Equality & Diversity Policy

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1. Rationale

The Trustees and staff of Ribbon Academy are committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity and fostering inclusion throughout all aspects of school life.

The aim of this policy is to encourage and enable inclusion, participation and achievement through the management of staff, the curriculum, our pupils, parents and carers within an environment that recognises the different experiences, backgrounds and life chances of individuals. We seek to ensure that every member of our school community is respected, valued and supported to achieve their full potential.

We are committed to upholding and implementing these principles as:

- A provider of education
- An employer
- A procurer of goods and services
- A partner within our wider community

As a school, we recognise the unique opportunity we have to influence positive attitudes and behaviours by creating meaningful relationships and promoting understanding between people from different backgrounds and experiences.

This policy works alongside other school policies and impacts upon behaviour, safeguarding, curriculum delivery, attendance, admissions, recruitment and school culture.

2. Vision Statement

At Ribbon Academy, we are committed to creating a culture of belonging where everyone is respected, valued and able to thrive regardless of background, identity, ability or circumstance.

The staff and Trustees seek to:

- Develop confidence in children by providing equal opportunities and enabling them to become resilient, motivated and independent learners.
- Recognise and celebrate the unique characteristics and strengths of every child.
- Create an environment of high expectations, respect and appreciation for diversity.
- Promote fairness, dignity and inclusion for all who learn, work, volunteer or visit the school.
- Foster understanding, empathy and respect for others.
- Prepare pupils to become active, caring and responsible citizens within modern Britain and the wider world.

3. Our Equality Duty

Ribbon Academy is committed to meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Equality Duty requires schools to have due regard to the need to:

Eliminate

Unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.

Advance

Equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Foster

Good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age (employment only)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

By understanding the impact of our decisions and actions on different groups, we are better able to provide an inclusive and accessible education that meets the needs of all members of our community.

4. Equality Objectives (2026-2029)

Ribbon Academy will:

Objective 1: Reduce attainment gaps between vulnerable groups and their peers through targeted support and effective monitoring.

Objective 2: Ensure curriculum content reflects a diverse range of cultures, backgrounds, experiences and family structures.

Objective 3: Promote pupils' understanding of equality, protected characteristics and inclusion through curriculum activities, assemblies and enrichment opportunities.

Objective 4: Monitor and reduce incidents of discriminatory language, prejudice-based behaviour and bullying.

Objective 5: Ensure all pupils have equitable access to enrichment activities, educational visits, leadership opportunities and extra-curricular provision.

5. Aims

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- Every individual is given every opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- Equal access is achieved by everyone and for everyone.
- Changing needs are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- Staff, parents, carers and pupils understand issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Everyone shares a common vision of respect, fairness and equality.
- Stereotypes and prejudice are challenged.
- Positive attitudes towards diversity are developed.
- Consistency exists across the school in dealing with issues of inequality and discrimination.

- Resources are used effectively to support individual needs and talents.
- The quality of life and educational experiences of all members of the school community continue to improve.
- Pupils become caring, compassionate and responsible citizens.
- Understanding and respect for all members of society are actively promoted.
- Discrimination, harassment and victimisation are understood and actively prevented.

6. The Law

Ribbon Academy has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate against, harass or victimise:

- Prospective pupils
- Pupils on roll
- Former pupils
- Staff
- Parents and carers
- Visitors and members of the wider community involved in the work of the school

This includes behaviour which may intentionally or unintentionally cause offence because of a protected characteristic.

The Trustees are legally responsible for ensuring the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are fulfilled throughout the school.

Who is Protected?

The school cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Gender reassignment

It is also unlawful to discriminate against a pupil because of the protected characteristic of somebody with whom they are associated, such as a parent, carer or family member.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees

Trustees will:

- Ensure compliance with equality legislation.
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy.
- Review equality objectives and related outcomes.
- Challenge and support school leaders in promoting inclusion.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Lead on the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training.
- Monitor equality-related data.
- Report relevant information to Trustees.
- Address incidents of discrimination and prejudice.

Staff

Staff will:

- Promote equality and inclusion in daily practice.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour and language.
- Deliver an inclusive curriculum.
- Support pupils to understand and respect differences.
- Report concerns appropriately.

Pupils

Pupils will:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Value differences within the school community.
- Report concerns regarding discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Support the values of equality and inclusion.
- Work in partnership with the school.
- Share concerns through appropriate communication channels.

8. What is Discrimination?

Discrimination can take many forms, including:

Direct Discrimination

Treating somebody less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Applying a rule or practice that disadvantages a particular group.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation

Treating somebody unfairly because they have raised or supported a complaint relating to discrimination.

Discrimination Arising from Disability

Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected to their disability.

Failure to Make Reasonable Adjustments

Failing to remove barriers that place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage.

9. What Does This Mean at Ribbon Academy?

All pupils and adults have the right to:

- Learn, work and play within a safe environment.
- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Receive physical, emotional and verbal respect.
- Be free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.
- Have their protected characteristics respected.
- Be free from inappropriate language, stereotypes and prejudice.
- Feel safe and included.
- Access equal opportunities in admissions, learning, enrichment and school life.
- Be treated fairly during recruitment and employment processes.

Pupils and adults are encouraged to report concerns about discriminatory behaviour or comments.

All incidents will be addressed promptly and appropriately in accordance with the Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Safeguarding procedures.

10. Equality Through the Curriculum

Ribbon Academy recognises that the curriculum plays a vital role in developing understanding, empathy, respect and appreciation of diversity.

We are committed to providing a curriculum that reflects and celebrates the diverse world in which our pupils live and prepares them to contribute positively to society.

The iBelong Programme

As part of our commitment to equality and inclusion, Ribbon Academy delivers the **iBelong programme**, developed through the Peterlee Partnership.

Through a programme of in-class assemblies and structured learning opportunities, pupils develop:

- Awareness of protected characteristics.
- Understanding of equality and human rights.
- Respect for differences and diversity.
- Skills for challenging stereotypes and prejudice.
- Appreciation of different cultures, backgrounds, experiences and identities.

PSHE and Reading Curriculum

Protected characteristics and themes of diversity are further embedded throughout our PSHE curriculum.

Carefully selected texts and recommended reading books are used to:

- Increase representation of different cultures, faiths, identities and family structures.
- Develop empathy and understanding.
- Challenge stereotypes.
- Promote positive attitudes towards inclusion.
- Encourage discussion around fairness, respect and equality.

Wider Curriculum

Across all curriculum areas, staff aim to:

- Present diverse role models and achievements.
- Use inclusive language and resources.
- Celebrate cultural and religious diversity.
- Encourage respect for different viewpoints.
- Reflect modern Britain and global communities.
- Promote British Values and mutual respect.

The school actively reviews curriculum materials to ensure they represent diverse experiences and support the development of inclusive attitudes.

11. Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

Ribbon Academy is committed to ensuring disabled pupils, staff and visitors are not disadvantaged.

The school will:

- Make reasonable adjustments where required.
- Reduce barriers to participation and learning.
- Improve accessibility through its Accessibility Plan.
- Ensure curriculum opportunities remain accessible to all learners.
- Work collaboratively with families and external professionals to meet individual needs.

12. How Will We Know When We Are Successful?

Success will be measured through both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Quantitative Indicators

- Attainment and progress of different pupil groups.
- Attendance rates.
- Persistent absence rates.
- Exclusion and suspension data.
- Participation in clubs and enrichment activities.
- Numbers of prejudice-related incidents.
- Parental engagement.
- Staff recruitment and retention data where appropriate.
- Successful engagement with external agencies.
- Representation across the school community.

Qualitative Indicators

- Positive pupil voice.
- Positive staff and parent feedback.
- A welcoming and inclusive school environment.
- Effective communication systems.
- Strong pastoral support.
- Inclusive classroom practice.
- Representation within displays, books and resources.
- Positive community relationships.
- Evidence of respect and belonging throughout the school.

Data will be analysed where appropriate to identify patterns, emerging issues and areas requiring further action.

13. Evaluation and Monitoring

The school will:

- Deal promptly and effectively with incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying.
- Record and monitor equality-related incidents.
- Report incident data to Trustees on a termly basis.
- Review policies and procedures regularly.
- Monitor attainment, attendance and participation data.
- Consult with pupils, parents, carers and staff.
- Evaluate progress towards equality objectives.
- Provide staff training where appropriate.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to share their views regarding the implementation of this policy through established communication channels.

14. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Accessibility Plan
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- SEND Policy
- Relationships, Health and Sex Education Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy