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READING SCHOOL

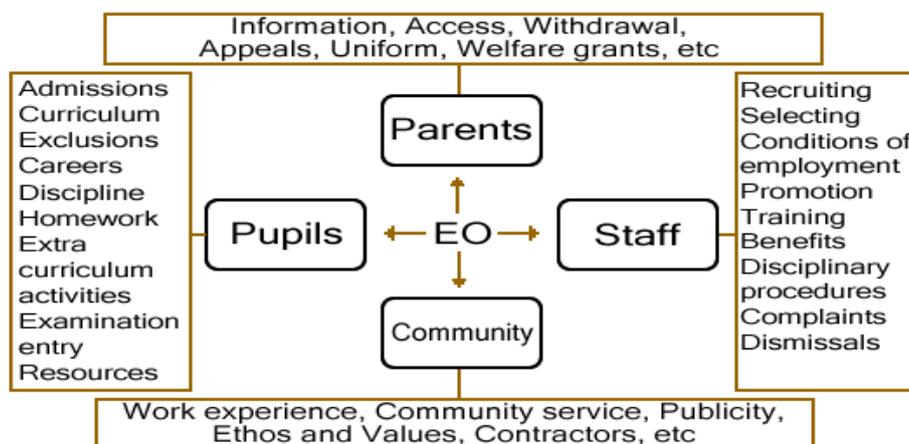
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Background - The Companies Act 2006

Reading School (The Academy) is the employer. The business of the Academy Trust is managed by the Governing Body.

Introduction

The scope of equal opportunities in the context of maintained schools can be illustrated by the following diagram, which shows how equal opportunities make an impact on the whole school - students, staff, parents and the community.



The Headmaster has a responsibility to ensure that he does not commit unlawful discriminatory acts and that the Governing Body's equal opportunities policy is implemented in the school. It is good practice for the Headmaster to ensure that:

- governing bodies have an equal opportunities policy which is regularly monitored and reviewed
- there is a procedure for checking that all staff know the equal opportunities policy and implement it both in other policy documents and in their own actions
- staff are aware of what constitutes direct and indirect discrimination
- staff have appropriate training related to equal opportunities, anti-bullying, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination
- performance management policies and practices reflect the school's commitment to equal opportunities

Student Issues

Reading School should make it clear to parents, carers and their students that the school has an equal opportunities policy that means it is committed to equality of opportunity for all its students. The Headmaster should monitor the impact of their policies and procedures on different groups with protected characteristic (i.e. sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage, pregnancy or maternity) and the effectiveness of such policies should be reported to and assessed by governors at committee and full governing body meetings. The Governing Body are required to publish a school prospectus for parents and prospective parents. The prospectus should include information about:

- Arrangements for the admission of students with disabilities.
- Details of steps to prevent disabled students being treated less favourably than other students.
- Details of existing facilities to assist access to the school by students with disabilities.

Admissions and the Curriculum

Reading School must ensure that their admissions policy fully embraces all aspects of the current National Admissions code.

Equality of opportunity does not mean that all students will study all subjects on offer, but it does mean that they should have an equal chance to study all such subjects. Care should be taken in the structuring of the timetable to make this choice real, particularly with respect to so-called 'non-traditional' subjects.

Where lack of prior education and experience in certain skills prevents students from participating in the full range of curricular options, schools should consider the possibility of mounting courses to provide students with the knowledge that they need.

Careers information - careers advice, interviews and literature must promote equality of opportunity.

Governors should be satisfied that students have access to all extra-curricular activities, visits and trips and that it is not assumed that certain activities are suitable for students. Governors should ensure that procedures for assessment and testing do not discriminate against students on the grounds of any appropriate protected characteristics. An example is in the use of language in the classroom by students and teachers.

Student Welfare and Pastoral Support

Codes of conduct for students must not discriminate between students, or ethnic groups. School clothing should not be a limiting factor on attendance. For example, Education Department guidance is to eliminate restrictive practices in the availability of school uniform.

Exclusions need to be monitored so that there is no prejudice towards students or ethnic groups. Appeal committees should try to have a gender balance and, where appropriate, an ethnic balance. Questioning and other formalities need sensitive handling such as the use of the term "forename" rather than "Christian" name.

Parental Issues

In some homes, it is sometimes difficult to give students support in their learning away from school, such as with homework tasks and work experience. Homework clubs can overcome problems related to completion of homework tasks and improve basic skills. Counselling should be available to deal with bullying and sexual harassment both in and out of school. Students and their parents should know what measures will be taken against culprits and that the school takes such matters very seriously indeed. Child abuse procedures should be known by all staff and appropriate training given.

Equal Opportunities and the Community

A sound approach to equal opportunities by a school will influence the outside community as it comes into contact with the school and as its students move into adulthood in the community. But careful watch needs to be kept on activities where the school has limited control. The two key areas are work experience and outside contractors working on site.

Work experience should be carefully checked on grounds of possible gender or race bias and employers should subscribe to the school's code on equal opportunities. Some training of staff and employers may prove useful in this context, as well as a clearly laid down work experience policy that includes equal opportunity issues.

Contractors on site need careful screening and account will be taken of whether contractors operate an equal opportunities policy.

Securing Impact

The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the efficacy of the Equal Opportunities Policy should be transparent and clear to all. A report should be provided for consideration by Governors at regular intervals.

Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010, people with protected characteristics (i.e. sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage, pregnancy or maternity) have a right not to be discriminated against in employment or access to goods or services.

The Act also places specific duties which require schools

:

(a) to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and

(b) to prepare and publish equality objectives.

The school routinely collects a large amount of data –e.g. through RAISE online - which presents performance data broken down by a number of relevant characteristics (sex, race, SEN etc) and which includes comparative analysis with national statistics and with comparable schools. This data is available publicly via the Department for Education website.

The Governing Body receives regular reports monitoring the effectiveness of policies which are directly relevant to its Equality Duty.

The school has prepared and published equality objectives.

A school must also draw up and implement an accessibility plan, aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

The school has drawn up and is implementing its accessibility plan.

References

- Legal dimension is taken from legislation in “A Guide to the Law for School Governors”.
- Equality Act 2010 implemented from 1st October 2010.

Approved by: EXPC Committee
Date: November 2015
Review Date: November 2017

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR STAFF

Statement of Policy

The governing body, the Headmaster and staff recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and, although equality of opportunity has been a long-standing feature of our employment practices and procedures, have made the decision to adopt a formal equal opportunities policy. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant or employee is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage, pregnancy or maternity, part-time working, or fixed-term working.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance. We will maintain a supportive working environment in which no staff member feels under threat or feels intimidated.

Recruitment and Selection

- The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions do not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.
- Promotion and advancement will be made on merit, and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
- Job descriptions will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.
- We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.
- We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources that provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
- All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.
- All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.
- Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person, where possible, in accordance with the selection policy approved by the governing body.
- Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
- Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

Training and Promotion

- Senior staff will receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.
- All promotions will be in line with this policy.

Monitoring

- We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

- Monitoring will involve:
 - the collection and classification of information regarding race in terms of ethnic/national origin, the sex and disability of all current employees;
 - the examination by ethnic/national origin, sex and disability of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants; and
 - recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of monitoring will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

Monitoring of applicants, as well as current staff will be undertaken, so as to ascertain the effectiveness of the policy and to help deal with complaints from unsuccessful candidates for vacancies.

READING SCHOOL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Introduction

Reading School is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for every person in the school community regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation, . Every attempt will be made to ensure that equal opportunities are reflected in all aspects of school life. Prejudice and discrimination in any form will be tackled, and students parents and staff must report any incident where they believe these are being exhibited. Students and parents must report any incident to the Form tutor and staff to their line manager or member of the senior management, if appropriate.

Reading School is committed to providing:

- an environment which stimulates and motivates students
- an education that realises the full potential of every individual student
- an atmosphere in which everyone flourishes, achieves and feels valued
- a caring and well disciplined school.

Within a friendly, caring and stimulating community Reading School will endeavour to educate and prepare its students from diverse backgrounds, cultures, faiths and communities for citizenship in a modern society.

The values of Reading School are grounded on respect for:

- working hard and to the best of ones ability and aptitude
- diversity of achievement in all areas of the school's life
- oneself and each other
- the wider community and the environment

The aims of Reading School are given below:

- to promote equal opportunities for all
- to enable every student to develop his aesthetic, cultural, social and physical talents
- to help students consider carefully key moral, religious and spiritual aspects of life
- to help students become considerate and responsible citizens able to make well-informed choices about their future

These aims form the core principles underpinning this equal opportunities policy. Equal opportunities is concerned with "enabling all individuals to develop their personal qualities and talents to the full, to learn to respond sensitively to ideas and beliefs that may not coincide with their own, and to respect views arrived at by reasoned thinking and argument. It requires that individuals accept the interdependence and common obligations of all human beings" (OfSTED).

It is widely accepted that students should be prepared for "adult life in multi-cultural, multi-lingual Europe, interdependent with the rest of the world".

Reading School has set itself the task of fostering tolerant, fair-minded attitudes and respect for others and to prepare individuals for citizenship as part of a British, European and world-wide community.

General Policy

- The School condemns racism, sexism and negative attitudes towards disability, homophobia and discrimination of any kind.
- All students should be helped to develop self-esteem and should feel valued as individuals.
- Students will be given opportunities to discuss and understand racism, sexism, homophobia as well as other forms of prejudice. It is important that everyone understand the hurt and harm caused by discrimination and prejudice of any kind.
- Dealing with discriminatory behaviour, abuse and intimidation is the responsibility of everyone - all students and staff can expect to be listened to and have their complaints investigated. If a student or a member of staff feels her or his complaint has not been properly dealt with s/he may take the matter to the Principal or the Chairman of Governors.
- Students or staff who have suffered racist, sexist, homophobic or other forms of personal verbal or physical abuse or intimidation will be supported by the school and anyone who has committed such offences will be appropriately dealt with.
- Students should be encouraged to be open-minded and to challenge prejudice.
- The school's performance in equalising opportunities will be monitored, including areas such as examination entries and successes, and school leaver destinations.
- Bullying and harassment of any kind will be dealt with swiftly and may lead to exclusion or dismissal where any allegation is proven with no extenuating circumstance.
- The governing body will monitor and keep under review its recruitment, appointments, promotions, staff training and other staff policies to ensure there is no overt or covert discrimination. However, the right is reserved, for specific appointments, to recruit either a male or female member of staff to comply with existing legislation (e.g. the supervision of students changing for PE).

Ethnic and Cultural Issues

- Students should be encouraged to contribute to their education and the education of others by bringing their cultural experience, values and perceptions to it.
- Attention should be given to the integration of students from different ethnic groups in the classroom and throughout the life of the school.

Gender

- Students should be encouraged to aim high and to utilise all the opportunities available to them in all areas of the curriculum and school life.
- Careers education should make students aware of the full range of opportunities available to them in a modern society.

Physical Disability

- Every effort should be made to integrate students with disabilities into the normal life of the school and the classroom.
- Classroom strategies should be adopted to help students with disabilities.
- The school will continue to improve access for students with mobility disabilities.

Sexual Orientation

The school has identified the measures it is taking in response to the Ofsted supplementary guidance regarding actions in schools to prevent homophobic bullying, published in February 2013, and will seek to ensure that these are fully effective.

Background

All parents should be made aware of financial help and concessions available in cases of hardship.

Race Equality

Reading School is committed to tackling racial discrimination in all its forms and is determined to promote race equality and good race relations across all areas of school activity. The policies of Reading School should reflect this commitment. Particular areas of importance include:

- Progress, attainment and assessment
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Student's personal development and pastoral care
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Admissions and attendance
- Curriculum provision
- Religious faith
- Staff recruitment and professional development
- Partnerships with parents and communities

Concluding Statement

Reading School aims to be aware needs of all are met. This Equal Opportunities Policy makes explicit the values of the school and seeks to ensure that all stakeholders are committed to upholding these values. Everyone in the school is of equal value and should have equal opportunities in school and in life. The governing body, the Headmaster and the staff recognise their responsibility for making this happen. This means being both flexible and adaptable.

Reading School
Appendix to Equal Opportunities Policy

Equality Objectives pursuant to the Equality Act 2010

THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

Reading School (The Academy) is the employer. The business of the Academy Trust is managed by the Governing Body.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which applies to public bodies, including Academies. The PSED extends schools' equality duties to all protected characteristics:

- sex,
- race,
- disability,
- religion or belief,
- sexual orientation,
- gender reassignment,
- pregnancy or maternity,
- marriage.

The duty came into effect in April 2011 and has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, the governing body are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, and between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The PSED introduces a secondary legislation in the form of specific duties. The specific duties require schools to:

- Publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the PSED.
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

It is a requirement under the Act that the Governing Body of Reading School publish at least one, or more, equality objectives. The equality objectives should help improve the experience of a range of different pupils.

Reading School's Equality Objectives for 2014-2018 are:

1. To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through all appropriate curricular opportunities, with particular reference to issues of equality and diversity.
2. To improve the quality of pupil voice through the Student Council with particular reference to equality and diversity issues.
3. To increase understanding of equality and reduce prejudice through direct teaching across the curriculum and the promotion of the use of appropriate language.
4. To promote cultural development and understanding, through a rich range of experience, to include all ethnic groups within our school community.
5. To promote understanding in relation to people with disabilities.

As well as its Equal Opportunities Policy, the school has implemented and will monitor the effectiveness of a number of other policies which are important in the achievement of the above objectives. These include:

- The Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Management of Student Behaviour Policy
- The Discriminatory Incidents Policy
- The SEN and Inclusion Policy
- The Sex and Relationships Education Policy
- The policy on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
- The Accessibility Plan

The school has also produced a statement on actions to eliminate homophobic bullying and is monitoring their effectiveness.