

## CITY OF ROCHESTER SCHOOL EQUALITIES POLICY

*This policy, which applies to the whole school, and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office. This policy is also publicly available on the school website and the staff shared drive.*

*This Policy subsumes policy in the following areas: Disability; Race Equality; Equal Opportunities; and Equality and Diversity*

### **Legal Status:**

Prepared with regard to the Equality Act 2010 (inclusive of Schedule 10), the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, Sex Discrimination Act 1986, Children's Act 1989 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2014 and the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.

### **Applies to:**

- The whole School including extra curricula activities and all other activities provided by the school, inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours.
- All staff (teaching and support staff), the trustees, children and people on placement and volunteers working in the school.

### **Related Documents:**

- Accessibility Plan, Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy
- Collaborative Curriculum, Therapy, Teaching and Learning Policy, E Safety
- First Aid, Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and Procedures along with Risk Assessments
- Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHEE)
- Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)
- Safeguarding Children - Child Protection, Safer Recruitment
- Staff Handbook
- SEND Policy

### **Monitoring and Review:**

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher 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.
- The Trustees will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require. If changes are required, the school will implement them. 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 Data Protection Act 2018

Signed:



Alicja Emmett  
Headteacher



Kirstine Boon  
Chair of Trustees

Date Reviewed: November 2023  
Date of Next Review: November 2025  
Version No. 3.1

## Aims

The policy exists in order to ensure that all the provisions of relevant equality laws, and the recommendations of associated codes of practice, are fully observed throughout all areas of City of Rochester School. Our duties under the Equality Act 2010 include dealing with issues related to pupils with special educational needs/disabilities and making reasonable adjustments for these pupils. This has implications for the School's Admission Policy. We aim to create and protect a learning environment free from any forms of discrimination, victimisation or harassment. City of Rochester School celebrates every individual, supporting them to meet their full potential, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Trustees of City of Rochester School to have an Accessibility Plan, in writing, which is kept over a prescribed period, whereby our targets are:

- A review of resources and teaching aids so that staff are familiar with technologies that support accessibility. – Work in progress (July 2023)
- Level the uneven ground around the site – Complete
- Improve the location of signage around the school – Work in progress (July 2023)
- Door handles to be of a contrasting colour and adjust door closures so as not so noisy – Work in progress (July 2023)

The Accessibility Plan must be implemented by the Trustees, who must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementing the plan. The plan must be kept under review during the period, and, if necessary revised.

[The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives. This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

## 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.”

## Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

The City of Rochester School SEND Policy includes:

- an explanation of how the individual needs of all children will be met (including how children who are disabled or have special educational needs (SEN) will be included, valued and supported, and how reasonable adjustments will be made for them);
- the name of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)
- arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices that promote and value diversity and difference;
- how inappropriate attitudes and practices are challenged; and
- how the provision encourages children to value and respect others.

## Guiding Principles

City of Rochester School is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in respect of all its members. To this end, we take steps to ensure that pupils appreciate racial and cultural diversity and avoid and resist racism. Fundamental to its life as a school community is the belief that all individuals, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation are of equal value. In order to ensure that our school community is one in which these values flourish, City of Rochester School is guided by the following principles in relation to Equality. Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHEE), including Social, Moral, Spiritual, Cultural (SMSC) Education, instructs all aspects of school life.

## **Principle 1 All learners are valued, and their contributions recognised**

Learners are supported and encouraged to maximise their potential and to contribute fully in all areas of school life. Contributions are regularly recognised: on a small scale, through regular verbal and written feedback by teaching staff; on a larger scale, which include academic, theatrical, dramatic, and sporting achievement, as well as dedication to the school qualities of confidence, resilience and success.

We aim to give every pupil a sense of achievement and fulfilment regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, national origin, national status, sex, gender, religious or non-religious affiliation, sexual orientation or gender identity.

## **Principle 2 Diversity is recognised and respected**

Treating people with respect and consideration, in accordance with Principle 1, does not necessarily mean that everyone should be treated identically. We aim to treat members of our school community with the utmost consideration and respect, and in doing so will approach their life situations, experiences and problems with a personalised and differentiated response in accordance with their needs. We will also recognise and respond to problems that people may face, and will recognise and work to eliminate discrimination, 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 and as relevant:
  - Pregnancy/maternity/paternity and in relation to employment:
  - Age
  - Marriage/civil partnership

## **Religion, belief or faith background Religious Observance**

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

The Trustees 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.

City of Rochester School fully acknowledges its moral duty (as related to the United Kingdom's Race Relations Act, 1976, Section 1) to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between members of different racial groups and it positively welcomes any communal or educational opportunities afforded by the school's cultural and religious diversity. All members of the School (whether of the student body, teaching or support staff) deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and with a sensitive understanding of their religious, cultural and racial differences and of the consequences thereof. Racially abusive language by children and young people or staff will not be tolerated. If racial, religious or cultural elements are discovered to be present in incidents of bullying, these must be acknowledged and challenged. Racially abusive language by staff or children and young people will be a matter for disciplinary action.

Special leave for religious reasons will not be unreasonably refused by the School. Applications for such leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher, giving at least a month's notice. Any special leave granted will be treated as unpaid leave; part-time employees may be given the option of making up lost time if this would benefit the School.

## **Principle 3 Everyone is welcomed and made to feel comfortable within our school community**

Our policies and practices should work to ensure that relations between different individuals and identity groups within school are positive, cordial and tolerant.

This includes the promotion of:

- 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.

We welcome all applicants to join the school, whatever the background or physical disability of a child. We also seek to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. We take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion affects the school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups. We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

#### **Principle 4 City of Rochester School follows best practice in staff recruitment, retention, continuing Professional development (CPD), and cessation of employment.**

All policies and practices adopted by City of Rochester School should be of benefit to employees and potential employees, in all areas of recruitment, promotion, retention, CPD, discipline, dismissal and redundancy. Employees and potential employees should receive equal opportunities in these areas, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation. As relevant, employees and potential employees should be given equal opportunities regardless of pregnancy, maternity, paternity, marriage/civil partnerships.

Being a committed equal opportunities employer, the School will take every possible step to ensure that employees are treated equally and fairly in respect of these matters, be they staff or pupil, and the School challenges stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.

All pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school, and we are always striving to remove all forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning. All policies and practices will conform to the principle of equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career development, discipline and dismissal, and redundancy.

#### **Principle 5 We will recognise and address inequalities and barriers that already exist**

City of Rochester School aims to foster an environment in which inequalities in any form are not manifest in our community. We will, however, commit to recognising any forms of inequality that do arise, and will work to combat these in the most effective manner possible. 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, and the various gender and sexual identities

**Anti-Racism:** It is the right of all pupils to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident. We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of different cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. Should anyone at our school be a victim of racism, we will do all we can to support that person in overcoming any difficulties they may have.

The following are some ideas on how racism can be combatted:

- Pupils' names should be pronounced correctly, and nicknames should be the prerogative of the nicknamed.
- Attention should always be paid to spelling names correctly.
- Literature in school should include names from a wide variety of cultures.
- Racist language must be categorically rejected.
- Racial stereotypes should never be used or allowed. Those in classical literature must be made explicit to pupils and contextualised.
- Bi-lingual pupils and parents must be allowed to nominate an interpreter when necessary.
- Lack of fluency in the English language should not be used as an indication of academic potential.

**Sex:**

- No pupil should be excluded from receiving the curriculum on the basis of their sex.
- No privileges must be reserved for pupils based on their sex.

**Class:**

- Assumptions should not be made about pupils' home circumstances or potential based on social class.
- Pupils must be allowed to talk in their natural dialect as and when they need to.
- Direct speech in children's work may reflect dialect, particularly in the lower school before punctuation differentiates speech in written work.

**Principle 6 The wider community and society should benefit from our policies and practices**

We intend that our policies and practices contribute to the creation and maintenance of a diverse, tolerant and socially cohesive community. We view City of Rochester School as playing a part in the creation of such communities at a school, local, regional and national level. We aim to encourage the active participation of all individuals and groups in society and in public life, regardless of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability or sexual orientation. We intend to promote a society in which discrimination, victimisation and harassment based on any perceived 'difference' is not tolerated.

**Principle 7 On-going review and appraisal**

City of Rochester School is committed to regular review of its equalities policy, which will be evaluated and edited in the light of public research; individual comments and/or complaints; quantitative and qualitative information gathered by the school. City of Rochester School is open to feedback and response on all matters related to its equalities policy from all stakeholders, including pupils, staff, parents, and Trustees. The equality objectives and plan will be reviewed annually with the Board of Trustees.

**Principle 8 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, and both girls and boys
- people of all gender and sexual identities
- people across the full age spectrum

**Principle 9 We base our policies and practices on sound evidence.**

- Evidence relating to equalities is integrated into our self-evaluation documentation.

## **Ethos and Organisation**

We ensure the principles listed in Section 3 above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

## **Procedures for addressing discriminatory behaviour - Definitions:**

**Discrimination:** treating one person less favourably than another on the grounds of age, gender, social or ethnic background, nationality, colour, religious affiliation, physical disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

**Harassment:** any unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It can be persistent or isolated and includes behaviour which induces anger, stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the person being harassed. It can be physical, verbal, direct or indirect and can include gestures, intimidation, unwelcome remarks, suggestions, propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and 'banter'. In addition, non-verbal harassment can include offensive literature, pictures, graffiti, isolation, non-co-operation or unwelcome physical conduct. The school will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying: such behaviour is totally unacceptable, and the School looks to support any employee who is suffering from harassment. The School strives to provide a neutral working environment in which no-one feels threatened or intimidated.

**Victimisation:** treating one person less favourably than another on the grounds that that he or she has brought discrimination proceedings, given evidence or information regarding discrimination proceedings or alleged discrimination or because he or she intends to do any of these acts.

**Unwanted Behaviour:** If you feel that you have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised in breach of the principle of equal opportunities set out above, you are entitled to complain using the procedures set out below.

## **Informal Resolution**

**Stage 1:** You should speak or write to the individual concerned informing him or her that their behaviour is unwelcome.

**Stage 2:** If the unwanted behaviour continues, you should ask the Headteacher to speak to the person concerned. If the person concerned is the Headteacher, you should ask the Trustees to speak to the Headteacher.

**Stage 3:** If the unwanted behaviour continues, you should keep a record of any relevant incidents and consider taking formal action as set out below.

## **Formal Procedure**

**Formal notification:** If you feel that the informal procedure has not stopped the unwanted behaviour or that the behaviour is too serious to be resolved by using that procedure, you should follow the formal parts of the School's Grievance Procedure. You will be entitled to an appeal against any decision in accordance with the Grievance Procedure. Under the Grievance Procedure, any grievance will be investigated thoroughly by an impartial member of management. Where possible, the member of staff complaining of harassment or discrimination will be kept anonymous. Any mischievous, vexatious or malicious claims of harassment of any nature will be regarded as gross misconduct.

## **The Role of the Board of Trustees**

- Ensure that equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents.
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Headteacher

The equality link Trustee is Kirstine Boon. The Board of Trustees will:

- Meet with the Headteacher at every Board Meeting, and other relevant staff members, to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed
- Ensure they're familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training
- Report back to the full Trustee Board regarding any issues

## **The Role of the Headteacher:**

- To ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to Trustees
- Meet with the equality link Trustee at every Board Meeting to raise and discuss any issues
- Identify any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary
- To ensure that all recruitment and selection processes give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- Promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays shown around the school.
- To treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to adhere to the "Roles and Responsibilities . ." sections and to support the school to achieve the Equality Objectives set out below.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the wider staff team:**

All staff and Trustees should recognise that they have a specific role and responsibility in their day-to-day work to:

- Promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
- Challenge inappropriate language and behaviour;
- Tackle bias and stereotyping;
- Respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and report these;
- Highlight to the senior leadership team any staff training or development that they require to carry out the above role and responsibilities;
- Promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;
- Challenge inappropriate language and behaviour;
- Tackle bias and stereotyping;
- Work to promote anti-bullying strategies;
- Respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and understand the action needed to report these
- Every employee is required to assist the whole school to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.
- Employees should be aware that they can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Trustees 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.

Protected characteristics. The Equality Duty covers: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships

**Equality Objectives – Academic Year 2023-2024 (4 year plan). All targets are linked to the School SEF/SDP**

1. Continue to expand the offer for the girls CoR curriculum to ensure that it is empowering and enabling.
2. To ensure that all staff regardless of disability, race, ethnicity, sex, religion, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation of gender have the professional development opportunities they need to, where appropriate, progress in their careers.
3. Further develop the mental health and wellbeing provision so that it supports the wellbeing of **all members** of the school community providing access to additional support where required, ensuring that there is equality of access to such support.
4. Provide opportunities out of school for pupils to have access to a range of experiences that prepares them for the wider world. These experiences should develop their social/communication skills and contribute to pupils becoming responsible citizens.

**Equality Impact Assessment**

This document forms part of the City of Rochester School's commitment to create a positive culture of respect for all staff and service users. The intention is to identify, remove or minimise discriminatory practice in relation to the protected characteristics, as well as to promote positive practice and value the diversity of all individuals and communities.

As part of its development this document and its impact on equality has been analysed and no detriment identified.



|   | <b>Intended Outcome and why we have chosen this Objective:</b>   | <b>To achieve this Objective, we plan to:</b>  | <b>Success Criteria</b>   |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | <p>Continue to expand the offer for the girls CoR curriculum to ensure that it is empowering and enabling.</p> <p>SEF/SDP Area 1.4</p>   | <p>Visit other outstanding girls' provision to learn from best practice in the system</p> <p>Hold a focus group with the existing girls' cohort and a separate one with their parents to discuss additional curriculum and opportunities</p> <p>Further development of professional development for staff to ensure they are equipped to deliver an appropriate curriculum</p>   | <p>Our aim is for all of our students to become happy, healthy, empowered individuals who participate in, and contribute towards society.</p>   |
| 2 | <p>To further develop all staff regardless of disability, race, ethnicity, sex, religion, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation of gender have the professional development opportunities they need to, where appropriate, progress in their careers</p> <p>SEF/SDP Area 4.1/4.2</p> | <p>Ensure all school leaders are 'equalities in recruitment' trained including training which develops leader understanding of conscious and/unconscious bias</p> <p>Increased pool of staff safer recruitment trained to ensure that recruiters are representative of the school population</p> <p>Further development programmes of professional development, for all staff, to include access to leadership development programmes, training and professional coaching.</p> <p>Ensure that there is a career 'pathway' identified and route mapped for all colleagues including both internal and external progression</p> <p>Ensure that induction, probation and appraisal processes support the professional development of all members of staff</p> <p>Use data from exit interviews to plan for further developments</p> <p>Involve staff in development of school policy, training programmes and other professional development –</p> <p>Strengthen practice/support for those returning from maternity or shared parental leave</p> | <p>Recruitment reflects make up of school population/diversity of community</p> <p>Proportions of those recruited to leadership positions map the wider make-up of the school/diversity of the community</p> <p>There are strong succession plans in place for positions across the school</p> <p>Exit Interviews and other analysis demonstrate that their high quality CPD/ Development opportunities which impact of professional practice</p> |

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 3 | <p>Further develop the mental health and wellbeing provision so that it supports the wellbeing of <b><u>all members</u></b> of the school community providing access to additional support where required, ensuring that there is equality of access to such support</p> <p>SEF Areas: 2.1/2.2 and 4.1/4.2</p>                       | <p>Strengthen use of wellbeing and other data to target support at areas of most need for the whole school community</p> <p>Analyse wellbeing, behaviour, safeguarding and other data to adjust and adapt curriculum plans, pastoral support and the Wellbeing Curriculum (pupils) and the Staff Wellbeing Policy to areas of most need</p> <p>Review and further develop PSHE curriculum to ensure its rigour, coherence and appropriateness for pupils at different stages/ages</p> <p>Review and further develop the Staff Wellbeing Policy through review of data and Staff Voice</p> <p>Broaden wellbeing services for the whole school community including to further strengthen wellbeing services</p> <p>Access to external wellbeing services improved</p> | <p>Data shows: - Even take up/engagement with wellbeing opportunities/services</p> <p>Evidence of Curriculum and other plans adapted based on emerging trends/needs –</p> <p>Pupil Voice/Parent Voice/Staff Voice shows that PSHE/Wellbeing Curriculum is well received, impactful and supports wellbeing for students</p> <p>Staff Voice shows that wellbeing is prioritised as a whole school and that they have a voice and are listened to</p> |
| 4 | <p>Provide opportunities out of school for pupils via the Youth Worker post, to enable pupils to have access to a range of experiences that prepares them for the wider world. These experiences should develop their social/communication skills and contribute to pupils becoming responsible citizens</p> <p>SEF/SDP Area 2.2</p> | <p>Explore appropriate opportunities that will enable pupils to socialise in their local communities and as a result broaden their experiences outside the home/school</p> <p>Use data to evaluate the effectiveness of the Youth Worker post in terms of engagement by pupils</p>  | <p>Pupils will have the confidence to engage with their local communities</p> <p>Pupil/Parent/Staff Voice shows that pupil wellbeing is better</p>   |