. In the event of a reorganisation during their period of maternity leave they will be included in the consultation process and will not be treated any less favourably than they would have been had they not been on leave. Wherever possible, the wishes of members of staff taking maternity leave who want to return earlier than their agreed original date of return will be respected. Members of staff returning from maternity leave are entitled to request a change from full-time to part-time working. Where it is possible to comply with this request without compromising organisational effectiveness and efficiency, it will be looked at sympathetically. The school will consider requests for a job share sympathetically.

Pregnant Students

Every effort will be made to ensure that students who are pregnant or who have been recently delivered have the same access to the school curriculum as other students. Individual care and support plans will be agreed between the student, her parents, and the school informed by advice by external organisations and individuals e.g. the school nurse, the student's midwife/GP, Warwickshire Ill Health Team.

Transgender Students and Students Undergoing Gender Reassignment

The school acknowledges that gender is a completely separate issue from sexual orientation. Transgender students and students undergoing gender reassignment have protected status under the Equality Act 2010. The school will make every effort to support transgender students and students undergoing gender reassignment, including authorising absences so that students can attend for treatment or receive support from external agencies. Although Rugby High School is a girls' school, the school will keep on its roll any student who undergoes gender reassignment and will ensure, to the best of its ability, that his needs are met.

Parents

Rugby High School recognises the important role that parents play in students' education. It is important that parents and other family members with disabilities have their needs accommodated so that they can attend and participate in school events. The school does not keep any data with regard to this but it makes reasonable adjustments on request. To request support e.g. to book wheelchair space to watch a play or concert or to request a special arrangement for a parents' evening e.g. a signer, or to receive information in a different format, please contact the headteacher's PA.

Monitoring

The school monitors the attainment and progress of students. It considers the overall statistics and also looks at the attainment and progress of specific groups. Where the analysis suggests that groups of students or individual students are underachieving a programme of intervention and support is put in place.

All students are encouraged to participate in a broad range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Historically, equalities monitoring in relation to extra-curricular activities has not been formalised. This is something that the school will seek to address in 2015-2016.

At Rugby High School the vast majority of students engage effectively with their learning. This is evident from student and parent surveys, student voice interviews, lesson observations and learning walks. The school will continue to monitor engagement in a variety of different ways and ensure that any equalities issues are identified and promptly addressed.

Student and parent surveys and the school's logs reveal that incidents of bullying are extremely rare. The school seeks to resolve all bullying swiftly and effectively. It will continue to monitor equalities issues in relation to bullying and to intervene appropriately to prevent the emergence of patterns including repetition.

The school believes that students should be encouraged to consider a broad range of careers. It rejects gender stereotyping with regard to careers and progression and conducts a number of initiatives e.g. the Engineering in Education Scheme designed to address this. It purchases independent external careers advice. It will monitor transition post 16 and post 18, its internal provision and the advice services that it purchases to ensure that students receive impartial advice and that they are encouraged to consider a wide range of options.

Rugby High School has a very low level of exclusion. This means that it isn't possible to produce statistically reliable data. In monitoring exclusions, the governing body will therefore consider whether there are potential equalities issues in relation to each case.

Reporting

The governing body will receive an Equality Report once a year which summarises monitoring, findings and proposed actions.

This document was informed by:

The Equality Act 2010 and schools
Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities (DfE May 2014)
Public Sector Equality Guidance for Schools in England (The Equality and Human Rights Commission November 2012)