Thomas Telford School

Equal Opportunities and Objectives Policy

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Introduction

Thomas Telford School is committed to eliminating discriminatory behaviour and to promote equality for students, staff and others in our school community. The Equality Act 2010 defines unlawful behaviour as direct discrimination, indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation of people on the grounds of protected characteristics: disability, age, race (including colour, nationality ethnic or national origin), religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. (See Appendix 1).

Thomas Telford School is committed to giving all students every opportunity to achieve the highest standards by:

- taking account of their varied experiences and needs
- offering a broad and balanced curriculum
- having high expectations of all students

Thomas Telford School complies with current legislation concerning unlawful discrimination and promoting best practice in equality of treatment. This policy accords with the Equality Act 2010 via guidance provided by the Department for Education in 'The Equality Act 2010 and Schools' (May 2014).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan
- Sex and Relationships Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy
- Trips and Educational Visits Policy

Aims and Objectives

The Governing Body is 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 **disability; age; race (including colour, nationality ethnic or national origin); religion and belief; sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; gender reassignment**.

All members of the School community, including visitors, are responsible for promoting the School's Equal Opportunities Policy and are obliged to respect it and act in accordance with the policy.

Thomas Telford School promotes the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that it provides in the School.

Thomas Telford School seeks to ensure that, wherever possible, all students have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the School.

Thomas Telford School strives to constantly identify and remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups by regularly assessing the impact of its policies, practices and guidelines.

Thomas Telford School ensures that recruitment, employment, promotion and development opportunities are open to all.

The School challenges personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur. The School is aware that prejudice and stereotyping can be caused by misconception and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's point of view, the School aims to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

Thomas Telford School values each person's worth, celebrating both people's individuality and the cultural diversity of the School community, and shows respect for everyone.

Thomas Telford School and its staff strive to be proactive in tackling prejudice and unlawful behaviour.

All employees of Thomas Telford School have a specific responsibility to operate within the boundaries of this policy. Any employee found to have breached this policy will be dealt with as a possible case of misconduct or gross misconduct under our disciplinary policy. Further, employees are warned that, under the Equality Act 2010, an individual can be held personally liable for his/her own acts of discrimination towards others, or where he/she knowingly helps another to commit an act of discrimination.

Thomas Telford School seeks to ensure that the students and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals.

Equal Opportunities in Recruitment

Thomas Telford School is committed to following the Safer Recruitment statutory guidance provided by Department for Education in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2024). Recruitment and selection procedures and practices are regularly reviewed to ensure that no group is put at a disadvantage either directly or indirectly. In accordance with the spirit of this policy statement, employees are given an equal opportunity for career progression within the organisation. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee is discriminated against on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

Equal Opportunities in the Curriculum

Every student at Thomas Telford School has an equal entitlement to the National Curriculum and, subject to entry requirements, to all other areas of the curriculum, regardless of language, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. Students at Thomas Telford School should have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum that will prepare them well for life beyond school regardless of academic ability. Consequently, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Policy. Staff will actively encourage the breaking down of any traditional gender stereotyping regarding subject choices when advising on Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 courses.

Thomas Telford School will monitor any careers advice or work experience placements provided by outside agencies with the aim of ensuring equal opportunities.

All forms of individual and subject support, guidance, amenities and facilities, including extracurricular activities, will be equally available to students of both sexes.

Behaviour expectations and disciplinary sanctions will be free of any gender, sexual orientation, race or culture bias, religion and belief.

Teachers at Thomas Telford School will assess all materials and resources used for teaching and take appropriate action whenever possible to ensure that they reflect concepts, themes and information which seeks to eliminate prejudice, and any other form of discrimination. Teachers should try to ensure that all students feel that their language and culture is both acknowledged and valued.

Thomas Telford School actively encourages an ethos in which all students feel secure and valued.

Due Regard

'Due regard' will be given to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed.

Training and Development
Thomas Telford School will seek 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, on the basis of their assessed training needs.

- Promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution that students, staff, Governors and parents can make.

- Provide training to staff on equal opportunities to promote understanding of equalities legislation and the School's and their responsibilities.

The Role of Governors
In this policy statement the Governing Body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the School community are treated both fairly and equally.

The Governing Body will ensure that no-one is unlawfully discriminated against whilst in the School on account of their race, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The Governing Body will monitor the implementation of this policy on a regular basis through information provided by the Headmaster. The policy will be reviewed every two years.

The Role of the Headmaster
The Headmaster will ensure that the School's policy on equal opportunities is implemented.

The Headmaster will ensure that all staff are aware of the School policy on equal opportunities and that these guidelines are applied fairly in all situations.

The Headmaster will ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy so that no one suffers discrimination.

The Headmaster will promote the principles of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum and in providing opportunities for training.

The Headmaster will promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in assemblies, for example, respect for other people will be a regular theme and it will also be in electronic displays around the School.

The Headmaster will view all incidents of potentially discriminatory treatment with due concern.

The Role of Teachers and Support Staff
Staff at Thomas Telford School will aim to ensure that all students, parents and their colleagues are treated fairly and with respect. The School will not discriminate against any child/young person, parent, member of staff or visitor and will actively seek to identify and remove indirect discrimination. Ignorance of what constitutes discrimination is not a defence.

When selecting classroom materials, teachers will strive to provide resources which promote positive images and which challenge stereotypes of minority groups.

When designing schemes of work, teachers will pay cognisance to this Equal Opportunities Policy, both in the choice of topics to study and in how to approach sensitive issues.

All teachers and support staff at Thomas Telford School will challenge any incidents of prejudice or discrimination and draw them to the attention of a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Role of Students

Students at Thomas Telford School will be made aware of the policy and draw any incidents of prejudice or discrimination to the attention of a member of staff.

Students at Thomas Telford School will be encouraged to show respect, tolerance and understanding towards others and expected to demonstrate these important values in their interactions with others.

The Role of Parents

Parents will be made aware of the policy through the School website and are expected to encourage their children to do as outlined above and will draw any incidents of prejudice or discrimination to the attention of a member of staff.

The Role of Visitors / Contractors / Third Party Employees

All visitors and contractors are required to adhere to the Equal Opportunities Policy. This information can be found on our website.

Complaints

Any complaints concerning equality opportunities should be addressed, as appropriate, through the School's complaints or grievance procedures.

Monitoring / Review

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. The Governors will:

- monitor the progress of students from minority groups, comparing it to the progress made by other students in the School;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from students, parents, staff or visitors regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the School's Behaviour Policy, and the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that students from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

Fostering good relations

Thomas Telford School aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, students will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures.
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Students will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies, we will also invite external speakers to contribute.
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, organising school trips and activities based around the local community.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of students within the School. For example, our school headship team has representatives from different year groups and is formed of students from a range of backgrounds. All students are encouraged to participate in the School's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures.
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach.

Equality considerations in decision-making

Thomas Telford School ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. The School always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the School considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays.
- Is accessible to students with disabilities.
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

The School keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

Equality objectives

Objective 1

Increase the number of opportunities to celebrate diversity within the School community.

Why we have chosen this objective: In order for the School community to see the vast ranging diversity within the School and allow these to be embraced.

To achieve this objective we plan to: Plan and complete more assemblies, whole school activities, broadcast videos and set PT tasks covering relevant areas.

Progress we are making towards this objective:

Objective 2

Have in place a reasonable adjustment agreement for all staff with disabilities by July, to meet their needs better and make sure that any disadvantages they experience are addressed.

Why we have chosen this objective: for staff to feel happy and safe within the working environment and react to ongoing needs of the staff with the focus of staff well-being.

To achieve this objective, we plan to: hold professional conversation with the staffing body to analyse need and set out any changes required.

Progress we are making towards this objective:

Objective 3

Undertake an analysis of recruitment data and trends in regard to race, disability and any gender pay gap by July, and report on this to the staffing and renumeration committee of the governing board and relevant governor.

Why we have chosen this objective: to get a full picture of current recruitment.

To achieve this objective we plan to: arrange time for HR to collate the data for discussion with the head teacher.
Progress we are making towards this objective:

Appendix 1 Protected Characteristics

- **Race / Ethnicity**

Thomas Telford School will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism (including against colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin) and racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups

Thomas Telford School will not tolerate any form of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, it will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures and logged accordingly.

Thomas Telford School endeavours to be welcoming to all minority groups. The celebration and understanding of cultural diversity are promoted through the topics studied by the students and is reflected in displays, resources and events.

Cultural diversity and respect for others are celebrated and reflected across the whole curriculum. The curriculum will enhance students' understanding of UK and world society and history, including the contributions of minority ethnic groups and key individuals within those groups.

Thomas Telford School will give students the understanding they need to recognise prejudice and reject racial discrimination.

As part of the broad and balanced curriculum, the School will ensure fundamental British values are promoted; giving students clear understanding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

- **Gender / Sex**

Thomas Telford School will constantly examine its curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias, inequality or stereotyping and will keep up to date with educational advice and guidance on gender questioning children.

Thomas Telford School will encourage students to be aware of the rigid gender stereotypes presented by, for example, the media and will try to ensure that resources include books and other learning materials which value the achievements of both women and men.

Thomas Telford School is committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions.

Thomas Telford School tries to ensure that:

- teachers allocate their time fairly between the sexes
- all students have opportunities to work with students of both sexes
- the traditional gender stereotypes are broken down
- students have opportunities to examine their own pre-conceived ideas of gender roles
- students are given the opportunity to pursue less conventional subjects and interests; for example, girls to read more non-fiction and boys more fiction

- **Disability**

There is a general requirement in The Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities. Thomas Telford School is committed to meeting the needs of both staff and students with disabilities and will make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices to alleviate disadvantage.

All reasonable steps will also be taken to ensure that students with disabilities are not placed at any disadvantage compared to students without disabilities in terms of access to student information and the School curriculum.

Thomas Telford School will seek to provide an environment that allows students with disabilities full access (where reasonably practicable) to all areas of learning and opportunities afforded to all other students at the School, including educational visits.

Teachers at Thomas Telford School will modify teaching and learning as appropriate for students with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities or modify teaching materials or offer alternative activities where students are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

- **Religion / Belief**

Thomas Telford School respects the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, students, parents and visitors and will comply with all reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. This includes respect for lack of religion or belief, as in atheism.

- **Sexual Orientation**

Thomas Telford School will make no assumption about the sexual orientation of any of the members of its community.

In the curriculum, sexuality is taught within the context of loving relationships. Students' questions will be answered as they arise, honestly, factually and non-judgementally.

Thomas Telford School will promote students' understanding and awareness of issues related to sexuality and sexual diversity. Through the curriculum and wider opportunities for students, sexual diversity will be celebrated and students will develop respect and tolerance.

Thomas Telford School will not tolerate any form of homophobia or homophobic behaviour. Should a homophobic incident occur, it will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures and logged accordingly.

- **Age**

Thomas Telford School will put procedures in place to ensure that no-one is denied a job, an equal chance of training or promotion, or suffers from discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of their age.

- **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

Thomas Telford School will not discriminate on the grounds of marriage or civil partnerships when considering employment of staff and when dealing with stakeholders within the School community.

- **Pregnancy and Maternity**

Thomas Telford School will follow legal requirements with regards to any issues relating to pregnancy and maternity.

- **Gender Reassignment.**

Thomas Telford School will follow legal requirements with regards to any issues relating to Gender Reassignment.

1 ACAS Definitions of Types of Discrimination

Types of discrimination: definitions

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perception discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see discrimination by association below). Annex 1 contains an example of direct discrimination.

Discrimination by association

Applies to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. See Annex 1 for an example of discrimination by association.

Perception discrimination

Applies to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic. See Annex 1 for an example of perception discrimination.

Indirect discrimination

Applies to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, disability and gender reassignment.

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in your company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably in managing your business, ie that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. A legitimate aim might be any lawful decision you make in running your business or organisation, but if there is a discriminatory effect, the sole aim of reducing costs is likely to be unlawful.

Being proportionate really means being fair and reasonable, including showing that you've looked at 'less discriminatory' alternatives to any decision you make. Annex 1 contains an example of indirect discrimination.

Harassment

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual".

Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association (see page 3). See Annex 1 for some examples of harassment.

Harassment by others

Applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act makes you potentially liable for harassment of your employees by people who are not employees of your company, such as customers or clients. You may be liable when you are aware that harassment has taken place, and have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again. See Annex 1 for an example of third party harassment.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

A complainant will not need to compare their treatment with that of a person who has not made or supported a claim under the Act. See Annex 1 for an example of victimisation.