



Robert May's School

**Equalities Policy
(including Equalities Statement, Information
and Objectives)**

March 2017

Last Updated March 2017

Robert May's School Equalities Policy (including Equalities Information and Objectives)

Introduction

Robert May's School respects and embraces the diversity within our community. We promote positive action to ensure that all students and staff are enabled to make the most of their abilities and qualities

We are committed to a welcoming environment which ensures that all students and adults are treated with dignity and respect. We seek to provide a positive learning and working environment, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. And as such, we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 as both a provider of education and as an employer.

For us 'equality' is about opportunity, access, participation and contribution on a fair and equal footing and providing a framework and plan for this to happen. This is regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, cultural background, disabilities, gender, sexual orientation, social economic factors or age.

The term 'diversity' acknowledges there are differences between people and the school values and respects the variety of backgrounds, perspectives, values and beliefs of each individual.

This document outlines the principles which will guide our approach to working with our school community and enabling an open culture.

For staff and prospective staff, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Employment Equality Policy which is based on the Hampshire County Council Education Personnel Services Manual of Personnel Practice.

National and Legal Context

This policy takes into consideration our duties under the following Acts / former Acts:

- Every Child Matters Green Paper 2003
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 – our duty to promote community cohesion
- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (PESD)

We also appreciate that these duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Not all of the sets of duties listed above remain statutory; however they all strongly reflect and support our School's philosophy of inclusion and valuing each individual student equally.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies and guidelines that set out how the school will aim to remove barriers to learning for students either as individuals or groups / cohorts eg Anti-bullying Policy, Assessment Policy, Accessibility Policy.

Background information

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This applies to all public sector bodies including schools and academies.

The Act extends the equality duties to all the following protected groups:

- Race
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment (It is unlawful to discriminate against a trans student)
- Age
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity (It is unlawful to discriminate against a student who is pregnant or who has had a baby)

The three main elements of the duty mean schools must have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations across all protected groups

To fulfil our specific duties under the law we will:

- a) Publish information on our website to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- b) Prepare and publish equality objectives.

The Equality Duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of school functions and the analysis necessary to comply with the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind.

The purpose of our Equality and Diversity information is to ensure that, in everything we do, the school promotes diversity and equality of opportunity, eliminates discrimination, and brings about positive change for those experiencing disadvantage. It is attached to provide a framework for good practice in developing equality of opportunity and access both within the school, its school workforce and the wider community.

Context

Robert May's School is a 11-16 fully comprehensive, community secondary school serving a wide catchment area in the North East of Hampshire. It is located in the district of Hart. The School's catchment area serves the rural area around the villages of Odiham, Hook and Hartley Wintney.

Students come from a wide range of backgrounds, including the farming community as well as children of commuters and other professional parents. The catchment area also includes RAF Odiham, a Children's Home and a permanent Travellers' site. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is low in comparison to national statistics but within this apparent relative affluence there are still wide variations in home circumstances.

The school serves the local RAF Odiham and so there are a number of students with links to the Forces Community. As a comprehensive school, Robert May's intake includes students with a broad range of mild to moderate Special Educational Needs including a small minority of students with physical disabilities. There is also a local authority Resourced Provision for 13 students with a mild to moderate autistic spectrum disorder. These students are almost fully integrated into mainstream lessons.

We collect specific equality information about students and staff which can be referenced in Appendix A to this policy. Broadly-speaking, the school is sited in an area of generally above average affluence. The vast majority of staff and students come from 'White British' or 'White other' backgrounds and the major religious background is Christian. There are a small number of Traveller students and students for whom English is an Additional Language.

School's Equalities Aims

The general equalities aims of the Robert May's School are to:

- Promote good practice in equality of opportunity in the organisation's activities;
- Ensure that the organisation's commitment to equality is widely known, understood and communicated.

The specific equalities aims are to work with our students, employees, students, parents, contractors and key stakeholders:

- as a **school**, to provide an outstanding education which meets the needs of all our students and enables all to achieve success;
- as an **employer**, to have a workforce which is representative of the community we serve; to value and use the diversity of its staff; to strive to be a place where people want to work; to be a leader in good practice in this area; to ensure fair treatment and equality of opportunity for all and to recruit the best person for the job based on careful analysis of job requirements and performance.
- as a **community leader**, to champion equality of opportunity, challenge all forms of discrimination and contribute to making the local community a place where people live together safely in peace, respect and friendship;
- as a **major procurer and commissioner of services**, to use our spending power wherever possible to influence other organisations in promoting equality of opportunity.

Principles

To fulfil our legal obligations, we are guided by a number of principles.

1. **All students, families, staff and other members of the school community are of equal value**

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

- Whether or not they have a disability
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- Whatever their gender and gender identity
- Whatever their religious and non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their marital status
- Whether they are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- Whatever their age
- Whether or not they have a connection with the forces community
- Whether or not they have refugee / asylum status
- Whether or not English is their first language
- Whatever their socio-economic background

2. **We recognise and respect difference**

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of diversity and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents/carers or students may face in relation to their protected characteristics:

- Disability – we note that reasonable adjustments may need to be made
- Gender (including trans) – we recognise that different genders have different needs
- Religion and belief – we note that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we note that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds
- Age – we value the diversity in age of students, staff, parents and carers
- Sexual orientation – we respect that individuals have the right to determine their own sexuality and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result
- Marital status – we recognise that our staff, parents and carers may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff, students, parents and carers should not experience any unfair disadvantage as a result of pregnancy or having recently given birth.

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 and interaction between groups and communities different from each other
- an absence of harassment, victimisation and discrimination based on these differences

4. We observe good equalities practice in relation to staff

We ensure that our policies and practices for all staff and potential staff throughout the employment lifecycle, i.e. from recruitment through to the cessation of employment and beyond, are applied fairly and consistently across all groups with full respect for legal rights, taking into account aspects applicable to particular groups (e.g. duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff).

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

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities avoid or minimise any possible negative impacts and we aim to reduce inequalities that exist between groups and communities different from each other.

6. We consult and involve to ensure views are heard

In our development of policies, we engage with groups and individuals, including students who are affected by a policy or activity to ensure that their views are taken into account. For policies and activities affecting students, we will take account of views expressed at school council; for parents, through parent governor representation and for staff, through staff governor representation. Where necessary, we will consult more widely with specific groups.

7. We aim to foster greater community cohesion

We intend that our policies, activities and curriculum offer foster greater social cohesion and provide for an equal opportunity to participate in public life irrespective of the protected characteristics of individuals and groups.

8. We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish information annually to show our compliance with the public sector equality duty, set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our current equality information relating to students and staff can be found in Appendix A to this policy statement.

9. We set ourselves specific and measurable equality objectives

We develop and publish specific and measurable objectives every four years based on the evidence that we have gathered (principle 8) and the engagement we have been involved in (principle 7).

The objectives can be found in Appendix B to this policy statement and take into account both national, county and school level priorities.

We will set ourselves new objectives every four years, but keep them under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

Application of the principles within this policy statement:

The principles outlined in the policy statement will be applied and reflected in:

- The delivery of the school curriculum
- The teaching and learning within the school
- Our practice in relation to student progress, attainment and achievement
- Our teaching styles and strategies
- Our policies and practice in relation to admissions and attendance
- Our policies and practice in relation to staff
- Our care, guidance and support to students, their families and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to student behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Our partnership working with parents and carers
- Our contact with the wider school community

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice including, but not limited to prejudice related to protected characteristics. We will ensure that prejudice-related incidents in relation to staff and students are recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented and that arrangements are in place to deal with any concerns or unlawful action that arises.

The Governing Body will specifically:

- monitor the implementation of the Statement and the objective(s) to check progress and assess impact on staff, learners, parents and others
- ensure that all governors are aware of their legal responsibilities under equality legislation
- approve the equality information to be published annually and the objectives to be published every four years
- check that implementation of the Statement and objectives achieves improved outcomes for people who share a protected characteristic and fosters good relations between them and those who do not share that characteristic

The Headteacher will

- provide proactive leadership to create a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and cooperation
- ensure staff, pupils, parents and any other interested stakeholders are aware of this Statement and their roles and responsibilities in implementing it
- monitor to ensure effective implementation of the Statement and objective(s)
- provide regular reports for governors on progress and performance
- allocate appropriate responsibilities, and provide suitable training and development for staff to implement this Statement

The Leadership and Management team will

- drive forward implementation of the Statement and action to achieve the objective(s)
- support staff to carry out their role in implementing this Statement
- provide effective leadership on equality matters
- respond in a timely and appropriate manner when dealing with any incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimization
- coordinate and monitor equality and diversity
 - monitor progress and attainment of learners from different groups and communities
 - monitor recruitment and career progress of staff from different groups and communities
 - provide reasonable adjustment and support for disabled learners

All staff will

- recognise that they have a role and responsibility in their day-to-day work to
 - eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations
 - challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
 - tackle bias and stereotyping
 - respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and report these
 - respond appropriately to the needs of pupils, parents, staff and others with protected characteristics and specific needs.
 - and encourage pupils to do the same.
- highlight to the senior leadership team any staff training or development that they require to carry out the above role and responsibilities.

Date first approved by the Governing Body: April 2010

Date revised policy and review approved by Governing Body: March 2017

Date for policy review: March 2021. Equalities Information and progress on objectives to be reviewed annually in March.

* *NOTES:*

All schools must re-publish equality information contained in Appendix A annually.

All schools must review their equality objectives (contained in Appendix B) four years after publication, but are encouraged (in accordance with principle 9) to review progress towards these objectives annually having reference to relevant aspects of the annual equality information,.

However, this policy statement should not require such regular review and governors should schedule a cycle of 4 years, coinciding with the review of objectives. However, a shorter cycle may be deemed necessary due to the circumstances of the school or if the annual review of the equality information prompts a shorter cycle.



Access to Further Equalities Information

School policies where consideration of equality matters is likely to be particularly relevant are:

Admissions Policy; Collective Worship; Uniform Policy; Behaviour Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; SEN policy; Complaints Policy; Sex and Relationships Education Policy; PSHEE Policy; Curriculum Policy; Community Cohesion Policy.

Copies of these policies will be available on request from the school office for a small charge to cover printing costs.

In terms of staffing, the school adopts the Hampshire County Council Education Personnel Services Manual of Personnel Practice which includes the Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Policy, Pay Policy, Performance Management Policy, Capability Policy.

The minutes of Full Governing Body meetings (particularly those evidencing discussions regarding responsibilities for equality) and those of the sub-committees are available upon request to the school office.

The minutes of staff and other school meetings where Equalities Matters have been discussed and training taken place are, due to the confidential nature of some of the content, kept by the Leadership and Management team as a record that this training has taken place.

As a school, we monitor the impact of school policies on equality matters and monitor a range of achievement, attendance, behaviour and other qualitative data. Where matters arise we are committed to addressing them swiftly and effectively. For example, we have identified that students on the SEN Register do not make the same progress that other students do and are therefore focusing on how we best meet their needs to narrow this gap in staff focus groups, Staff meetings, Middle Leaders Meetings and training sessions. We have also identified that some of our more vulnerable students in receipt of Free School Meals do not make the same progress as other groups of students. We have therefore worked on a bespoke curriculum and mentoring support with help from Outside Agencies like Hart Neighbourhood Centre and EOTAS.

The School Curriculum supports the promotion of tolerance, friendship and an understanding of different cultures in a wide range of subjects (e.g. Art, Music, Drama, History, Geography, English, MFL, Design Technology) as well as in students tutorial work, RE and Ethics and PSHEE and Citizenship lessons. Assemblies also support this work and often there is a particular focus e.g. Anti-Bullying Week.

Student voice is a strong feature of our school and the Student Council gives students the opportunities to raise and discuss equality-related matters.

Equality Objectives

Appendix B

We have considered how well we currently achieve our equality aims with regard to the protected groups under the Equality Act (race, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, religion and belief and sexual orientation).

We have also involved staff, students, parents and others in the following ways:

- self-evaluation and consultation with governors and staff.
- analysis of parent questionnaires
- involvement of the student council
- continuing contact with parents representing students with particular protected characteristics e.g.SEN, Travellers, EAL etc.
- contact with the local community through the Governing Body, the RAF and Local Children's Partnerships

Having referred to and analysed our equality information, we have set ourselves the following objective:

Element 1: Eliminate discrimination		
<i>Objective</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Measure</i>
To ensure that all school policies continue to actively work to eliminate discrimination of all protected groups.	LMT/Governors	

Element 2: Advance equality of opportunity		
<i>Objective</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Measure</i>
To continue to 'close the gaps' in achievement and outcomes between students on the Special Educational Needs register and disadvantaged students and the rest of the school.	LMT and HODs	Progress checks and examination results demonstrate that gap is closing.

Element 3: Foster good relations across all protected groups		
<i>Objective</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Measure</i>
To continue to celebrate and promote respect, tolerance and understanding of all members of the school's community through all aspects of the school's work including the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Assemblies and PSHEE etc.	LMT, HODs, HOYs	Student, Parent and Staff Voice surveys continue to demonstrate that the school is a welcoming and inclusive community. Behaviour analysis shows minimal instances of intolerance and prejudice and effective action taken to deter this when it arises.

Date of updated publication: October 2016

Date for review of Equalities Objectives and re-publication: *April 2020*

NOTE: The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require Governing Bodies to publish equality objectives at intervals of no more than four years but schools should publish detail on progress towards these objectives on an annual basis and publish this detail on the school's internet site.