



RUGBY SCHOOL

Equal Opportunities Policy (Students)

Advent 2025

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Rugby School (the School) is an independent mainstream boarding and day school for girls and boys aged from 13 to 18 years. The School is a registered charity with a Christian ethos and welcomes staff, workers, volunteers, students, parents, applicants and governors from all different ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds. The term School Community includes staff, governors, students, parents, visitors and volunteers.
- 1.2 Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Rugby School.
- 1.3 The School recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms (including cyberbullying) is unacceptable. The School will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying for any reason. The School's Counter-Bullying Policy contains more details about counter-bullying practices.
- 1.4 The School recognises the benefits of having a diverse School Community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Students will be taught to value and respect others. The School is committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and is committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the School Community. In the provision of equal opportunities, the School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination on the basis of:
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief (including where an individual does not subscribe to a particular religion or belief)
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation and (in the case of adult members of the School Community)
 - Marital or civil partnership status and age.
- 1.5 These are called the Protected Characteristics. The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need, learning difficulty, disability (SEND), or because English is an additional language.
- 1.6 The School aims to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities. The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, through the supportive School culture, and through the School's policies.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members of the current and prospective School Community. All members of the School Community are expected to comply with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times.
- 2.2 Staff at the School, particularly those working at a management level, have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard to equal opportunities.
- 2.3 There is a separate Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy for Staff, found on the Employee Self Service platform. That policy includes the recruitment of staff.
- 2.4 All parents are expected to support the aims of this policy and the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

3.0 Policy aims

- 3.1 Through the operation of this policy we aim to:
- 3.2 Communicate the commitment of the School to the promotion of equal opportunities for its students.
- 3.3 Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics.
- 3.4 Promote equal treatment within the School for all members of the School Community.
- 3.5 Create and maintain an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination.
- 3.6 Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School.
- 3.7 Comply with the School's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.8 Remove or help to overcome barriers for students where they already exist.
- 3.9 Make it clear that, and ensure, that all discriminatory words, behaviour and images are treated as unacceptable.
- 3.10 Take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled people at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustments' duty).

4.0 Admissions

- 4.1 The School will treat every application in a fair, open-minded way, subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of welfare and safety.

- 4.2 The School accepts applications from, and admits students, irrespective of their Protected Characteristics and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered.
- 4.3 Every application will be considered on its merits within the School's criteria for selection on grounds of the student's ability and aptitude, but this will not be done as a way of excluding students with a disability or special educational needs.
- 4.4 The School's Admissions Policy reflects the School's approach towards equal opportunities and is consistent with this policy.

5.0 Education and associated services

- 5.1 The School will take reasonable steps to afford all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services, and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The School will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- 5.2 The School will:
- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination.
 - Endeavour to meet the needs of all pupils and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics.
 - Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support.
 - Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds.
 - Challenge inappropriate and unacceptable discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff.
 - Encourage pupils to work and play freely and have respect for all other pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic.
 - Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of co-curricular activities.
 - Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School.
 - Ensure that it reviews, monitors, and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices.
- 5.3 The School will use the curriculum, including PSHEe, Chapel and assemblies, to:
- Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
 - Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.

- Encourage pupils to question and challenge assumptions and stereotypes in order to better understand discriminatory behaviours and bias.
- 5.4 The School may afford students of a particular racial group, or students with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the students in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.
- 5.5 The School will not discriminate against any student by excluding them from the School, or by subjecting them to any other detriment, on the grounds of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs, subject to section 10 of this Policy, 'Religious belief'.
- 5.6 Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example, sex or race), so that this can be eliminated in both the School's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias.
- 5.7 All students are encouraged to work and play freely with, and to have respect for, all other students, irrespective of their Protected Characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the School, and students will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

6.0 School uniform

- 6.1 The approach to School uniform is outlined in the Guidelines for Life at Rugby School. The Guidelines for Life at Rugby School is consistent with this policy. The Guidelines for Life at Rugby School applies equally to all students, irrespective of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, the School will consider reasonable requests to alter the School Uniform, for example, for genuine religious requirements and reasonable adjustments for disabled children.
- 6.2 Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by students when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the School's existing School Uniform Policy principles (in regards to, for example, the school colours). Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the student or their parents to the Head Master, whose decision will be final, subject to the Complaints procedure.

- 6.3 Reasonable adjustments may be required to the School Uniform for disabled students who require them. The student or their parents should refer the matter to the Head Master to ensure all reasonable adjustments are made.

7.0 Religious belief

- 7.1 The School's Christian ethos, services and timetable are rooted in Christian Tradition expressed through the doctrine of the Church of England. However, the School respects the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with other faiths, or no faith. The School will take all reasonable steps to enable members of the school community to fulfil religious observance in an appropriate manner.
- 7.2 The governing body, through the senior management team, actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

8.0 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

- 8.1 We are an inclusive School which welcomes members of the School Community with disabilities and special educational needs. We maintain and drive a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people and those with special educational needs in all the activities of the School and we will not treat a member of the School Community less favourably on these grounds without justification. We will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the School's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone. Our Policy on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is consistent with this policy.
- 8.2 Children have Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a "substantial and long-term adverse effect" on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activity (Equality Act 2010).
- 8.3 The School has an on-going duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled students and students with special educational needs in respect of the education and associated services provided to ensure that such students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other students. This is a broad expression that covers all aspects of School life, for example:
- the curriculum,
 - classroom organisation and timetabling,
 - access to school facilities,
 - clubs and visits,
 - school sports,
 - and school policies.

- 8.4 Reasonable adjustments may typically include:
- Making arrangements for a child in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room.
 - Allowing extra time for a dyslexic child to complete an entrance exam.
 - Providing examination papers in larger print for a child with a visual impairment.
 - Rearranging the timetable to allow a student to attend a class in an accessible part of the building.
 - Arranging a variety of accessible sports activities.
- 8.5 The School is not legally required to make adjustments which include physical alterations such as the provision of a stair-lift or new ground floor facilities, or a new library.
- 8.6 In making 'reasonable adjustments' the School is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled students. The School will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services.
- 8.7 In accordance with the School's terms and conditions, parents of students must notify the School in writing if they are aware or suspect that the student (or prospective student) has a disability or if they (either parent), the student (or prospective student), or immediate family have at any time had, or has a learning difficulty. The registration form enables prospective parents to give details of their child's disability when applying for a place at the School. Parents must provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information upon request. Providing the School with such information will enable the School to support the student as much as possible. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis where it is necessary for members of staff to be informed of any particular vulnerability of a student. The School will have due regard to any request by a parent or student (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential.
- 8.8 Applications for a place at the School will be considered on the basis that reasonable adjustments (see definition above) have been made by the School in order to cater for the child's special educational needs and/or disability. The School will not offer a place if, after reasonable adjustments have been made, the School will not be able to provide adequately for the student's physical and educational needs. The School shall inform the parents of their decision and give details of the reasonable adjustments they are going to make or give reasons why an offer of a place has not been made.
- 8.9 Where the School becomes aware of a disability or special educational need of an existing student, the School will do all that is reasonable to assist the student whilst at the School, which may include making reasonable adjustments. If in the professional judgement of the Head Master, and after consultation with the parents and the student (where appropriate), the School cannot provide adequately for the student's physical and educational needs after all reasonable adjustments have been made, parents will be asked to withdraw the student, without being charged fees in lieu of notice and with the

acceptance deposit returned. The School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide their child with the necessary environment and level of teaching and support.

8.10 The School will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the School will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises.

8.11 The School has an Accessibility Plan, which is kept under review and revised as necessary. The Plan is available on request from the Deputy Head.

8.12 SENDCO: The School has a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator.

9.0 Students with Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)

9.1 The School's Policy on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND Policy) includes details about the welfare and educational provision for students with and EHCP.

10.0 Students with English as an additional language

10.1 Students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) will receive additional learning support if necessary. The School will consult with the student and the parents as appropriate. The School has appropriate welfare support for all such students through the supportive House culture.

10.2 Provision for students with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs

10.3 The School will make individual provision for such students where necessary and in accordance with this policy.

11.0 Responsibilities

11.1 All members of the School Community are expected to comply with this policy and therefore to treat others with dignity at all times.

11.2 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the School's Equal Opportunities Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Board of Governors has delegated to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review.

12.0 Monitoring and review

12.1 To ensure that this policy is operating effectively with respect to admission and selection, the School monitors applicants' sex, race, disability and religion or belief confidentially as part of the Admissions procedure. We also maintain records of this data in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy.

- 12.2 The Deputy Head regularly monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy and reports to the governors annually on the policy's effectiveness in practice.

13.0 Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination

- 13.1 If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Deputy Head.
- 13.2 If you believe that you have received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed in this policy, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to your detriment, you are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's formal Complaints Procedure. For a copy of the School's Complaints Procedure, please contact the Deputy Head. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.
- 13.3 If you would like to report a breach of this policy that does not constitute a complaint, please contact the Deputy Head. Alternatively, students may contact their Hm, or the Head of Safeguarding, who will pass information about a breach on to the Deputy Head.
- 13.4 We will treat seriously and urgently investigate every complaint and report. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the School Community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy.
- 13.5 All reported breaches of this policy will be recorded, and this record will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Head.
- 13.6 The School will publish sufficient information to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty annually.

14.0 Related policies and statutory guidance

- 14.1 This Equal Opportunities Policy (Students) is consistent with all of the School's policies, including:
- The Admissions Policy
 - The Guidelines for Life at Rugby School
 - The Rewards and Discipline Policy
 - The Counter-Bullying Policy
 - The Accessibility Plan
 - The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - The SEND Policy
 - The Complaints Procedure
- 14.2 This Equal Opportunities Policy is consistent with statutory guidance, including:
- Equality Act 2010
 - Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2024

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

15.0 Policy Owner

15.1 This policy is the responsibility of the Deputy Head.

Authorised Compliance and Risk Committee:
Date: Advent 2025