

Aberdare Community School

Ysgol Gymunedol Aberdâr



Strategic Equality Plan

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Signature of Headteacher	<i>Evelyn Morgan</i>
Signature of Chair of Governors	Mrs E Bryant
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Introduction

This is the 1st Strategic Equalities Plan (SEP). This policy belongs to everybody and is relevant to all stakeholders.

The Equality Act 2010 gives us the framework for this plan. The Human Rights Act 1998, the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 are also relevant to this policy.

1 Equality vision and equality objectives

The Equality Act 2010 requires all schools to have equality objectives in place. These objectives cover all the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and include the Welsh language in Wales. Actions to achieve these objectives are in the action plan at the end of this document.

These are the equality objectives we as a school will be focussing on:

- **To reduce the gender gap in attainment between boys and girls and other specific learner groups (eFSM, CLA, EAL) at KS4.**
- **Implement Welsh Government Anti-bullying guidance and to work to establish the definition of bullying amongst pupils and parents.**
- **To narrow gender gaps in national reading and mathematics (procedural and reasoning) test results through analysis and intervention.**

The following plan sets out our equality commitments. Actions are included in the Action Plan and the Strategic Equality Plan will be evaluated through the School Improvement Plan.

2 School strategies and equalities

Implementing the Strategic Equality Plan will be a priority for school from September 2021. Progress on this plan is reported to Governors and other stakeholders regularly, where appropriate. Aspects of this plan will be included in the school's Self Evaluation Report. The Plan will be reviewed within 4 years of setting the equality objectives in 2021 and the objectives within the plan annually.

3 The national equality agenda

The following pieces of legislation are at the heart of the equality agenda.

3.1 The Equality Act 2010

The 9 protected characteristics of the 2010 Equality Act include everybody: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act sets down Public Sector Duties that apply to all the school's functions:-

- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good community relations
- Eliminating discrimination.

Specific public sector duties for Wales are set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, as issued by the Welsh Government.

3.2 The Human Rights Act 1998

Human Rights and equality are inextricably linked. Equality is treated as a fundamental human right, from the principle of equal respect for the inherent dignity of all people.

Article 14 of the Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination ‘on any grounds such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status’.

The words ‘other status’ have been held to cover, amongst other things, sexual orientation, illegitimacy, marital status, trade union membership, transsexualism, disability, carers and imprisonment.

Article 14 can only be used when attached to a complaint relating to another article of the Convention such as Article 3: right to life, liberty and security of person or Article 8: right to a private and family life, home and correspondence.

In some instances the Human Rights Act 1998 gives greater rights to people than other equalities legislation because it judges treatment against a fixed standard and does not rely on comparison between treatment of one group of people and another.

4 Pupils

4.1 A school for everyone

Our school is open to everyone. We will not discriminate in our admissions criteria, in providing education and access to any benefit, service or facility either directly or indirectly, against anyone with a protected characteristic.

We will not discriminate on the grounds of:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- and the Welsh language in Wales.

Age is the 9th protected characteristic. In a school context it applies to everybody except pupils.

Opportunities in our school will be of equally high standard for everyone.

The schools’ duty to our pupils goes beyond just the formal education. It covers all school activities such as extra-curricular and leisure activities, after-school and homework clubs, sports activities and school trips, as well as school facilities such as libraries and IT facilities etc.

The school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. The duty is anticipatory. The school will ask disabled pupils whether they need any support or adjustments so that we are ready for them e.g. produce the lesson notes in large print or in an electronic format before the lesson. In some cases a disabled pupil may receive support under the special educational needs (SEN) framework under Part 4 of the Education Act 1993.

4.2 How we deliver equality

We will mainstream equality in providing education, access to benefits, service or facilities by making sure that people:

- Know the equality duties and the school's equality commitments
- Can access all the benefits of being at the school
- Know how to ask for help
- Are offered suitable support e.g. translation and interpretation, transport, technology, adaptations etc. where the lack of these services would place a person at a disadvantage on the grounds of a protected characteristic – to meet a need, not only a preference
- The impact upon the person involved is of great importance in determining what is reasonable.

4.3 What support can you expect?

The school can only refuse to deliver support or adaptation if the school can prove that service is 'unreasonable' or 'impractical'. However, this can only apply to particular and unforeseen circumstances.

4.4 Positive Action

The school can take proportionate positive action to address disadvantages faced by pupils of a protected characteristic, or where it would enable or encourage participation by an under represented group. We will gather evidence before taking positive action.

4.5 Communication

The school will communicate with people in a way that is suitable for them. We will:

- Design materials that are easy to read, with clear language and clear layout
- Use images that reflect the school and our local community
- Acknowledge that parents may prefer different methods of communication and provide information in a variety of formats including large print, Braille, local languages etc. where needed
- Ask people for their preferred method of communication, where we can record it and use it e.g. email rather than letters to parents and carers
- Attach full contact details to make it easy for people to contact us
- Train and support employees in communication

4.6 Curriculum, resources and involvement

We will mainstream equality through the curriculum in our choice of diverse and challenging materials and activities. We will support children and young people, examine their lives and personal identity in the light of people's experiences, which are both similar and different to them.

The images we use will reflect the diversity of society in a positive way so to meet the third duty of the Equality Act - to promote good relations between people. We will not

omit or avoid certain equality issues because to do so would be to promote a false picture of the people of Wales.

We will welcome people across the protected characteristics to our school to share their skills and experience. We will make sure that we make all people feel welcome.

4.7 Buying goods and services and working in partnership

Our schools will pass on its equalities duties to any person or body who works for us or with us or delivers goods for us, whether they are paid, voluntary or partners. The impact of this is that school related activities will be fair and equal for all employees, pupils and parents.

4.8 Engagement

Our school consults and involve stakeholders on matters that concern us, including this plan and equality objectives. Engaging people will give us evidence to work out how well we are doing in delivering equality.

Our school has procedures for finding out how stakeholders think and feel about our school.

4.9 Training

We will make sure that all people involved with our school know our equality commitments and their personal duty under it. We will provide suitable training for all staff and pupils where relevant and appropriate. Where there are issues or potential issues e.g. social tensions, we'll continue to address matters through the curriculum and wider provision and seek the expertise of external agencies and services/providers if appropriate.

We will encourage employees and governors to continually develop their knowledge and understanding of equality matters.

4.10 Complaints and comments

Our school has mechanisms for gathering views and opinions such as questionnaires. Our school complaints policy provides information with regards to making complaints.

5. Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

5.1 Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination. Our school will make sure that nothing we do discriminates against any person or people on the grounds of a protected characteristic. Human Rights are applicable to all people in relation to the school.

There are four kinds of illegal discrimination defined in the Equality Act 2010, they apply to service delivery and employment across the protected characteristics:

5.1.1 Direct discrimination— where a person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic e.g. refused to admit a child because they are Roma.

5.1.2 Combined direct (dual) discrimination - where a person is treated less favourably because of a combination of protected characteristics e.g. a school excludes a pupil because they are black and male.

Discrimination based on association is now illegal. Direct discrimination occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic e.g. their brother is a disabled person.

Discrimination based on perception is now illegal. Direct discrimination also occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because you mistakenly think that they have a protected characteristic e.g. discrimination against a young person who is believed to be gay, even if they're not.

5.1.3 Indirect discrimination – when a policy or practice is apparently neutral but the effect places a group of people at a significant disadvantage e.g. a rigid school dress code which does not account for items of clothing linked to religion.

5.1.4 Discrimination arising from disability – where a person is treated less favourably because of something related to their impairment e.g. a pupil with a learning disability disciplined for not obeying a rule that they hadn't understood because they didn't understand the sign.

5.2 Harassment including bullying

The schools' work around personal and social education will help build a school community that understands and enjoys equality and diversity.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from harassment. Harassment is unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Our school has a responsibility to protect pupils, prospective pupils, former pupils, employees etc. from harassment. The school will be pro-active in protecting people by raising awareness, training teachers and pupils, encouraging people to report harassment and dealing with problems as they arise.

Harassment now includes **harassment based on association** i.e. a friend of a disabled person, **or perception** i.e. mistakenly believed to be a Muslim.

Where there are instances of bullying in and associated with the school we will deal with instances promptly and sensitively. We recognise that instances that are motivated by prejudice against people of a particular characteristic, or bullying that affects one group of people in particular, has a greater negative effect, both for the people involved and for the school community. Further information can be gained through the school antibullying policy.

5.3 Victimisation

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from victimisation on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics. Victimisation is when a person subjects another person to detriment because they have done, or believed that they will do, a 'protected act.'

A 'protected act' are acts that include giving information or evidence under the Equality Act 2010, bringing proceedings, or making an allegation in relation to the Act, (as long as they have done so in good faith).

5.4 Discrimination

Name calling, physical attacks, threats, the spreading of false rumours in person and online are all made more serious where a person is victimised for who they are. We know

that discrimination and prejudice are particularly damaging to the individual and to family, friends and the school community. Our school will take incidents of discrimination seriously and sensitively. False allegations are also taken seriously.

We will take an active role where discrimination is identified and it involves our employees, pupils or premises. Incidents 'on the bus' or 'outside school' negatively affect our pupils as much as incidents in school and we will tackle it where it is known, as far as we can and as far as our remit permits.

Discrimination involving adults are treated differently to those involving children and young people. All adults are fully responsible for their actions. Children and young people may need support and education in matters to do with prejudice and discrimination and as such we will try to find solutions that involve the whole group and avoid criminalising individuals because of their actions. We will work with partners to find solutions, in particular where incidents are complicated or involve a wide group of people.

6 Performance/ standards - how we deliver the policy

6.1 Leadership and Management

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school fulfils its legal equalities responsibilities. A member of the Governing Body has a watching brief for equalities matters. With assistance from the Head teacher, the Governing Body will ensure that this plan is implemented.

The Governing Body has a governor with responsibility for equalities.

The named persons with responsibility for dealing with reported incidents of discrimination or bullying are the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. The school will make sure that all incidents of discrimination relating to the school, its pupils and staff are reported and recorded. The information will be shared with the Local Authority to help it plan anti-discrimination work when requested. Neither the school nor the Local Authority will ever publicly identify individuals involved in incidents.

6.2 Taking decisions and Equality Impact Assessments

Before introducing important new policies or measures our schools carefully assesses the potential impact on equalities, positive or negative.

An Equality Impact Assessment will include:

- The purpose of the policy or practice
- A summary of the steps taken in the assessment (engagement)
- A summary of the information gathered and used
- The result of the assessment
- Any decision taken by the school in relation to the results.

Whenever possible, a broad range of people including staff, parents, pupils and others are involved in consultation on policy development. Any issues arising will be addressed and stakeholders informed of decisions and actions.

6.3 Performance

Performance in relation to the Action Plan and Equality Objectives generated will be reported to Governors annually and included in the school's Self Evaluation.

6.4 Identifying and publishing equality information

The information we publish will be easy to find and easy to understand.

For pupils and school performance we will be publishing information on:

- Composition broken down by year group, ethnicity and gender.
- Composition broken down by types of disability and special educational needs
- Inequality of outcome and participation connected with ethnicity, gender and Disability.
- Instances of discrimination
- Complaints.

We will be sensible in producing information. We realise that if the data group is very small then a breakdown of that data will not give us any useful information e.g. looking at the academic achievement of two individuals in a year group cannot tell us about the performance of Chinese pupils in general. No data published will identify any individual.

Other matters including language needs, behavioural needs, poverty, schooling history etc. will be taken into account in analysing data and developing strategies to address equality differences.

7 Employment

7.1 Employment

The school aims to be a fair employer and promote a friendly working culture. Without committed enthusiastic, skilled and empowered people the school cannot succeed. We will create a healthy, safe and supportive work environment where people are respected for who they are and employees can perform at their best.

We want our workforce to reflect society in RCT. It is illegal to discriminate either directly or indirectly against people in selecting and employing people, in the terms of employment, access to training, promotion, transfers, retirement, dismissal, and other benefits on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics.

School employees are covered by the school Pay Policy which ensure that we have robust pay scales, performance management and commitment to continual professional development for employees through all employment levels.

7.2 Requests in relation to a protected characteristic

We will make every reasonable endeavour to meet employees' requests relating to a protected characteristic, including dress, food, holidays, prayer times, work patterns, leave, support, physical adaptations in order not to discriminate.

7.3 Positive action in Employment

Positive action measures can be used to counteract the effects of past discrimination so that people in such groups can achieve their potential. We will evidence that we believe such disadvantages or underrepresentation exists before taking action.

If two candidates meet the job requirements and are equally good candidates, the school may choose a candidate from a less represented group in order to address demographic balance in the workforce.

7.4 Monitoring and publishing information on employment

We will monitor and publish equality information on our workforce in line with RCT's Strategic Equality Plan when this is requested. This includes monitoring recruitment, employee development and retention

8 Action Plan 2021-2024

Equality and diversity are a part of the school's everyday business. This action plan sets out the school's main equality objectives.

	What we are going to do	How we monitor it	Time	What is a successful outcome	Person responsible
<u>Equality objective 1</u> To reduce the gender gap in attainment between boys and girls and other specific learner groups (eFSM, CLA, EAL) at KS4.	Establish an effective assertive pupil-mentoring programme in KS4 to support individual pupils who are underperforming.	Regular data drops LMM between SLT link and PL DH/SLT link/PL meetings to update the war wall.	Termly	Attainment levels between genders level	HT/DH/SLT link/ PL
<u>Equality objective 2</u> Implement Welsh Government Anti-bullying guidance and to work to establish definition of bullying amongst pupils and parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the analysis of pupil questionnaires to measure pupil perceptions around the theme of bullying, e.g. feeling safe in school, knowing what to do if bullying occurs and knowing who to talk to if worried or upset (Estyn questionnaire) Organise awareness-raising sessions around the theme of bullying e.g. collective worship, participation in National Anti-bullying Week. Develop and implement data collection mechanisms to measure the incidences and nature of bullying and whether there is a correlation to 	<p>Data analysis will identify a baseline and the nature extent of bullying.</p> <p>HT reports to governors will indicate the prevalence and nature of bullying related to protected groups.</p> <p>Pupil, parent and staff questionnaires will allow perceptions to be identified and improvements measure.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of questionnaires (annual) indicate an increase in pupils' confidence in the work of the school with regards to bullying, e.g. feeling safe, knowing what to do if bullying happens and knowing who to talk to if worried or upset Reduction in the prevalence of bullying and identity based bullying. Standard definition of what constitutes bullying is understood by all pupils and parents/carers. 	HT

	any protected groups.				
<u>Equality objective 3</u> To narrow gender gaps in national reading and mathematics (procedural and reasoning) test results through analysis and intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual autumn analysis of previous national test results , identifying trends in gender. SIP to identify strategies to improve learning & teaching in identified areas. 	SER National test results	Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gap narrowed in national reading and mathematics test data between identified gender groups 2021-24. 	DH

