



Equality & Diversity Statement

Information and Objectives

Introduction

This statement sets out the academies process for creating a prejudice-free environment. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The school's general duties with regard to equality are:

- Eliminating discrimination.
- Fostering good relationships.
- Advancing equality of opportunity.

We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise any staff member, pupil, prospective pupil, or other member of the school community and are inclusive of the protected characteristics:

- Sex.
- Age.
- Race.
- Disability.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Marriage and civil partnership.

We aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with special emphasis on promoting equality and diversity, and eradicating prejudicial incidents for pupils and staff. Our school is committed to not only eliminating discrimination, but also increasing understanding and appreciation for diversity.

Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation and guidance:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives.
- Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

This document aligns with the following school policies:

- Relational Behaviour Policy

- SEN Information Report
- Mental Wellbeing policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Supervision Policy

Meeting the needs of a diverse cohort

River Tees Hospital School recognises that pupils attending alternative provision often face complex and intersecting barriers to education. Most of our pupils will have experienced school exclusion, trauma, care experience, or challenges related to mental health, SEND, or socio-economic disadvantage. Our approach to equality is informed by these needs and includes:

- Trauma-informed, attachment aware practices and relational approaches to behaviour management.
- Adaptive learning that carefully consider EHCPs, SEN support plans, and individual needs.
- Flexible and compassionate support for re-engagement in education, recognising different starting points and past educational experiences.
- Targeted interventions to support individual needs and reasons for referral.

Aims to eradicate discrimination

Creating a prejudice-free environment in the River Tees Academies involves implementing various strategies and initiatives aimed at fostering inclusion, diversity, and equity. We achieve this by:

- *Promotion of Inclusive Curriculum:* we have developed and implemented a curriculum that reflects diverse perspectives, cultures, and experiences. This includes incorporating materials that represent individuals from various backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and socio-economic statuses. We are committed to having a balanced, diverse and fair curriculum. We believe that our pupils should be exposed to ideas and concepts that may challenge their understanding, to help ensure that pupils learn to become more accepting and inclusive of others. Challenging and controversial concepts will be delivered in a way that prevents discrimination and promotes inclusive attitudes.
- *Training and Professional Development:* Providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities for staff to raise awareness about unconscious bias, prejudice, discrimination, and privilege.
- *Student Engagement and Empowerment:* Pupil voice is especially crucial in building trust and a sense of belonging. Our staff work proactively to engage often-disengaged pupils by using relational approaches and ensuring their views influence behaviour policies, curriculum planning, and therapeutic interventions; encouraging student-led initiatives and activities that celebrate diversity and promote inclusivity. Regular Junior Leadership meetings that encourage and promote pupil voice across all aspects of school life.

- *Establishment of Anti-Bullying Policies:* Implementing clear and comprehensive anti-bullying policies that explicitly address discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic status.
- *Regular Monitoring and Evaluation:* Implementing systems for monitoring and evaluating incidents of discrimination, harassment, and bias within the school environment. This includes collecting data on the frequency, nature, and context of such incidents. We acknowledge the national evidence that certain pupil groups (e.g. pupils with SEND, boys and black pupils) are disproportionately represented in alternative provision. Our data monitoring includes analysis by protected characteristics and other contextual indicators (e.g. FSM, EHCP, CP and LAC status) to ensure that all students are treated equitably and that we address any patterns of exclusion or disadvantage proactively. Head teachers report on bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment and violence) in their reports to trustees.
- *Feedback Mechanisms:* Establishing channels for students, parents, and staff to provide feedback on their experiences. This feedback can be used to identify areas for improvement and guide the development of future initiatives and policies.
- *Continuous Improvement:* Committing to a process of continuous improvement by regularly reviewing and revising diversity and equality initiatives and policies based on feedback, data analysis, and evolving best practices in the field of diversity and inclusion.

By implementing these strategies and fostering a culture of respect, acceptance, and understanding, the River Tees Academies create a prejudice-free environment where all individuals feel valued, supported, and empowered to thrive academically and socially.

Dealing with prejudice and celebrating diversity

We do not tolerate any form of prejudice-related incident. Whether direct or indirect, we treat discrimination against all members of our school with the utmost severity. When an incident is reported, our school is devoted to ensuring appropriate action is taken and a resolution is put into place which is both fair and firm.

The River Tees Academies procedure for dealing with prejudice-related incidents typically involves several key steps aimed at addressing the issue effectively and fostering an environment of inclusion and respect:

- *Reporting and Investigation:* Encourage students and staff to report any incidents of prejudice or discrimination they witness or experience. Once reported, we promptly investigate the incident to gather all relevant information.
- *Support for Victims:* Provide support and assistance to the victims of prejudice-related incidents. This may involve counselling services or other resources to help the affected

individuals cope with the experience and address any emotional or psychological impact.

- *Disciplinary Action*: Take appropriate disciplinary action against the perpetrators of prejudice-related behaviour. This might include counselling, mediation, 1:1 bespoke interventions, suspension, or other consequences depending on the severity of the incident and school policies. The goal is to not only address the behaviour but also educate the individual about the impact of their actions.
- *Education and Awareness*: Use prejudice-related incidents as opportunities for education and awareness-building within the school. This can involve classroom discussions, workshops, guest speakers, bespoke interventions or diversity training programs aimed at promoting understanding, empathy, and respect for differences.

Throughout the year, River Tees Hospital School celebrate diversity by implementing various initiatives and activities that recognise and honour the different backgrounds, cultures, and identities within the school community. This includes planning activities for key diversity awareness days, inviting guest speakers to talk to pupils about diversity and incorporating lessons about diversity into the curriculum.

Equality and dignity in the workplace

We do not discriminate against staff with regard to their:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marital or civil partner status.
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

Equality of opportunity and non-discrimination extends to the treatment of all members of the school community. All staff members are obliged to act in accordance with the school's various policies relating to equality.

We guarantee that no redundancy is the result of direct or indirect prejudice. All disciplinary procedures are non-prejudicial, whether they result in warnings, dismissal, or any other disciplinary action.

Given the high prevalence of social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs among both pupils and staff in alternative provision, we prioritise mental health as a key part of our inclusion and equality work. This includes access to external mental health services, school-based therapeutic support including supervision, and ongoing staff wellbeing initiatives.

Diversity, representation and Inclusion

At the River Tees Academies fostering an inclusive environment for all members of the school community is a top priority. We believe that every individual, regardless of their background, identity, or abilities, should feel valued, respected and supported. We ensure that our staff, administration and trustees are a diverse representation.

We strive to create physical and emotional environments that are safe, welcoming, and affirming for all students, staff, and families. This includes implementing anti-bullying policies, being inclusive of LGBTQ+ students, creating gender-neutral facilities, and promoting mental health and well-being initiatives. We are committed to providing accommodations and support services to ensure that all students have equal access to education. This includes accommodations for students with disabilities, language support for English language learners, and financial assistance for families in need.

By prioritising diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our school community, we strive to create an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.