



**The Robert Carre Trust**

## **Equality and Diversity Policy (Students)**

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## Statement of intent

The Robert Carre Trust understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, all schools have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality between different groups.
- Foster good relations between different groups.
- Promote mental health and wellbeing.

Our Trust's overall values are underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to ensuring that every student receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential, and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our students. We are committed to supporting and celebrating all students' individual identities. We have developed this policy to provide a clear framework for how we will achieve our school's aims.

Our school's demographic state is directly linked to our overall aims for achieving equality. Specifically, we aim to:

- Ensure that no student is disadvantaged by having any protected characteristic.

To achieve our aims, we will adopt the following methods:

- Embedding equality within teaching and resources
- Using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of our school
- Promoting community cohesion
- Promoting parental engagement
- Investing in regular staff training
- Using key data, such as measures of wellbeing, to monitor the progress of students with protected characteristics
- Regularly reviewing our policy to ensure it reflects current trends and issues

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy has due regard to statutory and good practice guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE (2018) 'Gender separation in mixed schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- School Uniform Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- RSE and PSHE Policy

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The Trust will:

- Be responsible for ensuring the Trust complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure students and potential students will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:
  - Admissions.
  - The way the school provides and education for students.
  - How students are provided with access to benefits, facilities and services.
  - The exclusion of a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- Ensure all policies are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans in collaboration with the headteacher.

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School will:

- Implement and champion this policy, ensuring that all staff and students apply its guidelines fairly in all situations.
- Conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Review and amend this policy, taking into account new legislation and government guidance, and previously reported incidents, in order to improve procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for students who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.

Staff will:

- Be alert to the possible harassment of students, both inside and outside of the schools, and to deal with incidents of harassment and/or discrimination as the highest priority.
- Carry out their statutory duties relating to equal opportunities and inclusivity, and pertaining to their specific roles.
- Have due regard to the sensitivities of all students, and not provide material that may cause offence.
- Act as a role model for equality, diversity and inclusion across the whole school community.

## **3. Protected characteristics**

Staff will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a student, or prospective student, because of their:

- Sex.
- Race.

- Disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy or maternity.

Staff will not discriminate against a student, or prospective student, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent, with whom the student or prospective student is associated.

Staff will not discriminate against a student, or prospective student, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if the belief is mistaken.

#### **4. Sex**

For the purpose of this policy, sex refers a student's biological assignment at birth depending on their reproductive organs. The school understands that some students identify as a gender different to the sex they were assigned at birth, and we will support students through their transitioning phases.

#### **5. Race and ethnicity**

Staff will ensure that students of all races and ethnicities are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other students and the school will regularly review its practices to ensure that they are fair.

Staff will ensure students with EAL are treated equally and fairly, while ensuring they are supported at all times.

The school will not segregate students on the basis of their race or ethnicity, understanding that claims of 'separate but equal' will not be tolerated, and that such actions will always be viewed as direct discrimination.

The school may, however, take positive action, e.g., organising open days for students and families of a specific race that is under-represented, to address the particular challenges affecting students of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

#### **6. Disability**

Staff will ensure that students with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other students simply because they have a disability, which includes any mental health issue, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.

The school will avoid implementing rules that could have an adverse effect on students with disabilities (e.g., by making physical fitness a basis for admission, or asking all students to deliver a presentation, as this could be unfair towards students with anxiety), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

Staff will ensure that they do not discriminate against students with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a student on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for them to get in and out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

The school will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of students with disabilities, especially where the student also has SEND but does not have a SEND statement or EHC plan.

The school will meet its duty to undertake accessibility planning for students with disabilities and ensure that an Accessibility Plan is implemented and reviewed where necessary.

The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for students with SEND.

## **7. Religion and belief**

Staff will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their religion or belief.

The school will ensure that students are provided with the appropriate space in which they can practice their faith, e.g., to perform their daily prayers.

Absences in relation to religious observances will be handled in accordance with the school's Attendance and Absence Policy.

The school will liaise with local religious leaders of all faiths to inform the amount of leave students will be granted in relation to religious observance.

## **8. Sexual orientation**

Staff will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bisexual students, or the children of gay, lesbian or bisexual parents, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other students.

The school will ensure that students are taught about the nature of marriage, including same-sex marriage, by presenting the facts of English and Welsh law – teachers will not offer personal opinions when discussing marriage in RSE. The school will educate students on positive relationships, families and gender identities within the LGBTQ+ community. PSHE & RSE lessons will be taught in accordance with the school's policy.

Staff will ensure that any religious beliefs with regards to sexual orientation are taught to students in an educational context, in a manner that is not prejudicial or discriminatory.

Staff will support LGBTQ+ students to feel comfortable and ensure they can celebrate their identity.

The school will ensure that there is a designated safe space where students can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

## **9. Gender reassignment**

Staff will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably in relation to gender reassignment, i.e., because they are trans or have trans parents, siblings or other family members. The school recognises that gender reassignment does not necessarily involve physical change, and can be solely social and emotional.

Pupils will have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code, outlined in our School Uniform Policy.

The school will ensure that there are suitable toilet and changing facilities for students to use, including:

- Gender-specific toilets and changing facilities.
- Private changing facilities.

The facilities will be made available to all students and students can use the facility they feel most comfortable in, e.g., if a trans student wished to use a private changing room.

The school will support trans students to feel comfortable and ensure they can celebrate their identity.

The school will ensure that there is a designated safe space within the school where trans students can discuss issues of gender without fear of discrimination.

## **10. Pregnancy and maternity**

The Trust will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because they become pregnant, have recently given birth, have children or are breastfeeding.

The Trust will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for the treatment and support of students who are pregnant or have just given birth.

## **11. Looked-after children (LAC)**

LAC and previously LAC (PLAC) will be given the highest priority for admissions, as per the requirements of our Admissions Policy.

Staff will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.

A personal education plan will be created and implemented for all LAC and PLAC, to ensure that their education and development needs are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.

Staff will ensure that any SEND that LAC or PLAC have are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.

The Trust will adhere to its LAC Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for LAC.

## **12. The curriculum**

Students will be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, and the school will not make any unjustified changes to curriculum content on the grounds of any protected characteristics that a student may have. The school will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way that prevents discrimination and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.

To ensure equality, diversity and acceptance are taught and promoted throughout each subject area, this is taught within all aspects of the curriculum and more specifically addressed in PSHE / RSE lessons and in the Personal Development Curriculum.

The observation of inclusive teaching strategies will remain a key aspect of the SLT's annual programme of monitoring.

The Trust will respect the right of parents to withdraw their child from sex education.

## **13. Promoting inclusion**

The Trust will promote inclusion and equality at our school through:

- Ensuring that students are called by their preferred names, which may be different from their legal names, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that our Trust and staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
- Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
- Instilling in students an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.
- Providing a variety of educational and residential visits that expose students to a wide range of cultural experiences.
- Ensuring equal access to opportunities, such as extracurricular activities and the curriculum.
- Taking care in the use of language and the choice of resources, so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.
- Valuing the cultural experiences and contributions of all students, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.
- Communicating our policy to parents to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
- Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the school councils.
- Promoting equality of opportunity within the wider society.
- Ensuring admission arrangements will not unfairly disadvantage a student from a particular social or racial group, or with SEND.

#### **14. Students that have left school**

The school's responsibility to not discriminate, harass or victimise will not end when a student has left school. It will continue to apply with regard to subsequent actions related to our previous relationship with the student, such as the provision of references.

#### **15. The Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Trust will meet its duty to publish:

- Annual information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding students who have any of the protected characteristics outlined in the [Protected characteristics section](#) of this policy.
- Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how the school may further equality.

There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and students will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

#### **16. Bullying and discrimination**

Our Anti-bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

Any bullying incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School will decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services and/or the police of any incident.

Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in the Complaints Procedures Policy.

## **17. Staff training**

New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their induction.

Whole-school staff training for will be delivered in-house on a regular basis as well as via Hays Safeguarding training

Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training that will:

- Focus on staff specialisms in relation to equality, for example, a focus on homophobic bullying to address a planned approach towards inclusion.
- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support students with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards students with protected characteristics.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.
- Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and students about any issues related to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that the schools are aware of, and have to opportunity to participate in, relevant awareness days, such as Black History Month, World Disability Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Pride, and International Women's Day.

**Approved by Trustees 10 August 2023**

**Date of next review September 2024 (Annual)**