



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

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Next Review Date: September 2024

Introduction

This document details our equalities diversity policy and plan. It is designed to communicate the following:

- Our Diversity statement
- Our legal responsibilities in terms of race, disability, gender & gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation
- Our particular provision for Special Educational Need
- Our intention to promote community cohesion
- Our response to recent legislations
- Our desire to fully meet statutory requirements
- An overview of some actions we have taken to date
- Our Single Equality Plan

As an alternative provision, we are committed to equality and diversity and we recognise the importance of making sure our policies, procedures, and the way we run the provision are barrier free.

The purpose of this document is to show how our provision is going to promote equality for disabled pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community. We believe in treating everyone fairly and we are committed to creating an environment in our provision which is appropriate and accessible to all.

We aim to encourage and listen to the views of all members in developing the work of our provision. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole provision community working together - students, staff, and parents / careers. All school staff and members of the provision's community have a responsibility to treat everyone fairly and to promote arrangements for people with disabilities.

The Equality Act 2010 which came into force in April 2011 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one. All schools have duties to promote race, disability, and gender equality. Schools also have a duty to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across groups within the community.

The 3 aims of the general duty are:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation by removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who shared a protected characteristic and those who do not, by taking steps to meet their needs where they are different from the needs of others.
- To foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by encouraging participation in activities where it is disproportionately low.

REACH Learning Provision fully understands the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities

The protected characteristics, under the Act, are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Sex (including transgender people)
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnerships (for employees)
- Religion and belief

(see <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics> for further details)

The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a teaching environment to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil.

- In relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for pupils
- In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility, or service
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

Equality in Policy and Practice

- To provide and improve equality and excellence for all to promote the highest possible standards
- That every individual within our learning community should be given equal opportunity to achieve and succeed.
- To provide a wide range of learning experiences and development opportunities for all students and staff

Access to our policies and guidelines can be requested via email. Our policies are regularly reviewed in line with the provisions policy review schedule at which time all aspects of equalities are considered and reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation each year.

Opportunity to offer an opinion is made available through a range of established routes, including direct contact with keyworkers and staff; pupil voice activities; staff and parent questionnaires and through other direct contact with the provision.

Leadership, Management and Governance

REACH Learning Provision is committed to meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and aims to follow the good practice set out within the statutory codes of practice and guidance which support the legislation. While the provision has overall responsibility to ensure that equality is promoted throughout the organisation, it is the responsibility of all staff, including those helping on a voluntary basis, to promote equality.

- REACH recognises that all staff need to be aware of, and understand, their responsibilities regarding equality legislation and guidance.
- REACH recognises that discrimination may occur on more than one of the grounds at the same time and that equality of opportunity cannot be achieved by treating all people alike.
- REACH acknowledges that it has a key leadership role in promoting equality and community cohesion and recognises the need to work with school staff and partner organisations, including the local authority.

Policy planning, implementation, and review

REACH Learning Provision will endeavour to ensure that all relevant policies reflect the provisions commitment to the principles of equality and that this commitment is reflected clearly in all its work.

All staff are encouraged to contribute to the formulation, development, and review of policy documents. Where appropriate, we will take steps to enable the contribution of pupils and their parents/carers and other relevant parties.

All policies, procedures and strategies are regularly monitored, reviewed, and evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting equality. As further equality requirements come into force policies, procedures and strategies will be monitored, reviewed, and evaluated for their effectiveness in fulfilling the requirements of new legislation.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2006 defines a disabled individual 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’

REACH will make every reasonable adjustment to accommodate disability to ensure that everyone can access education. Changes, where necessary and reasonable, are made to ensure that access to provision is available.

Pregnancy, Maternity, and Parenthood

Any student who is pregnant during their statutory education years will be supported to complete their education. The provision has a protocol which clearly sets out how we will support a student who becomes pregnant, both in the provision, during their maternity leave and to encourage them back into education after the birth.

In addition, the provision always considers how best to support any student who faces the prospect of becoming a father.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment of any person can take many forms including verbal abuse, physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups of activities, unwanted looks or comments, jokes, or graffiti. A racist incident is defined as "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person"

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur:

- Physical assault because of a protected characteristic
- Use of derogatory names, insults, or jokes
- Ridiculing an individual because of race, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation
- Racist, sexist, or homophobic graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, or homophobic badges or insignia
- Bringing discriminatory material into the provision
- Verbal abuse or threats
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to race, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations or groups
- Refusal to cooperate with others on grounds of race, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Staff development including CPD and Performance Management

All staff at REACH will be encouraged to develop and achieve new skills whilst working at the centre. We are an inclusive provision which means that EVERYONE will have the same opportunities to progress.

We will keep staff performance records for each staff member and will have regular meetings to discuss any concerns and help with further development if requested.

We will also have the opportunity for staff to attend workshops to improve their skills.

If a staff member feels that they are being stopped from progressing within the provision, they can take their concerns to the Provision Manager, and we will work with them to resolve the issue.

Staff members are encouraged to speak to the Provision Manager regarding staff development.

Conclusion

REACH Learning Provision is fully committed to provide a learning and working environment that includes individuals from all walks of life. We believe that to build a better society, it is important to show the pupils at our provisions that we can all work together for the same common goal.

Discrimination of any person in our building WILL NOT be tolerated and will be dealt with immediately.

We are also committed to creating a diverse staffing environment as we believe that the pupils will benefit from learning about different people and their backgrounds.