

SINGLE EQUALITY PLAN

Review Body:	MAT Board
Leadership Group Responsibility:	Assistant Headteacher/Pastoral
Type of Policy:	Statutory
Reviewed:	September 2019

Rainham Mark Educational Trust is dedicated to ensuring that all members of the school community and the wider community are treated equally, fairly, and with respect by the school and by each other. This applies to the school as a place of education, a business, and an employer. Prejudice, discrimination, and victimisation are not tolerated, and we work hard to instil in our pupils a strong understanding of right and wrong, including the importance of inclusion, acceptance, and compassion towards others. The Trust's main priority is to provide the best education and care that we can, and establish a cooperative working relationship between home and school, so as to aid the development, progress, and needs of all the children in our care.

This plan sets out how the school will promote equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, transgender, disability, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation, in both the delivery of its services and the employment of its staff. It is created by Rainham Mark Educational Trust governing body with the help of the core team in line with the Equality Act 2010 and operates in conjunction with other Trust policies – particularly the **special educational needs policy, admissions policy, anti-bullying policy** and the **behaviour for learning policy**.

Single Equality Statement

We aspire to be a Multi Academy Trust that through its leadership, recruitment, teaching and learning, is free from discrimination and confident in its diversity.

Rainham Mark Education Trust is committed to ensuring that every individual who belongs to our learning community is valued, supported and respected. We welcome and celebrate the unique talent and experience of each individual student and employee.

Introduction

Equality and diversity and a commitment to inclusiveness are embedded in our vision. This Single Equality Plan brings together our commitments to equality and diversity, including our plans as more schools join the Trust. The Scheme will build on individual schools' previous equality work. We will relentlessly continue with our efforts to break down barriers and challenge unfairness, and ensure opportunities which help people and communities reach their full potential

Aims

The purpose of this Single Equality Plan is to set out ways in which the Trust will continue to meet its legal requirements under the following legislation.

Equality Act 2010

The public sector equality duty consists of a general equality duty set out in the Equality Act 2010, and specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation. The Duty covers nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership

The general equality duty requires all public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and persons who do not share it

The specific duties require Public bodies to:

- Publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty
- Set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives

Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Right Act came into force in October 2000 and obliges public authorities to treat people in accordance with their rights under the European Convention of Human Rights. The aim of this Single Equality Scheme is twofold:

- To develop further measures and actions that pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality for all, notably those who share protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation.
- To promote equality so that our approach goes beyond legislative compliance and remains embedded in our culture.

Vision

We are building a Trust community that through its leadership, recruitment, teaching and learning is free from discrimination and secure and confident in its diversity. The Trust is committed to ensuring that every individual student and employee is valued, supported and respected. We welcome and celebrate the unique talent and experience of each individual student and employee.

A healthy community requires a safe environment, free from prejudice and discrimination, where the values and ethos of equality and diversity inform all Trust activity. The Trust, therefore, has a zero tolerance approach to discrimination. Our values apply equally to staff and governors, as well as students, volunteers and those with whom we do business, including the procurement and delivery of contracted services.

Our Single Equality Scheme and associated policies outline how we seek to ensure that the Trust is free from unlawful discrimination, and strives constantly to move beyond legal compliance towards excellence and best practice in promoting and celebrating equality and diversity.

Through creative and responsive teaching and learning, and a broad spectrum of extra curricula activities our students will understand better the world within which they live, and the impact of their own actions on community cohesion and wellbeing.

Commitment of the Trust

The Scheme aims to demonstrate our commitment to far more than equality complaints monitoring and management and to set comprehensive and contextualised objectives which are integral to continuous improvement of our service to every individual.

The effectiveness of the SEP will be evaluation by the appropriate monitoring group from the governors to the full Board of Trustees.

The Scheme aligns with the Trust overall commitment to quality improvement as we place our commitment to learner success at the heart of everything we do.

This Scheme relates to all members of the Trust, including employees, students, contractors, and visitors as appropriate.

We will address unequal experiences for all who share protected characteristics:

- Gender
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender assignment
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

We will also be mindful of our actions in relation to socio-economic factors, because socioeconomic disadvantage is a key and significant factor for all.

Trust Context

Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for each school in the Trust as of 1 September 2019:

RMGS - Years 7 and 8 - 235, Years 9 to 11 - 205 and Years 12 and 13 - 329

Twydall Primary School - 525

Riverside Primary School - 253

Delivery of the Trust Single Equality Plan (SEP)

The Trust will use its values as the template against which to evaluate all conduct matters, whether that be students, employers, governors, staff, visitors and contractors.

The Trust schools will use its strategies to listen to students – notably the learner voice, student councils, teaching and learning observations, surveys, the complaints system and all forums that enable the student body to be heard and responded to.

Similarly, the Trust will use the staff surveys, all-staff briefings and other means to listen to our staff body.

All of the above seeks to create a culture where the views of all can be heard and opportunities for discrimination, harassment or bullying will be minimised. The Trust actively plans to address inequalities and its main documents and processes reflect our passion to drive improvements:

- Trust Strategic plan
- Trust SEP
- Relevant Trust policies

Equality Impact Assessment

The Trust will routinely analyse data to ensure that there are no unwarranted discrepancies between the performances of different groups of students. Any statistically significant achievement gaps will seek to be closed or minimized as a priority.

Teaching, Learning and Support The leadership team in each Trust school is responsible for overseeing that teaching and learning routinely promotes diversity in their schools. They also ensure that there are no artificial barriers to accessing support for students.

Trust schools will ensure equality and diversity are embedded in to the curriculum through providing high quality learning resources and CPD

Single Equality Plan Priorities In order to create a Single Equality Plan that has the most meaning and impact on the majority of its community, the Trust will put particular focus on:

- Gender
- Race
- Socio-economic

The Trust will also keep a close watching brief with respect to any inequalities with regards Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion & Belief, Pregnancy & Maternity; Marriage & Civil Partnerships and disability and will ensure that no individual person will be disadvantaged.

Gender

The Trust welcomes people of all genders and we seek to create a culture which is strong in relation to mutual respect, removes barriers to achievement and challenges cultural stereotypes, particularly with respect to occupation. We do not tolerate gender based harassment.

Our intended impact:

- Student recruitment which actively encourages students to access careers of their choice regardless of traditional gender under representation.
- A well-developed curriculum that positively reflects different gender contributions in the workplace and promotes them equally and effectively.
- A staffing base in which students can see role models of their own gender, irrespective of the curriculum area and the traditional stereotypes.
- Facilities that enhance and support the experience of men and women equally in using the Trust's services or as Trust employees.
- A reward and remuneration structure which prevents pay gaps between the genders.
- A robust approach to gender-based discrimination and harassment that tackles unwanted attention and unfair behaviours directly and decisively at all levels and promotes a culture of respect.
- A fully developed approach to equality in employment and career progression based on secure evidence relating to pay, opportunities, role and position across all genders and with due regard to physiological differences.
- An approach to transgender issues that promotes understanding and welcome for those involved in any kind of change to their gender.

Race

The Trust is proud of the number of groups represented at the school and we have a wonderful diverse mix of culture and nationality. However, we are aware that some of our students and staff may have experienced racial discrimination. The Trust is committed to being a place where all people feel valued and respected and able to develop equally. We will take positive action to eliminate racism and its effects and racial harassment will not be tolerated in any area of Trust life.

Our intended Impact: In further developing and strengthening our work around race equality so that we can maximise the positive impact we have on students and staff from different racial groups, we aim to achieve the following:

- Retain the high success of all students on all provision and ensure no significant gaps emerge.
- Increase the mixed profile of staff to achieve a workforce that is representative of the local community at every level of the organisation.
- Promotion of race awareness and of zero tolerance to racism.

Socio-economic factors

Whilst there is no legislative duty in relation to socio-economic factors, the Trust recognises the impact of economic disadvantage on individuals and will therefore work to reduce barriers faced by such individuals. A number of our Trust schools are based in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Medway and our vision seeks to positively change the aspirations and expectations of many of the communities surrounding our schools. We will to this end recruit those, as a direct result of their economic disadvantage, who might have lower aspirations and expectations of success. The Trust will seek to inspire them to recognise and achieve their full potential with an ethos of high expectations, high levels of support, outstanding teaching & learning and access to first class facilities.

The Trust is mindful that the performance of white males is a national concern and therefore the Trust will seek to provide the right opportunities for members of this group to succeed and progress to higher education.

Our intended impact:

- To support the progression of all students into higher education where appropriate.
- To have a curriculum offer and support services which encourage recruitment from all communities.
- To enable students who live in areas of deprivation to do as well as their peers who do not.
- To consider socio-economic factors when impact assessing major plans, policies, procedures and practice.

Sexual Orientation

The Trust welcomes people of any sexual orientation, gender expression or identity. We have a zero tolerance stance towards homophobia, transphobia or gender-based discrimination and actively challenge it when it arises. We aim to provide a safe environment where students and staff are comfortable about disclosing their sexuality, gender expression or identity, if they wish.

Our intended impact:

- A welcoming place for all where students and staff feel respected and confident and free to be open about their sexuality if they choose.
- A zero tolerance stance on homophobia with a workforce trained and confident to challenge homophobia when it arises.

Religion and Belief

The Trust welcomes all people of all faiths and is proud of the inclusive nature each school within the trust.

Our intended impact:

- A climate of tolerance and understanding where religious discrimination is effectively challenged if it ever arises.
- A respectful and value-based curriculum that promotes social and moral awareness.
- Access to a contemplation/quiet room.

Pregnancy and Maternity

RMET Schools welcome staff who are pregnant, who are on maternity leave and who have recently given birth. The Trust will therefore act firmly to eliminate any discriminatory behaviour against those with this protected characteristic.

Our intended impact:

- A climate of understanding where pregnancy is not a barrier to learning or work

Marriage and Civil Partnerships

The Trust celebrates the diversity of its staff and students and welcomes people of any marital status.

Our intended impact:

A climate of mutual respect for all students and staff regardless of their marital or civil partnership status.

Overarching objectives of the Single Equality Plan

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.

RMET's overarching Equality Objectives are:

- To use performance data to monitor student achievement and respond to variations between groups of learners, subjects, courses and key stages, trends over time and comparisons with other schools
- To provide professional development which continues to support staff to promote equality and diversity routinely into their daily activity
- To provide an environment that welcomes, protects and respects diverse people

- To ensure that all students are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school
- Foster ownership amongst our students for the development of a set of positive behaviours which reflect the very best in all cultures, but which reaffirm the understanding of and compliance with the rule of British law and British Values
- To address cultural events through year worship activities to increase student awareness and understanding of issues in different communities

Single Equality Action Plan

This document should bring together all planned actions for meeting and implementing statutory duties. It should be reviewed every three years.

Legal Definitions

Unlawful Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination is defined in the Act as:

- Direct discrimination – treating a person less favourably on prohibited grounds (gender, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, socio-economic status) than another would be treated in comparable circumstances, where the treatment cannot be objectively justified (e.g. by a genuine occupational requirement)
- Indirect discrimination – when a rule, condition or requirement, which applies equally to everyone, has a disproportionately adverse effect on people from a particular group (i.e. due to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, gender, marital status, gender identity), and there is no objective justification for the rule (Example: by requiring job applicants to have a set number of years' experience may indirectly discriminate against women who have taken a career break)
- Discrimination arising from disability – this occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified. Treatment can be justified if it can be shown that it is intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair, balanced and reasonable way.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments (for disabled people)
- Discrimination by association or perception – the 2010 Act extends the scope of the legislation to protect people who 'associate' with others with the protected characteristics, for instance people who are related or who care for someone who is disabled. Protection includes perception (e.g. discrimination based on the belief that someone is gay, disabled or has a particular belief)

Harassment

Harassment is defined by the Act as:

Any unwanted conduct that violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This definition is limited to anti-discrimination legislation and therefore only applies to harassment on grounds of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief or age.

Victimisation

Victimisation is defined by the Act as:

Treating people less favourably because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment, or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

Burden of Proof

The Act states that once an individual can show that there is an issue of potential discrimination, the burden of proof shifts to the employer to defend the case and show that the reason for difference in treatment is justifiable and not discriminatory.

Vicarious Liability

The Act states that employers are responsible for the discriminatory actions of their employees where such actions have been carried out during the course of their duties. The only defence for employers is to show that they have done everything reasonable practicable to prevent an employee committing an unlawful act.

Personal Liability The act states that where an employer can show that appropriate steps have been taken to avoid discrimination, it is likely that the discriminator will be personally liable in the law.

Disability

This section should be read in conjunction with the school Special Educational Needs Policy.
Definition of Disability

The 2010 Act abandons the previous list of capacities and defines a disabled person as someone who has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The Act allows disabled pupils to be treated more favourably than non-disabled pupils and in some cases, requires this to be done, by making reasonable adjustments to put pupils on a level footing with those without a disability.