



River Learning Trust

Equality Statement

and Supporting Material

Person responsible for policy: Chief Executive

Revised: July 2016

Review Date: July 2017

Introduction

The River Learning Trust is committed to promoting equality and respect regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity.

This statement should be read alongside the River Learning Trust Equal Opportunities Statement, Accessibility Statement and Dignity at Work Policy.

A [model Equality Objectives](#) document is available in Appendix A (*statutory*)

A [model Equality Plan](#) is available in Appendix B (*recommended – takes place of objectives*)

[Supporting material](#) to help in drawing up Equality Objectives and Plan is available in Appendix C

Principles

Each school within the River Learning Trust will follow the National Curriculum Inclusion principles:

- Set suitable learning challenges
- Respond to pupils' diverse needs
- Overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

The principles of the River Learning Trust are:

- **Commitment to Excellence**; striving for the best educational experience
- **Everyone Learning**; creating and taking opportunities that enhance lives
- **Respectful Relationships**; acting with care, integrity, and fairness in all we do

What is Disability Equality and how does the Equality Act impact on schools?

Under the Equality Act there is a requirement for public sector bodies, including schools, to promote equality for disabled people in every aspect of their work. Schools will need to take an organisational approach to formulating policy and practices, which positively promote disability.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and Academies, and which extends to all protected characteristics – race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements.

In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**
- **Advance equality of opportunity**
- **Foster good relations**

This duty requires schools to adopt a proactive approach, mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and activities. The duty does not just apply to disabled pupils; it applies to any non-educational services schools provide. The duty applies also to parents, members of staff, visitors to the school, local community members and to potential pupils of the future.

Schools can implement the general duty by actively reviewing all their policies, procedures and planned access improvements to remove barriers, with a view, for example, to greater recruitment and retention of disabled staff, greater participation of disabled pupils, disabled parents and community members.

What are the specific duties?

The specific duties require schools:

- **To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty**
- **To prepare and publish equality objectives, and (optional) an equality plan**
- **To prepare and publish an accessibility plan**

Schools need to update their published information at least annually and to publish objectives at least once every four years. The River Learning Trust has produced supporting material for its schools to prepare an accessibility plan.

Leadership and Management in our Schools – a commitment to inclusion and equality

A clear ethos is set by the local governing bodies and the school management, which reflects the schools' commitment to equality for all members of the school communities. The schools' advance equalities of opportunity through positive and proactive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity.

Governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.

The school management works in partnership with others to eliminate all forms of oppressive behaviour; prejudice related incidents and discrimination.

All members of the school community, including pupils, parents, community and staff are consulted and contribute to the development and review of relevant policy documents. The school ensures the involvement of governors and takes positive action to enable consultations and contribution of all.

The evaluations of plans and policies are used to set equality objectives and address equality issues. The development of teaching and the curriculum are monitored to ensure high expectations of all pupils and appropriate breadth of content in relation to the school, local, UK and global community.

The Local Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation and ensures that the policy, related procedures and strategies are implemented. The Headteacher will also ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy.

Equality Objectives

Schools are required to have Equality Objectives showing how they are planning strategically and the impact this has over time following the duties of the Equality Act 2010. These general duties are to:

- eliminate discrimination,
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

The River Learning Trust understands the principal of the act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity. The Equality Act defines ‘protected characteristics’ as disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and pregnancy and maternity. We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

A [model Equality Objectives](#) document is available in Appendix A (*statutory*)

A [model Equality Plan](#) is available in Appendix B (*recommended – takes place of objectives*)

[Supporting material](#) to help in drawing up Equality Objectives and Plan is available in Appendix C

Essential Documents and Useful Links

All schools should have the following documents:

- [Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in Schools and Early Years’ Settings](#)
- [Promoting Disability Equality](#)

Further guidance is available on the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) website.

A list of [useful links](#) is available in Appendix D



River Learning Trust Model Equality Objectives

Name of School

Date Objectives set

Following an audit of equalities in our school, the governing body has agreed the following Equality Objectives:

*There is no prescription about the **number** of objectives. Your objectives may cover **Teaching, learning and curriculum; Equity and Excellence for All; Community Engagement and extended services.***

	Equality Objective	Success Criteria How we will know we are making progress	Actions to be taken	Aims of the Equality Duty (Circle the aim that applies)	Protected Characteristics (Tick the groups to which it applies)
1.		<p>Within 12 months</p> <p>Within 2 years</p> <p>After 4 years</p>		<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination</p> <p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>Foster good relations</p>	<p>Race</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Religion or Belief</p> <p>Sexual Orientation</p> <p>Age</p>
2.		<p>Within 12 months</p> <p>Within 2 years</p> <p>After 4 years</p>		<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination</p> <p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>Foster good relations</p>	<p>Race</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Religion or Belief</p> <p>Sexual Orientation</p> <p>Age</p>

River Learning Trust Model Equalities Plan

Introduction

Our School is committed to ensuring that *(summary of the school's general position - to cover gender, race, disability and any others and how it applies to pupils, staff, governors and parents/other visitors – see RLT Equality and Accessibility Statement introduction)*

The school recognises it has to make special efforts to ensure that all groups prosper including:

- Boys and girls, men and women
- All minority ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers
- Pupils or families with different religions or beliefs
- Pupils and others with special educational needs
- Pupils and others with a range of disabilities
- Children looked after and their carers
- Children or staff who are gay or lesbian
- Pupils or staff who are pregnant or have just given birth
- Pupils or staff undergoing gender reassignment

Describe how the school analyses pupil achievement to identify vulnerable individuals or groups

What sort of school are we?

Paragraph summarising main issues for the school from an equalities perspective, such as:

- Geographical location
- Ethnic composition of pupils and staff
- Gender
- Disability
- Socio-economic backgrounds of pupils

- Attainment levels of different groups of pupils
- Cultural, faith and linguistic diversity of pupils
- Pupil mobility
- Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers

The school has identified the following issues that may be barriers to effective learning and successful working at the school:

- Low self esteem, low expectations and peer group pressure
- Experience of bullying, harassment or social exclusion
- Low income leading to difficulty in participating in some aspects of school life and no adequate home study space
- Low parental support or different parental expectations
- Frequent moves and lack of stability in life leading to time out of school or low attendance
- Lack of help with emotional, mental & physical well-being and poor behaviour including exclusions
- Language difficulties
- Special Educational Needs
- Lack of physical access to school facilities or services
- Inappropriate curriculum
- Recruitment, management and development of staff and governors

....and any others that apply

School's Commitment to Equalities

As a school we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The general duties are to:

- eliminate discrimination,
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

We understand the principle of the act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity. We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The school recognises that Positive Action provisions in the Equalities Act 2010 allow us to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics. If we decide to use these we will ensure that it is a proportionate response to achieve the relevant aim.

Priority Success Criteria	Action to be taken	Lead Staff	Additional Resources, Budget	Milestones	Monitoring and evaluation summary
			<i>To be included within the budget plans for the year</i>		

Appendix C

Supporting material to help draw up Equality Plan

Establishing, maintaining and developing a school culture and ethos

- *Celebrate diversity/equality*
- *Celebrate achievement*
- *Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people*
- *Promote positive attitudes towards people of different ethnic groups/religions etc*
- *Involve pupils, parents and staff*
- *Promote high expectations*
- *Demonstrate sensitivity to pupils with disabilities*
- *Communicate behaviour expectations*
- *Ensure that it welcomes applications for school places and jobs from all sections*

Preventing and dealing effectively with bullying and harassment

- *Recognising that the groups covered in this policy are more vulnerable to bullying and harassment*
- *Communicate to pupils, parents and staff its abhorrence of all forms of bullying and harassment*
- *Ensure that incidents are reported and addressed swiftly and effectively*
- *Record, analyse and report bullying and harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation etc.*

Listening to pupils, staff, parents and others

- *Hear the student voice*
- *Actively seek staff views and listen to staff concerns*
- *Seek the views of parents*
- *Ensure it encourages, enables and hears the full range of views including those with disabilities*

Identify areas in which the school needs to operate differently to capture all the views it needs – for example it may be necessary to seek views from voluntary groups outside the school to get the full picture on disability.

Equalising opportunities

Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are likely to be economically disadvantaged, *paragraphs to describe what the school does to:*

- *Ensure school uniform is affordable*
- *Avoid putting parents under unnecessary financial pressure*
- *Promote the take-up of extra-curricular opportunities*
- *Ensure that its charging policy is appropriate*
- *Monitor take-up of extra-curricular opportunities*
- *Widen access to careers advice and work experience placements*

Informing and involving parents and carers

Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to find school intimidating, strange or inaccessible, *paragraphs to describe what the school does to:*

- *Explain how the school operates*
- *Offer a range of ways of communicating between school and parents that meet parents' circumstances and needs*
- *Encourage parents to let the school know if they have a particular disability or other need*
- *Encourage parents to discuss their concerns*
- *Ensure that parents understand how well their child is progressing*
- *Explain how parents can help their child at home*
- *Explain how parents and others can help in school*
- *Encourage parents to join the PTA and/or governing body*

Telephone, email, translations, Braille

Ensuring that 'absent parents' receive communication

Welcoming new pupils and helping them to settle in effectively

Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to find school intimidating, strange or inaccessible, and to move mid-year, *paragraphs to describe what the school does to:*

- *Ensure a happy start to the school at normal times*
- *Ensure effective school transfer and induction mid-year*
- *Ensure that extra help is given to pupils who find change of school challenging*
- *Ensure well-planned school adjustments are made to cater for a child with disabilities- if possible in advance of starting at the school*

Addressing the full range of learning needs

Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to under-achieve, *paragraphs to describe what the school does to:*

- *Ensure curriculum is relevant*
- *Ensure appropriate teaching styles and classroom organisation*
- *Planning is based on earlier learning*
- *Marking policy promotes learning of all*
- *Track pupil progress & Identify under- performing*
- *Promote and maintain higher attendance - strategies & monitoring*

Develop provision management to establish effective analysis and development of interventions

Supporting learners with particular needs

Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to have particular needs, paragraphs to describe what the school does to:

- *Provide distance learning packs for children out of school*
- *Prepare Personal Education Plans to focus on learning priorities*
- *Provide Basic Skills support*
- *Ensure language support is available as required*
- *Support students through tutoring/mentoring schemes*
- *Provide Homework/Revision support*
- *Provide appropriate training to enable staff to meet particular learning needs - planned well in advance of a child's admission.*

Gaps identified in training needs analysis are reflected in staff development plan

Making the school accessible to all

Paragraphs to describe what the school does to:

- *Meet the needs of pupils, staff and others with physical disabilities*
- *Meet the needs of pupils, staff and others with other disabilities*
- *Ensure that curricular and extra-curricular opportunities are available for pupils with disabilities*
- *Identify further developments to address outstanding issues where these constitute reasonable adjustments*

Increasing extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.

Improve the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.

Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

Including transport and supervision for children with disabilities

Ensuring fair and equal treatment for pupils

Recognising that the school needs to ensure that its policies and practice does not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against pupils in the school, paragraphs to describe what the school does to:

- *Ensure fair admissions procedure (applicable to VA, Foundation and Academy)*
- *Assess the implications uniform requirements have on pupils and modify them where appropriate*
- *Accommodate the needs of different cultures, races and religions where reasonably possible (in relation to wearing of uniform for example)*
- *Ensure that the implementation of uniform and other policy is sufficiently flexible to accommodate the needs of pupils undergoing gender reassignment*
- *Monitor the use of sanctions to ensure that staff do not impose stricter disciplinary penalties on one group than they do in similar circumstances to others*
- *Ensure where relevant that teaching or the expression of religious belief about same sex relationships is conveyed responsibly and sensitively*

Ensuring fair and equal treatment for staff and others

Recognising that the school needs to ensure that its policies and practice does not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against adults as well as pupils in the school and that positive role models and a wider perspective will strengthen the school, *paragraphs to describe what the school does to:*

- *Ensure non-discriminatory recruitment and employment practices*
- *Promote dignity at work*
- *Encourage the development of all staff*

Encourage participation of under-represented groups

Recognising that the school has an opportunity to model empowerment of all groups including disabled, ethnic, religious and socially & economically disadvantaged groups, *paragraphs to describe what the school does to:*

- *Recruit governors' representative of the pupil population and/or community*
- *Encourage the widest participation in Parents and Friends Association (PFA) activities*
- *Support individuals and community groups to express their case on matters affecting themselves and their community*

Monitoring and Evaluating the policy

Recognising that the strength of this policy depends upon ensuring that everyone is actively implementing it and that gaps and the need for further development will arise from effective evaluation, *paragraphs to describe what the school does to:*

- *Train all staff & governors*
- *Consult pupils, parents and staff on how the policy is working and how it could be improved*
- *Monitor and review practice*
- *Carry out impact assessments to evaluate practice*
- *Report to governors*
- *Report to parents and pupils*

Best to report on all aspects of inclusion via website, newsletter etc
Changes will also need to be reflected in the school's self-evaluation

Appendix D

Useful Links

[Abilitynet](#) gives free information and advice on any aspect of the use of a computer by someone with a disability.

[Action on Hearing Loss](#) runs a telephone/teletext helpline and also produces information leaflets and fact sheets.

[Arthritis Care](#) campaigns nationally, and also works through a network of local groups and centres offering support, advice and training. Information is available on their website and they represent the best source of information nationally on arthritis, its impact and on ways that colleges and centres may best be able to meet the requirements of learners with arthritis.

[Autism Oxford](#) brings together people who seek knowledge and understanding of the Autism Spectrum and autistic behaviour with those best able to impart it.

[British Deaf Association](#) is an organisation of Deaf people that represents the Deaf community.

[The British Dyslexia Association](#) offers advice, information and help to families, professionals and dyslexic individuals. It works to raise awareness and understanding of dyslexia, and to effect change. BDA provides a range of useful resources related to dyslexia.

[Broadbandsuppliers](#) is a site which collates valuable advice on online resources for disabled users.

[Foundation for people with learning disabilities](#) The Foundation provides information, resources and services and tries to influence government and local authority policies and services so that they better meet the needs people with learning disabilities.

[Gov.uk – disabled People](#) This part of the Gov.uk website has been designed to help people find out about their civil rights. It provides information on legislation that exists to help establish employees and employers.

[Diabetes UK](#) has a mass of information about diabetes that is of wider interest and would certainly be helpful to schools.

[Down's Syndrome Association](#) (DSA) provides information, advice and support to parents and individuals with Downs Syndrome. It also provides information and advice to professionals whose work requires an understanding of the condition.

[Dyslexia Action](#) (DA) is a charity that specialises in the assessment and teaching of people with dyslexia and is now the only national dyslexia teaching organisation in the world. It seeks ways to improve the effectiveness of teaching and also focuses on the development of teaching materials.

[Epilepsy Action](#) has developed a large website that includes basic information about the condition that will be useful to schools. The site also provides an index of reference material for those who wish to develop a more detailed understanding of epilepsy.

[The Equality Human Rights' Commission](#) (EHRC) is an independent body, established to eliminate the discrimination faced by disabled people and to promote equality of opportunity. The EHRC produces many useful guides and publications such as how to organise disability awareness/equality training and it has a fully accessible helpline.

[Mencap](#) is one of the major organisations for people with learning difficulties. Mencap has produced an education resource pack for those over 16 years old which supports their Essential Skills Award. The resource was developed by Mencap National College and focuses on enabling learners to develop “practical skills for the real world”. For more information on the award, call Tracy Wardle on [01935 403120](tel:01935403120) or e-mail tracy.wardle@mencap.org.uk.

[The Mental Health Foundation](#) The Foundation produces many publications on mental health. It also produces a newsletter, monthly updates and factsheets.

[MIND](#) (National Association for Mental Health) is a mental health charity covering England and Wales. Factsheets can be downloaded from their website on issues such as mental health problems and learning disabilities.

[National Autistic Society](#)

provides an enormous amount of information ranging from introductory information to links to research sites. This is an extremely valuable resource for education professionals.

[National Deaf Children’s Society \(NCDS\)](#)

Provides professionals with the latest information on campaigns, government news, NCDS projects and academic and professional research, publications and resources that are available to you.

[NASEN](#) (The National Association for Special Educational Needs) is an organisation that provides a forum for those actively involved with exceptional learning needs and/or disabilities and contributes to the formulation and development of policy in the area. NASEN also publishes quarterly the British Journal of Special Education and Support for Learning.

[National Autistic Society](#) provides an enormous amount of information ranging from introductory information to links to research sites. This is an extremely valuable resource for education professionals.

[NDCS](#) (National Deaf Children’s Society) campaigns to break down barriers faced by deaf children and young people. The website provides a considerable amount of information and research for families, young people and professionals working in the field.

[RADAR](#) (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) provides information and advice on all aspects of disability and has also compiled a list of recommended Disability Awareness or Equality trainers.

[Royal National Institute of Blind People](#) (RNIB) produces a huge range of resource materials. It runs a telephone information service and supports this with a range of fact sheets. One of the main ways in which LAs, schools and colleges will need to respond to DDA Part 4 is by ensuring that blind and partially sighted students can have access to teaching materials. RNIB has a wealth of experience in this area.

[Sense](#) The national (UK) voluntary organization working with and supporting people of all ages who are deafblind or have associated disabilities.

[Scope](#) is a national organisation for people with cerebral palsy. It also offers a range of services to professional staff in education and social services including information and advice. The Scope website offers a large quantity of useful information online and also provides a large index of additional publications that colleagues working primarily with disabled students will find very useful. The site is large and it may be helpful to go directly to the online publications catalogue:

www.scope.org.uk/action/publications/index.shtml

[SHINE](#) is happy to provide information to professionals working with young people with spina bifida and hydrocephalus to enable them to provide improved support. Their website includes a publications section which is extremely helpful for education staff. [World of Inclusion](#) provides training and resources primarily for schools, but also for colleges and local authorities around the issue of inclusion for all students within our education system.