



THE ROWANS SCHOOL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

This policy relates to all children from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 2.

Rationale

The Rowans School conforms to the wishes of the Equal Opportunities Commission that opposes all forms of discrimination and states that schools should provide equal opportunities for all children and staff. The philosophy of 'inclusion' encompasses equal opportunities for all, inclusive of our Early Years Foundation Stage.

Introduction

All pupils have an equal right to develop and achieve their potential. The children are treated as individuals with their own abilities, difficulties, attitudes, backgrounds and experiences.

The Education Reform Act entitles all pupils in school to a curriculum, which is balanced and broad based. The curriculum at The Rowans School includes cross-curricular dimensions such as equal opportunities for multi-cultural education and special educational needs. Wherever possible the curriculum will develop children's knowledge and understanding of different beliefs, cultures and needs.

We aim for an atmosphere of trust and respect among children as well as between teachers and children. The PSHEE, SMSC and RSE education programmes are about how we treat each other and, more importantly, how we learn to respect one another and ourselves as citizens of the world. They also foster an understanding of the diversity of cultures and needs that exist in school and in the wider community, having due regard for protected characteristics.

Children

It is the right of every child irrespective of gender, race, religion and belief, cultural background, linguistic background, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, SEND and disability to achieve their full potential. Each child should have access to an education, which will enable them to utilise their talents to the full and achieve their potential. We will develop children to become sensitive to, and be aware of, ways in which equality of opportunity is denied and how this might affect them in society.

Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to foster and facilitate this ideal by creating a welcoming environment for all children. They will endeavour to establish an atmosphere within school which effectively reduces prejudice and raises self-esteem, so that all children can develop independence, freedom of choice and knowledge of their right to take on whatever roles they choose, no matter what their cultural background, gender or ability.

As a staff we have to remember that we are role models. We must challenge the concept of discrimination based upon differences of race, gender and special needs.

Aims

To ensure that:

- we endorse the principle of inclusion for all in our school;
- every individual within the school has the chance to achieve their full potential and is given the same opportunities;
- every child is given access to the best possible level of achievement, appropriate to their age and ability, through appropriately differentiated work;
- prejudices are challenged and positive attitudes are built;
- understanding and mutual respect by and for all children, regardless of differences, is promoted;
- contributions from various cultures are included and acknowledged in the planning and teaching of the full range of curriculum subjects, resources and school displays;
- an awareness of the unfairness and injustice of stereotyping is raised;
- any form of bullying including verbal, physical, psychological and cyber-bullying, by any group or individuals, is challenged and addressed;
- high standards of acceptable group and individual behaviour are promoted by ensuring that all the school community is informed of school expectations and procedures;
- there is a commitment to minimising all school exclusions by implementing agreed strategies and procedures, ensuring that each child is given the opportunity to achieve and succeed;
- absences, racist incidents and bullying incidents are recorded and monitored.

Examples of strategies used in school that will carry out these aims are:

- planning activities of a non-stereotypical nature;
- giving children time to talk in class discussions to give everyone opportunity to voice opinion and discuss how they are feeling;
- encouraging the sharing of experiences - encompassing all equality issues;
- reviewing/updating resources so that appropriate messages are presented to the children;
- planning role-play experiences to include addressing age, disability, race and gender;
- differentiated lesson planning for those whose attainment significantly falls below or exceeds the expected level;
- providing a differentiated curriculum by developing classroom approaches that cater for individual differences but which do not make distinctions that have negative effects on children, their learning and development;
- displays around school promoting positive equality issues;
- providing an entitlement curriculum, which aims to offer the same balanced curriculum and learning experiences to all;
- staff on playground duty to identify and proactively respond to children on their own, the 'assertive' group and any negative physical contact;
- children are encouraged to think about how excluding others has a negative effect;
- involving children in rule-making in the classroom and at a whole-school level through assemblies;
- using assembly time and collective worship themes to reinforce equal opportunity issues;
- using targets and rewards for children to reinforce acceptable behaviour and attitudes;
- ensuring that all children will have equal access to all resources and recognise that some children will need encouragement/direction in the use of resources;
- giving children a voice;
- sharing in various religious celebrations throughout the year.

The curriculum

All children will have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life. We will need to monitor our practices to achieve this. Children should be given the opportunity:

- to make choices without rejecting any as being inappropriate, e.g. sport, manual jobs;
- to gain self-worth and self-confidence, freeing them to develop a sense of who they are and what they want;
- to have equal educational experiences so that they can make appropriate choices from a base of common skills and knowledge;

Please refer to the Learning Enrichment and Support Policy.

Resources

- Books, equipment and other resources will be checked to see that they are non-stereotyping.
- Children will be encouraged to learn to identify and question stereotypes if they are found in existing material.
- Resources, such as computer time, technology equipment and playground space, will be allocated fairly.

Hidden curriculum

- Displays will show positive role models.
- There is a need to discuss and counter prejudices and hidden beliefs - in assemblies, circle times and other opportunities where they become apparent.
- The development and sharing of common interests will be encouraged.
- Children's individual characteristics and feelings need to be respected and valued.

Parents

We will introduce and communicate the Equal Opportunities policy to parents through the school prospectus, admissions meetings with parents and on parents' evenings.

We will ensure that each parent/carer is treated in a manner which ensures that they have full and equal access to support, information and resources. We operate an open door policy and parents have many opportunities to come into the school and speak to staff and review children's work.

Ability

We want all our children to achieve their full potential during their time with us and be the best that they can be. As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes and practices do not prevent any child from reaching their potential whatever their ability. We will make efforts to ensure that all children receive equality in teaching time and support.

Age

We make efforts to ensure that children of different ages are provided with appropriate activities and that children are not excluded from activities solely on the grounds of their age. We will ensure that all staff are given equal opportunities within the school regardless of age.

Gender

We are aware that as our children mature and their relationships with peers develop, their perception of sex roles alters. We also recognise that such perceptions are influenced by other factors including home, peer group and the media. As we are a co-educational school we recognise and promote equality between the sexes, in our teaching, noting the achievements of both staff and children. Any differences/questions involving gender which arise inside or outside the classroom are dealt with sensitively and are discussed with the children.

We will ensure that no staff member is discriminated against because of his or her gender.

Race or Cultural Background

Under the amended 'Race Relations Act' (2001) it is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their race.

Through implementation of our Equal Opportunities Policy/Anti-Bullying Policy we will ensure that children/parents/staff from different ethnic groups, cultures, religions and background are provided equality of opportunity and are not discriminated against either openly or covertly. We take positive steps to promote mutual understanding and respect for people from different backgrounds.

Disability

"Anyone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect upon his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is stated to be disabled." (Quote from Disability Rights Commission). Disability is not about wheelchair users only; it includes dyslexia, epilepsy, dyspraxia, diabetes, ADHD, sensory impairment and cancer.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act 2001 and Equality Act 2010 places new duties on all schools to avoid discrimination against disabled children. It also makes it unlawful to be discriminated against because of a disability in areas of employment or access to goods, facilities and services. (Refer to Reasonable Adjustments Policy for Disabled Pupils).

The Rowans School does not treat disabled children less favourably than other children. The School will endeavour to provide appropriate access both physically and through the curriculum, for all children with disabilities with appropriate support when required, from appropriate outside agencies. Staff with disabilities will be afforded the same support.

All children are given the opportunity to recognise and respect individual differences and abilities. We are all unique and therefore have the right to be treated as individuals.

We will endeavour to:

- Raise awareness of the varying needs of others;
- Highlight and celebrate the differences between each other;
- Raise awareness of the need for appropriate facilities to be available for people with disabilities, e.g. wheel chair ramps.

This will be achieved through:

- Appropriate discussions;
- Topic links, e.g. work on the body;
- Visiting speakers;
- Appropriate resources, e.g. positive images in books/stories/displays;
- Following the inclusion policy.

The Rowans School has a three year rolling accessibility plan as is required under SENDA.

Staff Recruitment

Age, sex, ethnic origin, disability, married or single status shall not be a consideration in the recruitment of staff, but simply qualification, experience and suitability to the proper discharge of relevant duties.

People with disabilities will be offered facilities at interviews to enable them to demonstrate their suitability for employment. Candidates for vacant posts will be assessed against relevant criteria only, i.e. skills, qualifications and experience, in selection for recruitment. Requests by interviewees will be taken into account and reasonable adjustments made.

Staff Development

All employees have equal chances of training, career development and promotion. All staff, and in particular those concerned with selection and promotion, are given equality awareness information. People becoming disabled while in employment will be given positive help to retain their jobs or to be considered for redeployment if that is necessary.

Success Criteria

Equal Opportunity will be recognised or highlighted in the following areas:

- Play/classroom interaction;
- Displays in school;
- Perceptions of parents;
- Teaching styles;
- Differentiated work;
- Use of resources;
- Teacher assessment.

Staff will tackle all forms of discrimination

The main objectives we are working towards are:

- To prepare all children to live and work together, with equality of opportunity as part of a multi-racial world;
- To build on the strength of cultural and linguistic diversity;
- To raise awareness and enable children to recognise and challenge inequality;
- To meet effectively the particular educational needs of all children;
- Racism will be treated seriously and any accounts of racist behaviour will be dealt with in guidance of the discipline and behaviour policy. These accounts will then be recorded.

In the classroom Teachers will:

- Raise awareness of similarities and differences of individuals and groups;
- Where appropriate encourage positive role models from the community to support work in the classroom and arrange relevant visits to religious buildings;
- Have high expectations so all children achieve their full potential, as well as encourage a positive self-image;
- Give opportunities for children to express and evaluate their own opinions and to respect the opinions of others;
- At all times encourage children to challenge stereotypes, prejudices and racism;
- Carefully choose books and materials and create displays that reflect the diversity within school, community and the wider world;
- Audit /monitor subjects ensuring equality issues are addressed;
- Be made aware of the ethnic mix, different religions and home language of children Identify children for EAL support;

In School Organisation and Management we will:

- Celebrate the success of individuals;
- Ensure all staff, teaching and non-teaching, are informed of the policy;
- Provide opportunity for children to work with people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures in a wide variety of roles including work, domestic and recreational;
- Monitor extra-curricular activities to ensure that children from all cultural groups are encouraged to take part;
- Carefully monitor data available to school, to ensure all children achieve their full potential.

Monitoring and Review

Practices and approaches involving equal opportunity in terms of age, ability, disability, gender, religion, race or cultural background will regularly be reviewed by the Head, Deputy Head and members of staff when auditing aspects of our ethos throughout the school. We will also audit our school policies to ensure they take account of inclusion and equal opportunities for all. Practices and procedures will also be amended in light of any changes to legislation. We will monitor pupil attainment/achievement and progress to ensure that we have equally high expectations of all pupils and no pupil is underachieving because of race, gender, ability, disability, age or culture. The Head will be responsible for the overall monitoring and reporting of issues relating to equal opportunities.

This policy will be reviewed annually
Policy Owner: TR Head, DH
Approved: TR Head
Date of last review: July 2025
Next review: July 2026