

**Riverside Junior School**  
**Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan**



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<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Purpose and scope.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Our school.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Guiding principles .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Action plans and objectives .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Roles and responsibilities .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The curriculum.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Ethos and organisation.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Addressing prejudice and bullying.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Religious observance.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Staff development and training .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Commissioning and procurement .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Equality impact assessments.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Other school policies .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Publishing the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Breaches of the Single Equality Scheme .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Monitoring and review.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendix 1 - Single Equality Scheme Action Plan 2013 – 2016.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendix 2 - Summary of Equality Legislation for Schools.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix 3 - Examples of School Activities Contributing to Equalities Best Practice 14</b>	

## Introduction

This Single Equality Scheme brings together Riverside Junior School's approach for promoting equality in our policies and procedures and in our day-to-day interactions with the whole school community. It outlines the commitment of the staff, students and governors to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all. We will treat everyone the same, and also understand and tackle the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of students in school, whilst celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all members of Riverside Junior School's community.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The general duties are to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between groups

We welcome our responsibility to promote community cohesion and are committed to developing good relations across different cultures, ethnic, religious (and non-religious) and socio-economic groups.

We have incorporated these priorities into our Single Equality Scheme.

## Purpose and scope

Our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan (Appendix 1) covers a three-year period from 2013 to 2016. It integrates our statutory duties in relation to race, disability and gender and the promotion of community cohesion (See Appendix 2 for the legal framework). The duties cover the wider school community including governors, staff, pupils and parents and carers.

The Scheme also addresses the legislation relating to religion or belief, sexual orientation and age and therefore includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment across all groups of protected characteristics.

Our Single Equality Scheme and action plan enables us to achieve a framework for action which ensures that we meet our responsibilities and duties in an inclusive way.

We will continue to meet our statutory duties by setting equality objectives and reporting annually on the progress of our Single Equality Scheme and action plan.

## Our school

Our school is based in Calderdale. The Asian ethnic category accounts for about \*% of our children. We also have \* numbers of children of Mixed Ethnicity/Dual Heritage etc.

We have \* children/learners eg:

- with a Statement of Educational Needs
- disability
- autistic spectrum disorder
- free school meals
- etc

## **Guiding Principles**

In meeting the duties described above we are adopting seven guiding principles, adapted from those chosen by the Department for Education in their Single Equality Scheme.

### **Principle 1: All members of the school community are of equal value**

All learners and potential learners and their parents and carers are of equal value and we strive to make the best possible provision for all:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation and faith, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender/gender identity or sexual identity
- irrespective of other factors such as age, income, family circumstances or where they live.

### **Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity**

We know that treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Different people have different needs and treating them all the same can lead to some people being disadvantaged because their needs are not met. Our policies, practices and programmes will not discriminate, but will take account of differences in life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, culture and religion, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, so that the different needs and experiences of boys and girls, women and men are recognised
- factors such as age, income, family circumstances or where people live, so that different needs and experiences are recognised.

### **Principle 3: We value our staff**

We value our staff for their ability and potential to help us make the best possible provision for the children in our school. Our policies and programmes benefit all members of staff in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation and faith, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender, gender identity or sexual orientation
- irrespective of other factors such as age, income, family circumstances or where they live.

### **Principle 4: We foster positive attitudes and relationships**

We know that equalities is not simply about protecting the potentially vulnerable. We believe that all children may be disadvantaged by the holding of prejudicial views and we seek to promote good relationships between all groups. Our policies and programmes promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, and good relations between disabled and non-disabled people
- positive interaction and good relations between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation and faith, and national origin or national status
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men, and people of different sexual orientation
- mutual respect and good relations between people from different age groups, with different income or family circumstances or who live in different places.

**Principle 5: We feel that the community as a whole should benefit**

We recognise our role in promoting community cohesion, and actively encourage the participation in public life of all learners in our school. Our policies and programmes benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled and non-disabled people alike
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- women as well as men, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as well as heterosexual people
- people from different age groups, with different income or family circumstances or who live in different places

**Principle 6: We are proactive in addressing inequalities**

We are proactive in our efforts to identify and minimise existing barriers or inequalities. In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, our policies and programmes maximise positive impacts by addressing, reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- boys and girls, women and men, and people of different sexual orientation
- people from different age groups, with different income or family circumstances or who live in different places.

**Principle 7: We consult and involve all groups affected by our policies**

We seek the views of all groups affected by the policies and work of our school, and strive to involve them in policy review. We recognise that it is particularly important to involve those who in the past may have been excluded or disadvantaged, and who may continue to face barriers:

- disabled people
- people of minority ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- women as well as men, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as well as heterosexual people
- people who face challenges because of their age group, income, family circumstances or where they live.

## Action plans and objectives

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we formulate specific and measurable equality objectives based on the guiding principles above that take into account local and national priorities and issues as appropriate to ensure equality in terms of:

- disability
- ethnicity
- gender and gender identity
- sexual orientation
- religion and belief
- age
- socio-economic circumstances.

These objectives are outlined in our Single Equality Scheme Action Plan (Appendix 1). We keep these objectives under review and ensure that our practical priorities, policies and procedures promote equality.

## Roles and responsibilities

- **Governing Body** – The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with statutory requirements in respect of this Scheme and action plan. They will delegate a governor with specific responsibility for this Scheme. They will review the Scheme and action plan on a yearly basis.
- **Headteacher** – The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of the Scheme and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support. The headteacher will report progress to the governing body and will ensure that the senior leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the Scheme or actions arising from it.
- **Senior Leadership Team** – The senior leadership team will have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing the Scheme and provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Scheme. Along with the headteacher they will provide advice and support in dealing with any incidents/issues.
- **Staff** – The staff will promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in Riverside Junior School, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for students with additional needs and maintain a good awareness of equalities issues. Staff will be involved in the development of the Scheme and how it relates to them.
- **Parents/Carers** – Parents and carers will be involved in the development of the Scheme and be encouraged to support it and to attend any meetings and activities in relation to the Scheme and action plan.

## The curriculum

We will ensure that curriculum planning reflects our commitment to equality in all subject areas and cross-curricular themes promoting positive attitudes to equality and diversity. All staff ensure the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel their contributions are valued.

Positive steps are taken to include pupils who may otherwise be marginalized. We take account of pupils' cultural backgrounds, experiences and starting points and are responsive to pupils' different learning styles. All pupils are regularly consulted about their learning.

Riverside Junior School recognises and values all forms of achievement. We will monitor and analyse pupil performance by ethnicity, gender, disability and special educational need and social background. Any disparities which are identified will be addressed through targeted curriculum planning, teaching and support.

### **Ethos and organisation**

We ensure that our guiding principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies, procedures 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
- partnership working with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community
- participation of groups in wider school activities
- preparing all members of the school community for positively contributing to a diverse society.

### **Addressing prejudice and bullying**

Clear procedures are in place so that all forms of bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently. All forms of bullying and harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with relevant school policies.

We are opposed to all forms of prejudice that stand in the way of fulfilling our legal duties for all aspects of equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with and all staff are trained to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice and are offered support in handling such matters.

We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents and where requested can provide a report about the numbers, types and seriousness of these incidents and how they are dealt with.

### **Religious observance**

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

### **Staff development and training**

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

All staff are offered the opportunity to engage in appropriate development to ensure they can support the achievement of our Guiding Principles.

### **Commissioning and procurement**

We are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We ensure that we purchase goods and services from organisations that comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in any tendering process.

### **Equality impact assessments**

We undertake equality impact assessments to identify the impact or effect of our policies, procedures and programmes on the whole school community. Where negative impacts are identified we take steps to deal with this to ensure the equity of services to all.

### **Other school policies**

A number of our other school policies directly link into and inform our Single Equality Scheme. These include:

- the school improvement plan
- the school inclusion and SEN policy
- the accessibility
- the bullying and harassment policy
- the racist incident reporting protocol

### **Publishing the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan**

This policy and plan will be published on our school website and hard copies available from the school office. We will ensure that the content of this policy is known to all governors and staff and (as appropriate) to all pupils and their parents and carers.

In addition all governors and staff will have access to a range of resources that discuss and explain the concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion.

### **Breaches of the Single Equality Scheme**

Breaches of this scheme will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the headteacher and governing body.

### **Monitoring and review**

In line with legislative requirements we will report annually on our progress and performance covering protected characteristics, including access to the curriculum, physical access and access to information in one annual report.

This Scheme will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on students, staff, parents/carers and all the different stakeholders that make up our school community.