



The Rivers
C.of E. Academy Trust

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust

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1.0 The Rivers Values

At the Rivers C of E Academy Trust, our mission is:

- Extraordinary Education
- Extraordinary People
- Extraordinary Futures

We ensure that all staff are empowered to thrive and contribute brilliantly to an extraordinary education and that they have the confidence to be bold, innovative and out of the ordinary. Our people benefit from highly effective collaboration, learning and development.

Our mission and our STARS values are embedded in our HR policies and in the decisions that are made when using this policy.

2.0 Introduction

The Rivers CofE Academy Trust is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our pupils, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

In providing an extraordinary education, extraordinary people and extraordinary futures, the trust is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public.

3.0 Our Policy's Purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employees, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
 - pay and benefits
 - terms and conditions of employment
 - dealing with grievances and discipline
 - dismissal
 - redundancy
 - leave for parents
 - requests for flexible working
 - selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

4.0 Definition of Key Terms (ACAS)

To ensure clarity and consistency, the key terms below are defined in line with ACAS guidance and the Equality Act 2010.

Equality

Treating people fairly, ensuring they are not put at a disadvantage because of a protected characteristic, and complying with legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010. Equality is about preventing less favourable treatment and unlawful discrimination.

Diversity

Recognising, respecting and valuing the differences people bring to the workplace, including background, identity, skills, and experiences. Diversity supports fair treatment and contributes to a healthy organisational culture.

Inclusion

Creating a culture where everyone feels respected, supported, and able to participate fully. Inclusion means ensuring people are not excluded, disadvantaged, or marginalised through workplace practices.

Direct Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic such as age, race, sex, disability or others listed in the Equality Act. This includes exclusion from opportunities or making it harder for someone to do their job.

Indirect Discrimination

A rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but puts people with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage, unless it can be objectively justified.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation

Treating someone less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination or harassment or are believed to have done so. This includes being labelled a troublemaker, being left out, or denied opportunities.

5.0 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

As a public sector organisation, The Rivers C of E Academy Trust complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In carrying out our functions, we have *due regard* to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

To meet these duties, The Rivers CofE Academy Trust will:

- Integrate equality considerations into all strategic and operational decision-making.
- Publish annual information on our workforce and pupil-related equality data.
- Set and publish clear, measurable equality objectives at least every four years.
- Monitor progress regularly and report outcomes to trustees.
- Ensure staff understand the duty through appropriate training and guidance.

These actions support our wider commitment to creating an inclusive environment where all staff and pupils can thrive.

6.0 Responsibilities

To ensure this policy is effectively implemented, the following roles and responsibilities apply:

Trustees

- Provide strategic oversight of equality, diversity and inclusion across the trust.
- Ensure the trust meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).
- Hold senior leaders accountable for progress against equality objectives.

Executive Leaders

- Champion an inclusive culture and lead by example.
- Ensure EDI principles are embedded in policies, procedures, and strategic decision-making.
- Allocate appropriate resources to support EDI initiatives, training, and monitoring.

Managers and Leaders in Schools

- Promote a positive and respectful workplace environment.
- Address inappropriate behaviour promptly and fairly.
- Implement reasonable adjustments where needed.
- Apply trust policies consistently in recruitment, performance management, and staff development.
- Support staff to raise concerns through the appropriate channels.

All Employees

- Treat colleagues, pupils, families, and visitors with dignity and respect.
- Avoid discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and bullying.
- Use inclusive language and challenge inappropriate conduct when safe to do so.
- Participate in relevant EDI training.

HR Team

- Provide specialist advice and guidance on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Support leaders in applying this policy fairly and consistently.
- Monitor recruitment, workforce, and employee relations data to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- Coordinate reporting required under the Public Sector Equality Duty and support the development of equality objectives.

7.0 Our Objectives (February 2026 – February 2030)

The trust's objectives are to:

1. Cultivate an Inclusive, Respectful, and Healthy Organisational Culture

Foster a positive environment that values diversity, promotes equality, prevents all forms of harassment (including sexual harassment), and supports staff wellbeing and work-life balance through proactive initiatives and robust policies.

2. Ensure Fair, Equitable, and Accessible Employment Practices

Implement transparent and unbiased recruitment, retention, and progression processes - using positive action where appropriate - and ensure prompt, effective workplace adjustments to remove barriers for disabled employees.

3. Empower Staff Through EDI Training, Awareness, and Leadership Development

Provide ongoing training and professional development to build awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion; strengthen inclusive leadership skills; and equip staff to contribute to an equitable organisational culture.

4. Monitor, Analyse, and Report Workforce and Equality Data

Collect, analyse, and publish workforce and equality data annually to demonstrate compliance, identify disparities, and inform continuous improvement across all aspects of EDI.

5. Embed Strong Governance, Accountability, and Measurable Equality Objectives

Ensure trustees and senior leaders actively champion EDI, integrate equality considerations into strategic decision-making, and set clear, measurable equality objectives every four years, with progress reviewed and reported annually.

8.0 Agreement to Follow this Policy

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with trade unions and employee representatives.

9.0 Our Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures are available. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.