

Equal Opportunities Policy

To be read in conjunction with:

- The Equal Opportunities Act 2010
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Accessibility Policy & Plan
- The Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Independent School Standards 2019

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Equality Act 2010 explanatory notes (2010)
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE, 2015)
- Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance for schools (2014)
- Advice for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies in maintained schools and academies (DfE, 2013)
- Working Together with Safeguarding Children 2020

1 Aims

1.1 This is the Equal Opportunities policy of Atelier 21 Future School.

1.2 The aims of this policy are as follows:

- communicate the commitment of the School to the promotion of equal opportunities
- promote equal treatment within the 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
- remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist
- ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against any person on any ground listed at paragraph 2.2.
- make it clear that, and ensure, that all discriminatory words, behaviour and images are treated as unacceptable

- take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled people at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustments' duty).
- 1.3 The School aims to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities. The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, through the supportive School culture and through the School's policies.

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 The School recognises the benefits of having a diverse School Community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Pupils will be taught to value and respect others. The School is committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and is committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the School Community.
- 2.2 In the provision of equal opportunities, the School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under law to oppose discrimination on the basis of the following Protected Characteristics:
- disability
 - gender reassignment
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion and 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.
- 2.3 The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need or disability (SEND) or learning difficulty, or because English is an additional language.

3 Scope and application

- 3.1 This policy applies to all members of the current and prospective School Community. There is also a Staff Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, a copy of which is included in the Employment Handbook.
- 3.2 All members of the School Community are expected to comply with this policy and therefore treat others with dignity at all times.
- 3.3 Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. This policy covers the following forms of discrimination;
- 3.3.1 **Direct discrimination:** Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic as set out in paragraph 2.2 above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in". This would be a decision based on grounds of their race and 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 pupil is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that pupil.

3.3.2 **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.

3.3.3 Discrimination arising from disability: Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, where a pupil 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.

4 Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

4.1 The Head of School has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the School's Equal Opportunities Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination.

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

4.3 Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard to equal opportunities.

5 Definitions

5.1 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

- Reference to EHC Plan (s) is to Education and Health Care Plan(s).
- References to Protected Characteristics are as defined in Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010.
- Reference to PSHE is the personal, social and health education programme.
- References to the School are references to Atelier 21 Future School which is an independent day school for pupils aged from 4 to 14 years. The School welcomes staff, workers, volunteers, pupils, parents, and applicants from all different ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds.
- References to the School Community includes staff, pupils, parents, visitors and volunteers.
- Reference to SEND means special educational needs and disabilities and reference SENDCo is the School's special educational needs co-ordinator.

6 Admission

- 6.1 Applicants: The School accepts applications from, and admits pupils irrespective of their gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or special educational needs and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered, subject to section 10, below. The School will treat every application in a fair, open-minded way. Please see the Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff relating to staff recruitment and selection.
- 6.2 Selection: Every application will be considered on its merits within the School's criteria for selection on grounds of the pupil's readiness for learning, reading and communication skills and attitudes to school, but this will not be done as a way of excluding pupils with a disability or special educational needs, subject to section 10 below.
- 6.3 Admissions Policy: The School's Admissions Policy reflects the School's approach towards equal opportunities for prospective pupils and is consistent with this policy.

7 Education and associated services

- 7.1 Equal access: The School will afford all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects including all sports, irrespective of their gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare, paragraph 7.2 and section 10, below.
- 7.2 Positive action: The School may afford pupils of a particular racial group, or pupils with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the pupils in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.
- 7.3 Exclusions: The School will not discriminate against any pupil by excluding him or her from the School, or by subjecting him or her to any other detriment, on the grounds of their gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs, subject to section 10 of this Policy.
- 7.4 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 the School's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias.
- 7.5 Pupil interaction: All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, pregnancy or maternity or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the School, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes. The School's PSHE curriculum encourages respect for other people, with particular regard to the Protected Characteristics.

7.6 Bullying: The School 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.

The School's Anti-Bullying Policy contains more details about the School's anti-bullying practices.

8 School uniform

8.1 Atelier 21 is of the firm belief that as long as students are in comfortable clothing and attire fit to learn then there is no need for a uniform. Pupils will not be discriminated against clothing associated with any of the Protected Characteristics. Pupil's will be required to purchase hoodies for outdoor activities for Health and Safety reasons.

8.2 Symbols of faith: Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle worn by Sikhs, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by pupils when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the pupil or his or her parents to the Head of School, whose decision will be final, subject to the complaints procedure.

9 Religious belief

9.1 Religion: the School respects the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with all faiths, or no faith, subject always to their respecting the rights and freedoms of the School Community as a whole and considerations of safety and welfare.

10 Disability and special educational needs

10.1 Our approach: We are an inclusive School which welcomes members of the School Community with disabilities and special educational needs. We maintain and drive a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people and those with special educational needs in all the activities of the School and we will not treat a member of the School Community less favourably on these grounds without justification. At present, our facilities, physical and otherwise, for the disabled and those with special educational needs are limited. However, we will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the School's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone. Our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy is consistent with this policy.

10.2 Definitions: Children have Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A disability is a physical or mental

impairment which has a "substantial and long-term adverse effect" on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activity. For further clarification, please refer to the policies mentioned in the opening list.

10.3 Reasonable adjustments: The School has an on-going duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs in respect of the education and associated services provided to ensure that such pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils. This is a broad expression that covers all aspects of school life, for example:

- the curriculum
- classroom organisation and timetabling
- access to school facilities
- clubs and visits
- school sports and
- school policies.

Reasonable adjustments may typically include:

- making arrangements for a child in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room
- allowing extra time for a dyslexic child to complete an entrance exam
- providing resources in larger print for a child with a visual impairment
- rearranging the timetable to allow a pupil to attend a class in an accessible part of the building
- arranging a variety of accessible sports activities.

The School is 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" the School is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils where to do so would be reasonable. The School will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services.

As well as providing educational services, the School provides services to the public, for example at:

- open days
- parents' evenings
- concerts and plays
- exhibitions

When providing such services, the School will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled people are able to use the School's services as far as is reasonable to the same extent and standard as non-disabled people.

10.4 Informing the School: In accordance with the School's terms and conditions, parents of pupils must notify the Head in writing if they are aware or suspect that the pupil (or prospective pupil) has a disability or if they (either parent), the pupil (or prospective pupil), or any close

relations have at any time had, or has a learning difficulty. The registration form enables prospective parents to give details of their child's disability when applying for a place at the School. Parents must provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information upon request. Providing the School with such information will enable the School to support the pupil as much as possible. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. The School will have due regard to any request made by a parent or pupil (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential.

- 10.5 Admission of children with special educational needs and / or a disability: Applications for a place at the School will be considered on the basis that reasonable adjustments (see definition above) have been made by the School in order to cater for the child's special educational needs and/or disability. The School will not offer a place if, after all reasonable adjustments have been made, the School will not be able to provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs. The School shall inform the parents of their decision and give details of the reasonable adjustments they are going to make or give reasons why an offer of a place has not been made.
- 10.6 Existing pupils: Where the School becomes aware of a disability or special educational need of an existing pupil, the School will do all that is reasonable to assist the pupil whilst at the School, which may include making reasonable adjustments. If in the professional judgement of the Head of School, and after consultation with the parents and the pupil (where appropriate), the School cannot provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs after all reasonable adjustments have been made, parents will be asked to withdraw the pupil, without being charged fees in lieu of notice and with the acceptance deposit returned. The School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide their child with the necessary environment and level of teaching and support.
- 10.7 Access: The School will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the School will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. The School has an Accessibility Plan, which is kept under review and revised as necessary.
- 10.8 SENDCo: The School's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator is Jo Epps

11 Pupils with statements of special educational needs or EHC Plans

- 11.1 The School's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy includes details about the welfare and educational provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs or EHC Plans.

12 Pupils with English as an additional language

- 12.1 Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) will receive additional learning support if necessary. The School will consult with the pupil and the parents as appropriate. The School has appropriate welfare support for all such pupils through the supportive culture and the teaching team.

13 Recording incidents of discrimination

- 13.1 Questions about this policy: If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Head of School.
- 13.2 Complaints: If you believe that you have received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed in paragraph 2.2 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's formal complaints procedure. For a copy of the School's Complaints Policy, please contact the School. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the complaints procedure.
- 13.3 Reports: If you would like to report a breach of this policy that does not constitute a complaint under paragraph 13.2 above, please contact the Head of School.
- 13.4 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.

14 Record keeping

- 14.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.
- 14.2 Where there are specific record keeping requirements under this policy, these are set out below:
- 14.2.1 All reported breaches of this policy will be recorded and this record will be reviewed annually by the Head of School.

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