

RUSSELL LOWER SCHOOL

Equal opportunities and Inclusion - Equality Duty Statement and objectives **2025/26 – reviewed and proposed for 2026/27**

Legal Duties

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is a law which protects people from discrimination. It replaces all previous, separate equality laws including the Disability Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act and many others.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Previous equality duties involved schools producing separate policies and action plans for race, disability and gender. The new Equality Act introduces a single equality duty for all public sector organisations including schools, this is known as the 'public sector equality duty'.

The public sector equality duty requires all schools to show how they are meeting the aims of the Equality Act by giving 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct 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

Specifically to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that is connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that is different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act protects the same groups of people that were covered by previous equality legislation, but these groups are now referred to as 'protected characteristics'. The following is a list of the protected characteristics that must be covered by schools:

- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex (referred to previously as gender)

- Sexual Orientation

The protected characteristic of 'Age' applies to schools as employers, but not with regard to the treatment of pupils or prospective pupils.

The Act covers all aspects of school life which are to do with how a school treats its pupils and prospective pupils, and their parents and carers; how it treats its employees; and how it treats members of the local community.

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual accessing education provision. A school must not discriminate against a pupil with regards to:

- Admissions
- Provision of education
- Access to any benefit, facility or service
- Exclusions

It is also unlawful for a school to harass or victimise a pupil.

What do schools have to do?

Schools and other public sector organisations have two sets of specific duties which they must achieve to show that they are meeting their duty, they must:

- publish information which demonstrates their compliance with the duty to have due regard for the three aims of the general duty (as detailed below)
- prepare and publish specific and measurable objectives which they will pursue over the coming years to achieve the three aims

School governing bodies should work closely with the whole school community to:

- Evaluate how well the school is already achieving the three aims of the general duty across all of the protected characteristics listed earlier;
- Identify where there are gaps and prioritise these for actions identifying at least 3 measurable 'equality objectives' to focus on over the next 3 years;
- Develop a 'Single Equality' Policy, detailing all protected characteristics, and making clear the school's responsibilities under the Act, its commitment and what it will do to achieve 'equality of opportunity' for the whole school community.

Direct Discrimination and Indirect Discrimination

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person treats another person differently than they treat or would treat another person because of a 'protected characteristic'.

Discrimination arising from disability can happen if a person is treated unfairly because of something that results from, or is connected with their disability.

Example:

A pupil with cerebral palsy who is a wheelchair user is told she will be unable to attend a school trip to a local theatre which is showing a play that she is currently studying in English. This is because the building is not wheelchair accessible. The pupil and her parents are aware that the play is also on at a theatre in a nearby city

which is accessible but the school does not look into this option.
This is likely to be discrimination arising from a disability.

Unlike all other protected characteristics, treating a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person, because of their disability, is allowed under the act.

Example: A school provides extra lessons to a disabled pupil who has missed lessons because of attendance at medical appointments relating to their disability.

Further Examples of Direct discrimination

Example 1: A teacher at a school lets children know that there will be football trials for the school football team. The teacher states that the trials will only be open to male pupils. A female pupil wishes to take part in the trials but is told that she cannot. This is the only football team in the school.

The teachers' actions mean that the female pupil has been treated less favourably because of the protected characteristic 'sex', and as a result this is unlawful direct discrimination.

Example 2:

A pupil is unsuccessful in gaining a place at a Catholic primary school because his parents are a gay couple. This is direct 'sexual orientation' discrimination by association because of the boy's association with his parents.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when a school applies what is felt to be a general policy or practice which puts pupils sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage.

Example of Indirect Discrimination:

A school instigates a policy that no jewellery should be worn. A young woman of the Sikh religion is asked to remove her Kara bangle in line with this policy, although the young woman explains that she is required by her religion to wear the bangle. This could be unlawful indirect discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief.

Further information on the Equality Act:

<http://homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act>

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/governance/guidetothelaw/b0065507/gttl/equal-opportunities-and-governors>

Single Equality Policy

As a school we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The general duties are to:

- eliminate discrimination,
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

We understand the principal of the act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity.

A protected characteristic under the act covers the groups listed below:

- age (for employees not for service provision),
- disability
- race
- sex (including issues of transgender)
- gender reassignment
- maternity and pregnancy
- religion and belief,
- sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (for employees)

In order to meet our general duties, listed above, the law requires us to do some specific things to demonstrate how we meet the general duties. These are to:

- Publish equality Information – to demonstrate compliance with the general duty across its functions (We will not publish any information that can specifically identify any child)
- Prepare and publish equality objectives

To do this we will collect data related to the protected characteristics above and analyse this data to determine our focus for our equality objectives. The data will be assessed across our core provisions as a school. This will include the following functions:

- Admissions
- Attendance
- Attainment and Progress
- Exclusions
- Prejudice related incidents

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998. In fulfilling our legal obligations we will:

- Recognise and respect diversity
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging

- Observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development
- Aim to reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers
- Consult and involve widely
- Strive to ensure that society will benefit

Our Ethos/Mission

At Russell Lower School each child is treated as an individual and we respect everyone's opinion, faith, race and gender.

We aim:

- To provide a broad, well-taught curriculum, enabling all pupils to develop at their own pace and reach their full potential academically, physically, socially and spiritually
- To develop children's curiosity, imagination, love of learning and sense of fun.
- To create a happy, supportive and safe environment where children can become friends, learn to help each other and gain a greater understanding of community
- To foster self-discipline and independence, teaching children to make good choices and take responsibility for their actions

Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents

This school is opposed to all forms of prejudice and we recognise that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice related discrimination may fair less well in the education system. We provide both our pupils and staff with an awareness of the impact of prejudice in order to prevent any incidents. If incidents still occur we address them immediately.

Responsibility

We believe that promoting Equality is the whole school's responsibility.

Governing Body Responsibility:

Involving and engaging the whole school community in identifying and understanding equality barriers and in the setting of objectives to address these. Monitoring progress towards achieving equality objectives. Publishing data and publishing equality objectives. It will take an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment made to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all. Reviewing policies to enable equality to exist,

Headteacher Responsibility:

As above including:

Promoting key messages to staff, parents and pupils about equality and what is expected of them and can be expected from the school in carrying out its day to day duties. Ensuring that all school community receives adequate training to meet the need of delivering equality, including pupil awareness. Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.

Senior Leadership Team and staff Responsibilities:

To support the Head as above and to ensure fair treatment and access to services and opportunities. Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.

Teaching staff deliver the right outcomes for pupils.

Uphold the commitment made to pupils and parents/carers on how they can be expected to be treated.

Design and deliver an inclusive curriculum

Ensure that they are aware of your responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.

Non-Teaching Staff Support the school and the governing body in delivering a fair and equitable service to all stakeholders Uphold the commitment made by the headteacher on how pupils and parents/carers can be expected to be treated

Support colleagues within the school community

Ensure that you are aware of your responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents

Involve parents to take an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these

We will ensure that the whole school community is aware of the Equality information by sharing it via Governor and Staff Development meetings, by having copies available from the school office and on the school website. We will ensure that other policies, such as Teaching and Learning, Behaviour, SEN, RE planning and SMSC all work to support the Equality objectives in our day to day practice.

Breaches

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

Monitor and Review

Every three years, we will review our objectives in relation to any changes in our school profile. Each year we will agree **three** tangible actions to further promote the elimination of discrimination, to advance the equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

Actions and Objectives for 2025/26:

- eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

Area and objective	Action	Success Criteria	Person Responsible
Advance equality of opportunity – to create a positive and inclusive	School to collaborate with local organisations,	Collaboration with other groups	NW/SLT

environment regardless of race/religion/belief	faith groups, and community leaders to broaden children's perspectives and create opportunities for interaction. Invite a guest speaker to at least one assembly a term or organise off site visits for at least one non-church location	Visitors to assembly at least 3 times over the year Visit to at least one non-church place of worship over the year for at least one year group	
Foster good relations – to take steps to foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics (race, religion, disability etc.) and those who do not	To invite ex-students to lead deaf awareness day in 2026 To invite children to run their own assemblies around key non-Christian festivals such as Eid	Deaf Awareness day in 2026 is celebrated with ex-students leading assemblies and workshops Children have a greater empathy for children with disabilities, such as deafness Eid assembly is lead by the children and non-religious or Christian children have a greater awareness of how children in their schools celebrate.	NW/SK/DT
Eliminate discrimination – to support children who's behaviour is detrimental or dangerous minimise these behaviours through the use of the Therapeutic Thinking 'toolkit'	Create small interventions to support children with similar needs and with very different needs Parent workshops or coffee mornings to continue to inform parents	Increased awareness of neuro diversity and other SEND needs that can lead to detrimental/dangerous behaviour in school Increased support for children who 'think differently' to be accommodated in school	SK/NW/teacher s

	and create own support groups	Parents of neurodiverse/SEND children feel supported by a peer network and school Consider use of zones of regulation	
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Actions and Objectives for 2026/27:

1. **Levelling the social playing field**
2. **Ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to succeed, participate, and be heard.**
3. **Advance equality of opportunity**

Area and objective	Action	Success Criteria	Person Responsible
Levelling the Social Playing Field Inclusive play and social imagination	To launch a structured "Inclusive Play" initiative at playtimes that actively encourages mixing across different peer groups and ensures children of all abilities can access playground games- this to be developed in all 3 playgrounds	Playground staff logs will show a reduction in lunchtime behavioural incidents, and an annual pupil survey will show that 95% or more of children feel they have someone to play with.	GY/SLT
Ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to succeed, participate, and be heard. Developing Speech and language, through	Early identification of speech and language needs With timely referral to speech and	All children have the right support at the right time to allow them to thrive in all of school life. Where interventions are implemented clear progress and impact is evident.	SK, Phase leaders

the use of wellcomm	language where needed		
Advance equality of opportunity through enhancing Accessibility and Sensory Spaces	Review and adapt the indoor and outdoor learning environments—especially in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1—to ensure they are highly accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), specifically focusing on the sensory needs in each classroom/ plus the creation of an enhanced provision.	Classroom environmental audits will confirm that 100% of teaching spaces/ breakout provision have the supportive environments, and feedback from parent-teacher consultations for SEND pupils will show high satisfaction with learning adjustments.	