

## Equality, Diversity & Accessibility Policy

Contents	Page
Context	1
Visions and Values	1
Aims	2
Legislation and Guidance	2
Roles and Responsibilities	2
Eliminating Discrimination	2
Advancing Equality of Opportunity	3
Fostering Good Relations	3
Equality Considerations and Decision Making	4
Equality Objectives	4
Accessibility strategy	6
Monitoring arrangements	6
See also	6

<b>Date of last review:</b>	Summer 2025	<b>Date of next review:</b>	Summer 2028
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### Policy review dates and changes

Review date	By whom	Summary of changes made	Date implemented
Feb 2019	HS	Accessibility strategy added	April 2019
Jan 2021	HS	Updated equality information	Feb 2021
Jan 2023	PB	Updated equality information	January 2023
Summer 2025	PB	Updated context info and other minor admin changes	Summer 2025

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Designation</b>	Chair of Governors
<b>Name</b>	Janet Hall & Heather Flockton	<b>Date</b>	Summer 2025



## **Context**

Royal School for the Deaf Derby (RSDD) is a non-maintained special school for deaf children and young people aged 3–19. Places are funded by local authorities and pupils attend from across the Midlands as well as further afield. Children in the Nursery class attend part-time until they start full time in their Reception Year.

- The school has a broad and diverse ethnic mix, replicating the diversity seen within the locality and across the UK.
- Approximately 50% of pupils are boys and 50% are girls.
- Approximately half of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is a much greater proportion than seen nationally. Approximately 5% of children are looked after. The school receives additional funding, known as the pupil premium, to support the education of these groups of pupils. The school receives physical education and sports funding for primary pupils.
- A high proportion of pupils arrive part way through their education.
- All pupils have or are awaiting statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. Some pupils also have complex learning difficulties.
- The school provides pupils with access to learning through British Sign Language (BSL) and spoken English.
- Although some pupils use BSL as their first language on entry, many have no language of communication on arrival.
- All Post-16 students study offsite at alternative provision for some part of their week, supported by staff from the school. Alternative providers include Derby College, Burton College, Lees Brook School.
- The school has residential boarding provision, managed by the Head of Care, under the line management of a Deputy Headteacher.

## **Vision & Values**

### **Our vision for children and young people at Royal School for the Deaf Derby:**

- To have confidence in developing their own deaf identity and their sense of belonging.
- To feel safe, happy and cared for in an environment where all children are listened to, can express their views and are understood whatever their preferred communication.
- To be challenged to achieve their best through excellent teaching, a comprehensive curriculum and a wide variety of experiences from Early Years to Post-16.
- To work in an environment that encourages lifelong learning, and equips our children and young people with the tools and skills to achieve.
- To be tolerant and inclusive, so all children and young people are able to build effective relationships based on empathy, friendship and respect.
- To have excellent access to communication support.

### **We promote the following values for children and young people at Royal School for the Deaf Derby:**

- To have a 'can do' attitude to achieve to their potential with positive deaf and hearing role models
- To understand, respect and promote British Values and culture within the school and wider community.
- To feel comfortable, safe and happy within both school and residence.
- To enjoy and thrive in a school rich in cultures, languages and experiences.
- To make sure all children and young people have the opportunity to become responsible adults and leave ready to enjoy the challenges of life beyond school.



## **Aims**

- RSDD aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 which protects individuals from discrimination and harassment based upon 'protected characteristics'
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Gender reassignment
  - Marriage and civil partnership
  - Pregnancy and maternity
  - Race
  - Religion or belief
  - Sex
  - Sexual orientation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

## **Legislation and Guidance**

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## **Role and Responsibilities**

### **The governing board will:**

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Headteacher

### **The Headteacher will:**

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors

## **Eliminating Discrimination**

RSDD is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive guidance in the document given each September. Training is part of the annual Safeguarding and Well-being Inset training.

The school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, within the wellbeing and safeguarding management and a link governor. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and governors aware of these as appropriate.

## Advancing Equality of Opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies)

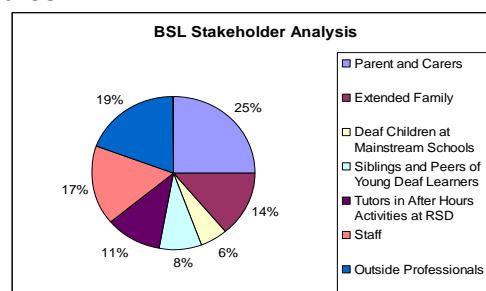
In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils

## Fostering Good Relations

RSDD aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach
- Adopting a positive social model of disability and takes action to promote it. A stakeholder analysis of outreach and partnership reveals a range of stakeholders are involved in BSL tuition and deaf awareness sessions which challenge the environmental and attitudinal barriers that young deaf learners may experience in life beyond School.
- Sharing expertise and skills including staffing in partnership with the City of Derby and surrounding area.





## **Equality Considerations and Decision Making**

RSDD ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. RSDD always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

## **Equality Objectives**

### **Objective 1**

Recognise that all learners are of equal value. Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, their gender and gender identity, religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and sexual orientation.

#### **Why we have chosen this objective**

- To develop knowledge and understanding among young people and education staff of the diversity of cultures and languages, and the value of this diversity
- To help young people to acquire basic life skills and competences for their personal development and for future employment

#### **To achieve this objective we plan to**

- Develop exchange trips with a European School for the Deaf
- Continue to develop awareness of LGBT+ across the curriculum, assemblies and workshops as part of the general calendar
- Support for transgender pupils and staff
- Review progress through the use of the school monitoring system
- Welcome visitors from a range of areas to school to discuss issues
- Organise trips and visits exploring a range of cultures

#### **Progress we are making towards this objective**

- A group travel to Europe annually
- LGBT+ workshops and assemblies have taken place with visitors from Derby Pride
- Regular input from police officers and deaf culture community groups.
- Displays around school celebrated all genders, sexual orientation and cultures.

### **Objective 2**

Have in place a reasonable adjustment agreement for all staff with disabilities, to meet their needs better and ensure that any disadvantages they experience are addressed.

#### **Why we have chosen this objective:**

- To enable RSDD with a range of disabilities to access work and training at RSDD.

#### **To achieve this objective we plan to:**

- RSDD actively uses Access to Work, a scheme designed to help employers and disabled people, current or potential employees, make sure disabled people have the same opportunities in the workplace as their non-disabled peers.

#### **Progress we are making towards this objective:**

- Awareness of the Access to work scheme is part of the induction process for all newcomers to the School, disabled or non-disabled.
- RSDD currently has the highest number of deaf employees in the East Midlands.
- RSDD's Governing Board is made up of different genders, disabilities and ethnic minorities

### **Objective 3**

Train all members of staff and governors involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities. Training evaluation data will show that 100% of those attending have a good understanding of the legal requirements.

#### **Why we have chosen this objective:**

- To ensure that RSDD's recruitment, selection and assessment processes deter, reject and help identify people who might abuse children and young people or are otherwise unsuitable to work with children and young people.



- To ensure all those employed at RSDD are the best qualified and experienced to work with children and young people
- To ensure all those employed at RSDD share the ethos, values, ways of working and aspirations for its pupils and the communities it serves
- To meet the requirements of the safeguarding agenda and legislative framework to protect children and young people and employers within the establishment
- To meet government recommendations for appropriate training especially for safe staff recruitment, selection and assessment

**To achieve this objective we plan to:**

- Ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process are suitably qualified and experienced

**Progress we are making towards this objective:**

- RSDD's selection and assessment process includes a range of assessment tools which are not biased towards specific language use or non-disabled models for example, all applicants are invited to work sample. We include work sampling in the recruitment process for example, to prepare and deliver a lesson, to spend time in the role applied for to enable an assessment based on what potential newcomers can do, their abilities rather than their disabilities

#### **Objective 4**

Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum and ensure the language preferences and variety of language and communication children and young people experience at home and at school are valued and where appropriate incorporated into approaches to care and teaching and learning

**Why we have chosen this objective:**

Due to the changing population of children and young people at RSDD, it is important to ensure that all children can access teaching and learning.

**To achieve this objective we plan to:**

The views of children and young people are actively sought through a range of formal and informal forums and a comprehensive audit of need has taken place and forms the basis of actions and interventions which is revisited annually.

**Progress we are making towards this objective:**

- Provision of an in-house educational audiologist to devise, in collaboration with the highly specialised speech and language therapists, communication profiles together with individual support for teachers and education assistants and care staff in using aids to hearing
- Training from the cochlear implant team in working with learners with cochlear implants
- Deaf/hearing staff in classroom and residential settings
- Provision of positive first language BSL users and staff with cochlear implants to learners identified in recruitment, selection and assessment
- School timetable (break times and class changeovers) visual alarm and frequency to enable non-profoundly deaf learners to respond
- Visual fire alarms, door and telephone alerters, vibrating pillows upon request
- Provision of Wi-Fi for mobile telephones in residential houses and throughout the school
- The attainment and progress of children and young people is comprehensively tracked and analysed for different groups socio-economic backgrounds for example, the progress and attainment of children and young people entitled to free school meals
- RSDD works in close partnership with CAMHS specialists to support children and young people with mental health issues. The CAMHS team provide continuing professional development activities for staff to foster understanding and inform strategies for children and young people to access the curriculum.
- Art Therapists give children and young people additional support from mental health professionals who use BSL as a first language. Pupils can access drop-in sessions and access group sessions arranged at specific times of the year for example, before examinations.
- Resources made available for positive behaviour support assistants to work in close liaison with the instructors to effect long term positive behaviour change.
- We negotiate dual placements and packages to meet the needs of pupils for example, for children and young people who wish to study topics or curriculum that RSDD cannot provide e.g.





animal care

## **Accessibility strategy**

### **Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum**

- Our school offers a differentiated curriculum for all pupils.
- We use resources tailored to the needs of pupils who require support to access the curriculum.
- Curriculum resources include examples of people with a range of additional complex needs.
- Curriculum progress is tracked for all pupils.
- Targets are set effectively and are appropriate for pupils with additional needs.
- The curriculum is reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils.
- All staff can sign and have access to both deaf and hearing role models

### **Improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school**

- Ramps where there are steps into a building
- Lift in area where there are two floors
- Yellow marked edges of pathways
- Disabled and taxi parking bays
- Disabled toilets and changing facilities
- Adjustable seating and desk heights
- Automatic doors for each main building

### **Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled**

- Internal signage is clear and in simple English or with BSL symbols
- Large print and / or coloured resources
- BSL Newsround and BSL / English explanations of words / phrases
- Displays are uniform in colour
- Soundfield System in identified rooms
- Pictorial or symbolic representations
- Ambient and calming lighting in identified areas

## **Monitoring arrangements**

RSDD Headteacher will update the equality information we publish, at least every year.

This document will be reviewed by Finance and Resource Committee at least every 4 years.

This document will be approved by the Full Governing Body

## **See also**

- Whole school curriculum policy
- Safeguarding and recruitment policy
- Communication policy