



# Robert Bloomfield Academy

## Equality Policy

Current Version	Autumn Term 2024
Minor changes made	
Significant changes made	
Ratified	
Validity	Review Annually
Next Review	Autumn Term 2025
Author	Seema Crowley, Associate Assistant Principal

## Mission statement

At Robert Bloomfield Academy (RBA), we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion and belief, or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Robert Bloomfield Academy, we aim to make diversity a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the BEST Equality Policy which sets out our legal obligations and roles and responsibilities.

## 1. Guidance relating to school policies

### Admissions and Exclusions

Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST) admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>.

Exclusions always follow RBA's Behaviour Policy. RBA closely monitors exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

### Teaching and Learning

RBA aims to provide all students with the opportunity to achieve, excel, and reach their potential. To do this, the academy will:

- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society.
- Have high expectations and aspirations for all students.
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and address any gaps in achievement and progress.
- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets.
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the academy, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexuality and disability, without stereotyping in our teaching resources, promotional materials, including the website and prospectus.
- Taking positive steps to decolonise the curriculum (so ALL of our students see themselves represented in the curriculum via deliberate representation).
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour or prejudice in assemblies and tutor time activities, as well as our notice board, displays and social media.

---

<sup>1</sup> As defined by s149 of the Equality Act, 2010

- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education.
- Encourage discussion of equality, diversity and inclusion issues which reflect on social stereotypes through our curriculum delivery.
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole academy population, which are inclusive and reflective of all our students.
- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which support is provided to individuals and groups of students.

### **Equal Opportunities for Staff**

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

### **Employer duties**

As an employer, we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

### **Race Equality**

The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins<sup>2</sup>.

### **Disability**

This section should be read in conjunction with RBA's Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Plan.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person 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'.

---

<sup>2</sup> As defined by part 2, ch1, s9, Equality Act, 2010

## **Gender Identity**

Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male students and between women and men, including transgender people. A transgender person has a gender identity or gender expression that differs from their assigned or biological sex.

RBA will actively seek to:

- Promote equality between genders.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment.

## **Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999**

Individuals who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment are protected from discrimination in work, school and vocational training.

Less favourable treatment relating to absences arising from gender reassignment is unlawful if:

- the treatment is less favourable than if it had been due to sickness or injury
- the treatment is less favourable than if it had been due to some other cause and, having regard to the circumstances of the case, it is reasonable not to be treated less favourably.

Less favourable treatment includes the arrangements relating to terms and conditions or arrangements under which employment, education or vocational training is offered.

## **Discrimination**

The Equality Act 2010 states that a school must not discriminate against a student because of their Transgender status. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice applies to everyone but puts a person with a particular protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and it cannot be justified as a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim. An example might be an inflexible school uniform rule which offers no “unisex” options such as trousers for girls, and which would therefore create a particular difficulty for a female to male student.

## **Sexual Orientation / Religion or belief**

The Equality Act 2010 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for students and treatment of students.

Individuals, in relation to religious belief, or lack thereof, will not be discriminated against.

RBA will actively seek to:

- Promote understanding of religions and belief
- Recognise the positive contribution that religion / belief can make to our school community

### **Fostering and Adoption**

Students who are undertaking the Foster to Adopt and/or adoption process within school will be made to feel safe and secure in their own identity and the identity of their family. Staff will acknowledge that family is created via different means and will not exclude or make a student feel uncomfortable/ insecure through the implication of 'real' family deriving from 'birth'. Staff will be sensitive when dealing with change of status of carer to parent and with change in name upon completion of adoption. Absence due to contact will be dealt with sensitively.

### **Tackling discrimination**

Harassment or victimisation because of any of the protected characteristics is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the academy environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.

Staff and Governors should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences:

- Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a senior member of staff where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Principal and racist incidents are reported to the Governing Body and Local Authority on a termly basis.

### **What is a discriminatory incident?**

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person".

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably, than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a prohibited act") in connection with the Act e.g. making an allegation of discrimination.

## **Types of discriminatory incident**

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress, etc.;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation.

## **2. Guidance relating to procedure**

### **Changing/Toilet Facilities**

There is provision within the Academy for unisex toilets. Transgender pupils/students will be able to use these facilities sensitively and appropriately. RBA has 5 separate unisex toilets across the site in addition to individually sexed toilet blocks. In terms of changing for PE/Dance, as pupils at RBA are not Fraser-Gillick competent, any decision made regarding an alternative provision would be made in partnership with Parents/Carers.

### **Academy Uniform**

Transgender pupils/students will be expected to follow the Academy Uniform Policy, which covers uniform, make-up and jewellery. At RBA, we have adopted a gender-neutral uniform which has numerous unisex options. Pupils are allowed to partake in PE uniform in the uniform that applies to their identified gender. We will also provide separate changing facilities where required. As pupils at RBA are not Fraser-Gillick competent, any decision made regarding uniform would be made in partnership with Parents/Carers.

### **Responding to and reporting incidents**

It should be clear to students and staff how they report incidents. Any incident can be reported to any member of staff, and staff are expected to follow the steps outlined in the behaviour and/or safeguarding policy with regards to passing the information on to relevant members of senior leadership. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole academy.



### **Monitoring of incidents**

All logged incidents will be monitored and reviewed via RBA school systems and the data will be used to inform how to improve practices and or policy.

### **Publishing of Objectives**

RBA will monitor objectives and share all progress made annually. The LGB and the COO will review the objectives and progress made annually, and the progress will be published in the form of update on the RBA school website.

### **Author and Date**

Seema Crowley, Assistant Associate Principal September 2024

Approved by the Principal

Next review date – September 2025