



**National
Autistic
Society**



**Vanguard
School**

SCHOOL EQUALITY POLICY

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1. Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 replaced existing equality legislation, including the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act and we welcome our duties under the Equality Act to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in terms of age, disability, ethnicity, gender including reassignment, religion, sexual identity and family type. NAS Vanguard School also recognises the 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.

2. Guiding Axioms

The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the *protected characteristics* that qualify for protection from discrimination as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender including reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Family type

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we will be guided by nine axioms.

Axiom 1: All learners and school team members are of equal value.

We see all learners, their parents and carers, and school team members as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background

- whatever their sexual identity

Axiom 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Axiom 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 culture, life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kind of harassment, barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made (see also Access Policy / Plan)
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised and proactively addressed
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, including transgender individuals, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- family type
- sexual identity

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

Our approach, procedures and activities will promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, 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

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

We will always ensure that policies and procedures can 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

Axiom 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 will 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
- gender including girls and boys, women and men, and reassignment
- those of differing sexual orientation
- family types

Axiom 6: We will consult and involve widely.

We will engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We will consult in ways which take into account:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender including reassignment, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual identity
- family type

Axiom 7: Society as a whole should benefit.

Our policies and activities will benefit society as a whole, 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 people regardless of sexual orientation and family type

Axiom 8: We will base our practices on sound evidence.

We will maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender including reassignment
- age
- sexual orientation
- family type
- and for all pupils, progress with regard to prior attainment and special educational needs in particular autism

Axiom 9: Objectives and reporting.

We will formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published and the engagement in which we have been involved, in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender including reassignment
- age
- sexual orientation
- family type
- and for all pupils, progress with regard to prior attainment and special educational needs in particular autism

We will set out within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify will take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate. Our equality objectives will be kept under review and we will report annually on progress towards achieving them.

3. Curriculum

NAS Vanguard School governors and SLT will keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the axioms set out above.

4. Ethos and Organisation

We will ensure that the axioms listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community

5. Prejudice and Bullying

NAS Vanguard School is opposed to all forms of prejudice, harassment and bullying which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to above:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism, and those that are directed against travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia

6. Recruitment

We recognise our duties under safeguarding legislation and aim to comply with both the Health Standards (England) Regulations 2003 and Section 60 of the Equality Act 2010. We

also note and will use guidance on Safer Recruitment (see Safeguarding Policy). Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for members of staff in the school to apply. In most cases vacancies will be advertised externally unless there are cogent reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.

Governors will wherever possible make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment. All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. For further information see the school's Safeguarding Policy.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with statutory requirements, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. At all times a nominated member of the governing body will have a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy. The Principal is responsible for implementing the policy, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination. They may delegate day-to-day responsibility to a member of the SLT.

Staff will be expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver lessons and sequences of lessons reflecting the above axioms
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work

8. Information and Resources

We will ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupil, their parents and carers, and relevant stakeholders.

9. Religious Observance

We will respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

10. Staff Development and Training

All staff, including support and administrative staff, will receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. The principles outlined in relation to fair and equal treatment will also apply to selection for training. Requests for training will be considered in accordance with the school's operational priorities, based on the school development plan and CPD budget.

11. Breaches of the Policy

Any breaches of this policy will be dealt with as determined by the Principal and governing body on a case-by-case basis.

12. Impact Monitoring and Evaluation

Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected relating to the implementation of this policy, and governors may make adjustments as appropriate in the light of such review. In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; gender including reassignment; family type; age; and sexual orientation.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed bi annually by the Executive Principal and governors.