



Anthony Gell School

Equal Opportunities Policy

	Date	Minute No.	Review date
Approved by Governors	July 2022	1632/22	July 2026
Reviewed by Governors			

This policy reflects the duty of all educational organisations to have updated and published their Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, to adhere to the Equality Act 2010. It describes how our school will meet the requirements of the Act. This 2010 Equality Act replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. The policy will be applied to all staff and learners, in addition to any placement students and any volunteers working in the school.

Rationale

It is made explicitly clear to every member of staff, teaching and non-teaching, at interview, that a genuine commitment to Equal Opportunities is an essential condition of appointment. The school intends to create a community based on fairness and equality. Anthony Gell is a community where diversity is welcomed and inclusion is at the centre.

Anthony Gell is committed to equality of educational opportunities and outcomes, which enables all students to achieve their full potential. The school aims to offer an education that will prepare young people to participate fully in Britain's multi-ethnic, multi-faith, multi-cultural society.

Staff are required to fully implement the Equal Opportunities policy in planning, delivery and evaluation of both the curriculum and extra curricular provision.

Equal Opportunities Statement of Commitment

The governing body and school are committed to a policy of equality and aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, student or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief.

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. We aim to provide equal access to high quality educational opportunities and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to provide a safe and happy environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

We aim to empower our students to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the school's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the policy.

All members of the school community are responsible for promoting the school's equal opportunities policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

Aims and objectives

The governing body and school, through its adopted Equal Opportunities Policy, aims to:

- carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation.

- reinforce the school's position as a provider of high-quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities.
- ensure that equality remains high on the school's strategic agenda.
- establish good people management practice and to set out a proactive agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response.
- achieve a staffing composition that reflects the composition of the wider community.
- ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every student.
- ensure that students and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals.
- ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the school's equal opportunities policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure.
- All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.

Guiding principles

Principle 1: All learners, potential learners, parents, and carers are of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled.
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, or nationality.
- whatever their gender, gender identity and their sexual identity.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised along with their sexual identity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We intend that our policies, procedures, and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people and good relations between them
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, nationality, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents

- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, girls and boys, women and men.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, both women and men, and girls and boys.
- People regardless of sexuality.

Principle 7: Society should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, both women and men, girls and boys, all sexualities.

Employment matters

Appointments: in all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria.

Family-friendly policies: the governing body/school is a family-friendly employer and will do its best to respond to the changing needs of all staff by publicising existing schemes designed

to support employees in combining work and other responsibilities (parental leave arrangements, job share opportunities, flexitime where appropriate, carers' leave provision).

HIV/AIDS: the governing body/school recognises that people with HIV/AIDS suffer not only from the purely medical effects of the infection but may also experience prejudice and misunderstanding leading to unfair discrimination and victimisation. The governors/school therefore will ensure that people with HIV/AIDS do not experience unfair treatment in relation to employment, as students or as other members of the school community. The school and governing body will follow the detailed guidelines regarding staff recruitment and student admissions set out in Appendix B.

Transsexual employees and gender reassignment: *The Sex Discrimination Act* now expressly covers discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment. Anthony Gell School will follow Local Authority guidance.

Training and development

The success of the Equal Opportunities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training. Governors will be encouraged to take up all relevant opportunities provided by the Local Authority's Governors Training Programme.

The school will endeavour to:

- enhance and develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status.
- provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all staff, including part time, based on their assessed training needs.
- promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution which staff, governors, parents/carers, and students can make.
- equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions, discriminatory practices, and behaviour and to promote anti-discriminatory behaviour generally.
- professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement, and motivation. The school places great importance on the relationship between team leaders and their teams and will ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of the school's performance management system.

Students and the Curriculum

The school follows Local Authority admission policies that do not permit sex, race, colour, or disability to be used as criteria for admission. The school's aim is to provide for all students according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability, or ethnic origin. *The Education Reform Act 1988* stated that 'the school curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse society to which students belong and of which they will become adult members. Students should have

access to a broad and balanced curriculum, which avoids stereotypes and provides good role models for all students. Equality of opportunity informs the whole of the curriculum and is reviewed regularly.

Equal opportunities issues will be taken account of in planning the curriculum. This is reflected in our curriculum planning process and relevant documentation.

The Curriculum should:

- Reflect a true picture of the world and its history, in particular an understanding of the political, social, and economic reasons for racism and inequality, and the ways in which racism and sexism is transmitted.
- Represent fairly and accurately, the contributions of all civilisations and sections of society.
- Encourage students to question and evaluate information, recognise bias, and seek alternative sources
- Be relevant to all students, meet their needs and motivate them to high achievement.
- Act as a force for developing and reinforcing a school ethos, which maintains respect for all members of the community.

Faculties of Teaching and Learning should help to offer a curriculum that is broadly based, balanced and relevant. Schemes of work should specify how equal opportunity is promoted.

The curriculum can be a potent force for perpetrating injustice through racism, sexism, homophobia and misguided attitudes towards disability, and learning and behavioural difficulties. Ignorance and misunderstanding are fostered by a curriculum, which by distortion or omission, leads to the misrepresentation of people or cultures.

Pastoral Care

Effective pastoral care is essential in raising achievement, the tutorial system, PRS programme and careers guidance together with mainstream teaching and extra-curricular activities aim to provide a framework to ensure equal opportunity for all students.

Key stage 3, 4 and 5 curriculum choices, work experience and careers guidance are monitored to ensure a fairness in these processes. Where negative patterns in terms of ethnic background, gender or disability emerge, improvements would be made. In the options elements of the curriculum it may not be possible to run all choices every year depending on uptake numbers and staffing constraints.

All students have an entitlement to any of the school's activities. Tutors should actively encourage students to participate in school activities and see that they are not discouraged because of dress, diet, religious practices etc. Tutors should have an overview of their students' academic and personal progress and should welcome contact with parents to seek the perspective of the home.

Exclusions from school are monitored closely by the SLT and governors.

School Ethos

- Staff should demonstrate mutual respect to each other and towards students.
- Displays should reflect a positive attitude towards all cultures and societies. They should contain positive, non-stereo typical images of men, women and people with disabilities. Displays should include role models of different genders, ethnicities, religions and sexualities. Different types of families (including same-sex and one parent families) should be represented.
- Bilingualism should be celebrated in the classroom and where possible students should be allowed to share ideas in their own language in addition to English.
- Communication to parents/carers should be in appropriate languages if needed.
- Students should feel confident to speak, read and hear their home language.
- Assemblies should reflect the multi-faith nature of the school community and members of the community should be invited to take part in assemblies.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

Governors have a duty to ensure that policies are regularly monitored and reviewed. Monitoring is an essential aspect of this policy, as it should provide important information by which we can measure our performance against our aims and objectives. Statistical information can also enable the governors and head teacher to detect where potential or actual imbalances exist and to take steps to correct them.

This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation is illegal. However, for the school community, discrimination is also unacceptable on any of the other grounds referred to in this policy statement. Failure to comply with the policy will be fully and promptly investigated using the appropriate procedures in line with Anthony Gell School's Behaviour policy.

There are four ways in which discrimination may occur:

Direct discrimination: This means treating someone less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex etc

Indirect discrimination: This means applying a requirement or condition which cannot be justified to all groups but which has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group because the proportion of that group which can comply is smaller than the proportion of the group(s), which can comply with it.

Victimisation: This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other persons would be treated because that person has done a 'protected act' under the Equal Pay Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act or Employment Equality Regulations, for example, by bringing forward proceedings or giving evidence or information.

Harassment: Harassment can take many forms, from the most obvious abusive remarks to extremely subtle use of power. As with unfair or unlawful discrimination, harassment can be intentional or unintentional. However, the key issue is not simply the intention of the offender but the impact of the behaviour on the person receiving it.

Harassment may involve any of the following:

- physical contact or violence.
- offensive humiliating and intimidating remarks or actions.
- exclusion from participation in job-related or classroom-related discussions, training or social or other events.
- unfair work allocation.
- unjust or excessive or humiliating criticism of performance.
- offensive signs or notices.
- graffiti.
- repeated demands or requests for sexual favours.

These are merely examples and not an exhaustive list. Whatever the form, the school will provide support for any member of the school community, student or staff member.

HIV/AIDS guidelines

The governors and school will:

- ensure that job applicants who are deemed to be medically fit to perform the job for which they have applied, are not denied an offer of work solely because they are HIV positive. In arriving at the decision, the school's normal recruitment criteria will be observed including the normal medical procedures.
- ensure, where possible, that resources are available to support employees or students with AIDS or other major health problems associated with HIV infection. The school's normal rules and procedures regarding ill health will apply in such cases. Equally the school will make appropriate arrangements for the provision of counselling (i.e. by referral to external agencies);
- give positive consideration to applications for unpaid leave for those with responsibility for caring for people with AIDS-related conditions in accordance with carers' leave arrangements.
- treat any breaches of confidentiality as a serious matter to be dealt with in accordance with the normal disciplinary (or other appropriate) procedure.
- provide appropriate training in relation to AIDS in order to combat fears and prejudice and to enable the school community as a whole to function without risk to health.