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Whole-School Equality Policy

Scope and publication

Anthem Schools Trust (Anthem) welcomes staff, workers, volunteers, students, parents, applicants, local governors and Trustees (the ‘School Community’) from all different ethnic groups and backgrounds. This policy applies to all members of the current and prospective school community across all Anthem schools and the Anthem Central Team.

This policy is available on the Trust and each school website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

Our aims

We recognise the benefits of having a diverse School Community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. We are committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and employer and are committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the School Community. Students will be taught these values and to respect others. In the provision of equal opportunities, we recognise and accept our responsibilities under the law and oppose discrimination on the basis of:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief)
- gender
- sexual orientation and (in the case of adult members of the School Community)
- marital or civil partnership status; and
- age

These can be called the **Protected Characteristics**. We also oppose unlawful discrimination (and bullying) on the basis that a person has a special educational need or learning difficulty, or because English is an additional language.

We aim to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities and comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Aims of this policy

Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- Communicate the commitment of the Trust and each school to the promotion of equal opportunities.

- Promote equal treatment across the Trust and in each school for all members of the School Community
- Create and maintain an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination.
- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School Community.
- Remove or help to overcome barriers where they already exist.
- Ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against any person on any ground listed under Protected Characteristics above.
- Make it clear that, and ensure, that all discriminatory words, behaviour and images are treated as unacceptable.
- Take reasonable steps to avoid putting people with a disability at a substantial disadvantage (the **Reasonable Adjustments** duty).
- Set out how we will publish information to demonstrate our equality commitments.
- Set out details about our school equality objectives.

Related policies

This policy should be read alongside the Safer Recruitment Policy, Admissions Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Disability Policy, SEN and Disability Policy and our Accessibility Plan.

Policy statement

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Trust and each school are committed to promoting equality and when carrying out our functions, in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those without
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We also:

- publish information to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty; and
- prepare and publish equality objectives.

Each school's equality information and objectives are published on the school website. This information is published at least annually, and new objectives are published at least every four years.

Forms of discrimination

Types

Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not 'fit in' on the grounds of their race would be direct discrimination. Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity). For example, if a student is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that student.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with gender, they would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of gender.

Discrimination arising from disability

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a person with a disability is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, where a student with cerebral palsy who is a wheelchair user is told they will be unable to attend a school trip because there is no wheelchair access available and other options are not investigated.

Equal opportunities education provider

Admission

Each 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. Every application will be treated in a fair, open-minded way. Each school's admissions policy reflects our approach towards equal opportunities and is consistent with this policy.

Equal access

Each school will afford all students equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects including all sports, irrespective of their Protected Characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare as set out below.

Positive action

We 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.

Exclusions

We will not discriminate against any student by excluding him or her from school, or by subjecting him or her to any other detriment, on the grounds of his or her Protected Characteristics.

Teaching and school materials

Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example gender or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias.

Student interaction

All students are encouraged to work and play freely with, and 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, and students will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

Bullying

We will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying for any reason. Specific types of bullying include:

- bullying relating to race, religion, belief or culture
- bullying related to SEN, learning difficulties or disabilities
- bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- bullying relating to sexual orientation
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- sexist or sexual bullying

Each school's anti-bullying policy contains more details about the school's anti-bullying practices.

School uniform

Each school's school uniform policy is consistent with this policy. The same school uniform policy applies equally to all students, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, we will consider reasonable requests to alter the school uniform, for example for genuine religious requirements and reasonable adjustments for children with a disability. The student or his or her parents should refer the matter to the Headteacher to ensure all Reasonable Adjustments are made to accommodate the student.

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 (with regard 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 the student's parents to the Headteacher, whose decision will be final, subject to the complaints procedure.

Students with SEN

Each schools' policy on special educational needs includes details about the welfare and educational provision for students with EHCPs.

Students with English as an additional language

Students with English as an additional language will receive additional learning support if necessary. The student and the parents will be consulted with as appropriate. Linguistic diversity is positively recognised. Each school will ensure that:

- home-school links are made to involve parents directly in the work of the school
- interpretation and translation services are made available as quickly as possible
- links are established within the local community
- staff work effectively with other local services
- learning support for ethnic minority students is efficient and effective
- provision is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, supported by appropriate resources and information; and
- students' names should be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced - students should be encouraged to accept and respect names from cultures other than their own.

Equal opportunities employer

Employment

This policy applies to all aspects of employment from the advertisement of jobs, recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, career development, counselling, training, promotion, grievance and disciplinary procedures, through to reasons for termination of employment.

Applicants

We accept applications from, and recruit staff irrespective of their Protected Characteristics and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a position is offered. Every application will be treated in a fair, open-minded way. Our Safer Recruitment Policy reflects our approach towards equal opportunities and is consistent with this policy.

Equal access

We will afford all staff equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, and opportunities for development, irrespective of their Protected Characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare as set out below.

Disabilities and reasonable adjustments

We have an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for individuals with a disability in respect of both employment and the education and associated services provided to ensure that such staff and students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other staff and students.

Reasonable adjustments may typically include:

- making arrangements for an individual in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room
- allowing extra time for a child with dyslexia 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.

We are 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.

In making reasonable adjustments, we are required to provide auxiliary aids and services for students with a disability. We will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services. Further information can be found within each school disability policy.

Informing us

Please notify the Headteacher (or recruiting manager for new staff applicants) if you are aware or suspect that you or your child has a disability, as applicable. Please provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information upon request. Providing us with such information will enable us to provide the appropriate support and adjustments. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a 'need to know' basis. We will have due regard to any request to treat the nature or existence of a person's disability as confidential.

Access

We will monitor the physical features of the premises to consider whether users of the premises with a disability are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, we will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises.

Each school has an Accessibility Plan, which is reviewed annually and is available on request from the Headteacher.

Responsibilities

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

Overall responsibility

The Local Governing Body of each school has delegated responsibility from Anthem Trustees for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Headteacher has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review.

Management

Those working at a management level within the Anthem Central Team and at each school have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the Trust with regard to equal opportunities in light of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Senior management

The senior management team at the Trust, and in each school, is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements to monitor the performance of potentially disadvantaged individuals are in place.

Monitoring

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify those sections of the local community which may be under-represented, each school monitors staff and student applicants' gender, race, disability and religion or belief. We also monitor achievement, exclusions and bullying incidents against gender, race, disability and special educational need. We maintain records of this data in an anonymised format for the purposes stated in this policy.

Review

The Headteacher of each school, together with the relevant Education Director, is responsible for the ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of the data monitored in accordance with this policy and will arrange for the taking of appropriate positive steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination where necessary. The Headteacher is also responsible for reviewing whether the aims of this policy are carried out throughout all areas of the school and taking appropriate action where necessary. This policy is reviewed every two years and updated where necessary by the Anthem Central Team.

Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination

Complaints

If you believe that you or your child has received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed above, 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 or the Trust's formal complaints procedure as applicable, available on the relevant website. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant complaints procedure.

Reports

If you would like to report a breach of this policy that does not constitute a complaint under one of the grounds listed above, please contact the relevant Headteacher or the Trust Central team.

Enforcement

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.

Record

All reported breaches of this policy will be recorded, and this record will be reviewed annually.