



# READING BLUE COAT

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### 1. Staff

#### General Statement

Reading Blue Coat values the diversity and potential that people with different backgrounds, skills and abilities can bring to the workplace. Our Equal Opportunities Policy aims to treat all current and prospective employees fairly, with dignity and with respect.

#### School Policy

RBC is an equal opportunities employer. There should be no harassment, victimisation, bullying or discrimination, either directly or indirectly because of age, disability, employment status, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, religious belief or non-belief, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, social background or any other reasons which cannot be shown to be justified.

The School will ensure that its important investment in its employees is used in the most effective manner and to the benefit of the whole School community.

The Equal Opportunities Policy is applicable to all employees and candidates applying for posts at the School and covers all aspects of employment.

#### Equal Opportunities in Employment

Recruitment and selection will fully incorporate the School's commitment to securing the equal opportunities of all candidates and volunteers for roles at RBC.

Employees involved in recruitment, promotion, appraisal and training must be able to demonstrate that any decision is based solely on objective criteria, after a careful assessment of the individual and, in competitive situations, the merits of other candidates. Preconceptions and assumptions have no place in equal opportunities policy or practices.

The 'terms and conditions' of employment reflect the School's belief that fairness in how people are rewarded is fundamental. In this regard, we will ensure that terms and conditions, including pay, are fair and equitable, taking account of responsibility and contribution. We will also ensure that benefits, facilities and services available to all our employees are defined clearly so that people are aware on them.

#### Flexible working

We recognise that patterns of work are changing as employees have to balance work and domestic commitments. We will consider requests for flexible working made under our Policy which balances, with fairness, the needs of the individual and the needs of the School.

## **Development of Staff**

The age, disability, employment status, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, religious belief or non-belief, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or social background, or any other reasons which cannot be shown to be justified have no relevance when assessing ability or potential.

The Deputy Head (Staff) and Human Resources Department endeavour to provide and ensure access to training is available to all employees according to their individual need to develop new skills.

## **Personal Responsibility**

Whilst it is the School's responsibility to provide equal opportunities, all individuals at all levels in the School community also have a major role to play. Under the Equality Act 2010, employees are made personally liable for any acts of discrimination committed by them.

## **Mechanisms for Dealing with any Incident of Discrimination or Harassment: Procedures for Staff**

### **Grievance Procedures**

Any employee, who feels that he or she has received treatment in connection with his or her employment which is contrary to the School's policy on equal opportunities, should attempt to resolve the matter in accordance with the School's grievance procedures. A copy of this policy can be found in the Staff Directory on the School intranet:

<https://ourportal.rbc.org.uk/staff/home/HR/Shared%20Documents/August%202015%20Staff%20Directory%20approved%2012%2008%2015%20pdf.pdf>

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Any behaviour contrary to this policy and in particular discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment will be considered a serious disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's disciplinary rules and procedures. A copy of this policy can be found in the Staff Directory on the School intranet:

<https://ourportal.rbc.org.uk/staff/home/HR/Shared%20Documents/August%202015%20Staff%20Directory%20approved%2012%2008%2015%20pdf.pdf>

## **Marketing**

Publicity and marketing recognise the School's commitment to equal opportunities and will make use of a variety of advertising methods and referral sources.

RBC will ensure that its advertising and marketing encourage all individuals to apply and participate in school activities regardless of age, culture, race, religion, marital status, sexual orientation and gender or disability.

## **3. Pupils**

RBC is committed to securing equality of opportunity through the creation of an environment in which pupils are treated on the sole basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

The School recognises the value and vitality in managing diversity and the acceptance of pupils' visible and non-visible differences to create an environment in which everyone feels valued, and talents are fully utilised. This commitment is not exclusive to pupils, and is shared equally with staff, parents and governors.

We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination because of sex, race, disability religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity (the 'protected characteristics' as set out in The Equality Act 2010), or any other reasons which cannot be shown to be justified.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy aims to ensure that all members of our school community are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

### **Types of Discrimination**

With the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010 discrimination is now defined as direct or indirect discrimination, associative discrimination, discrimination by perception, harassment, harassment by a third party and victimisation.

**Direct discrimination** is obvious, usually, to everyone and occurs where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.

**Indirect discrimination** is less obvious and occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied equally to all groups but has a disproportionately adverse effect on a person or group with a particular protected characteristic. An employer may commit an act of indirect discrimination even though there is no such intention when a decision is made.

### **Equality Areas of Particular Relevance in Schools**

#### **Race**

RBC regards as racism any attitude held by a person or group of one ethnic origin towards an individual or group of a different ethnic origin which is offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual or group. We also consider racism to be behaviour, acts or expressions that reflect such attitudes; or any incitement to behaviour of that kind.

It should be stressed that racist comments or jokes, even when made in jest and with no attempt to offend, still constitute racism.

Any racist behaviour will be investigated in accordance with the School's disciplinary procedures as a serious disciplinary offence.

#### **Gender & Sexual Orientation**

RBC considers sexism to be any attitude held by a person or group of one sex towards an individual or group of the other sex which is offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual or group. The School considers sexual harassment to be behaviour, acts or expressions that reflect such attitudes; or an incitement to behaviour of that kind.

It should be stressed that sexist or 'homophobic' comments or jokes, even when made in jest and with no attempt to offend, still constitute sexism / homophobia and are a serious disciplinary offence.

Any sexist or homophobic behaviour will be investigated in accordance with the School's disciplinary procedures as a serious disciplinary offence.

#### **Disability**

RBC will not tolerate any form of discrimination against anyone on the grounds of any disability, physical or mental, that they may have.

Harassment of anyone on any such grounds whether inside or outside the classroom will be investigated in accordance with the School's disciplinary procedures as a serious disciplinary offence.

## **Religion and Belief**

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for someone to discriminate against anyone because of their religion or belief (or because you have no religion or belief). There is no specific list that sets out what religion or belief discrimination is. The law defines it as any religion, religious or philosophical belief. This includes all major religions, as well as less widely practised ones. Employees are also protected against discrimination if they do not hold a particular (or any) religion or belief.

Therefore, the School upholds the right of all individuals to hold their own religious belief or other philosophical belief. The School would also uphold the right of an individual to have no religion or belief.

The School believes that being sensitive to the cultural and religious needs of our pupils is in keeping with the ethos at the heart of the School. This can mean making provisions for: religious holidays and time off to observe festivals and ceremonies; dietary requirements in the dining hall; dress requirements.

## **Mechanisms for Dealing with any Incident of Discrimination or Harassment**

### **Procedures for Pupils**

- Pupils are encouraged to discuss any areas of concern with their Form Tutor, Head of Year or Second Master.
- Any incident of possible discrimination or harassment must be reported to the Head of Year or Second Master. Incidents may be reported via any member of staff (whether teaching or support staff) or pupils. The Head of Year will conduct an initial investigation in order to check facts and assess the seriousness of the incident.
- If the incident constitutes discrimination or harassment a thorough investigation will take place. The seriousness of the incident, and whether or not the alleged perpetrator has been involved in discrimination or harassment before, will determine who should lead the main investigation. The Head of Year will discuss the incident with the Second Master.
- The main investigation is likely to involve interviewing the victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses. A record of the conversations must be kept and, in some cases, signed statements may be appropriate and necessary. Following the investigation some action is likely to be needed. In minor cases, an informal verbal warning may be sufficient but any pupil who systematically discriminates or harasses, or who commits a serious act of discrimination may lose his or her place at RBC. In other instances, responses may include a letter of apology, a meeting with parents, an after-school detention, a Saturday detention, suspension, or any combination of these.
- The person who conducted the investigation will contact the parents of both the perpetrator and the victim to inform them of the outcome of the investigation. All staff with a pastoral responsibility for the pupils must also be informed of the outcome and any follow up action required of them.
- Written records of the investigation and communication with parents must be kept on the pupils' personal file.

#### 4. The Curriculum

- Our School and policy seeks to create an atmosphere in which no pupil suffers unfair discrimination.
- All pupils should have equal access to all entitlement offered through the curriculum. In assessing provision, individuals will not be denied consideration for educational opportunities. Assessment for suitability for participation in a particular activity will be based upon the principle that each pupil is to be offered appropriate educational opportunities. It may be necessary to make reasonable adjustments in order to include pupils with a disability.
- Equal opportunities form part of the curriculum. Schemes of work, teaching materials, methods, examinations and assessments should recognise and reflect this commitment.
- The importance of Careers Education Counselling and Guidance is recognised. Guidance should be non-discriminatory and based entirely on the needs of the pupils.
- Pupils should be made aware of the channels of communication for help, advice or complaint should unfair discrimination be perceived whilst attending the School.
- Pupils will be made aware of equal opportunities issues through the School's PSHEE programme and Student Planners/Sixth Form Diaries.

#### 5. Monitoring/Evaluation

- This policy will have the active support of management at all levels. The overall responsibility for the implementation will rest with the Senior Leadership Team.
- The policy will be clearly stated and made known to all employees and pupils.
- The policy will be kept under review and will be evaluated at least annually, or sooner if legislative changes require.
- An analysis of incidents will be undertaken with a view to informing or amending practices or procedures.
- Where discrimination has been found to have taken place those involved will be monitored to ensure there is no repetition.

#### 6. Provision of Information

The School wants to create an ethos which enables all members of its community to maximise their abilities. The School therefore welcomes and encourages an open and frank exchange of information between staff, parents and pupils about any concerns regarding harassment or discrimination.

New parents in particular are encouraged to provide as much information as possible about a disabled pupil. The School is happy to accept such information on a confidential basis if necessary.

Author(s):	Kevin Magill
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References:	Equality Act 2010 <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf</a>
Governor:	
Date of Governor Agreement:	