

# GENDER EQUALITY POLICY



## VANTAGE ACADEMY TRUST

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## CONTENT

		Page No
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Roles & Responsibilities	4
3.	Purpose	5
4.	Vision	6
5.	Information Gathering and Consultation	6
6.	Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)	7
7.	Reporting	8
8.	Gender & Every Child Matters	8
9.	Gender & The National Healthy School Programme	10
10.	A Framework For Achievement	11
11.	Sexist & Sexual Bullying	11
12.	Employment – Lack of Men/Women in Senior Roles	12
13.	Promoting Equality of Opportunity	13
14.	Action Plan	13
15.	The National Equality Standards	14
	<i>Appendix A – Gender Equality Duty – Action Plan</i>	16

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This guidance is for Representatives, School Principals, and the whole school workforce of the Vantage Multi Academy Trust (herein 'the Trust'). The information contained provides information on the Gender Equality Duty (GED). The Trust's prime responsibility is making sure the duty is met. However, in practice the School Principal and senior staff with support from staff, students, parents and carers, and members of the wider school community will all need to play a role to ensure the duty is met.
- 1.2 The Trust has taken positive steps to address gender inequality and remove the many barriers that prevent children and young people from achieving and making the most of their opportunities remain. The Trust will ensure that the differences between boys' and girls' experiences, attitudes and achievements in the schools are understood so that our policies and practices will break down these barriers. The gender equality duty will help schools to work towards this goal.
- 1.3 Our key issues for gender and education include:
  - 1.3.1 **Challenging gender stereotypes in subject choice and careers advice:** Gender stereotyping not only prevents some boys engaging with schools, it also limits girls' and boys' ability to pursue their interest and talents. Although girls as a group are achieving better results than boys, they are still being steered towards choices that lead to low paid, low status jobs.
  - 1.3.2 **Pupil attainment:** Boys are generally not achieving the same attainment level as girls, with 63% of boys and 73% of girls in the UK gaining five high grade GCSEs or equivalent by age 16 in 2014/15. The situation is complex however, with certain groups of boys doing as well as girls, whilst other groups of boys doing very badly.
  - 1.3.3 **Health, sport and obesity:** As Girls aged 7-11 are less than half as likely to take part in physical education and sport compared to boys.
  - 1.3.4 **Sexual and sexist bullying and violence:** Research by the Universities of Warwick, Bristol, Durham and North London found that over 75% of 11-12 year old boys thought it was acceptable that women get hit if they make men angry, and more boys than girls of all ages believed that some women deserved to be hit.

- 1.4 The Trust will put processes in place to monitor these key issues. Our GED is a proactive duty and we consider it a fantastic opportunity for us to make a coordinated effort to tackle inequality and ensure that all children and young people are able to fully achieve their potential. The entire school population will benefit by us taking well-planned action on gender equality. This should act as a catalyst towards a society where we all can make the best of our life chances.
- 1.5 The Local Advisory Board (LAB) of each school are committed to:
- Eliminating unlawful sex discrimination and harassment
  - Promoting equality of opportunity between men and women
- 1.6 These elements together are referred to as the general duty. The Trust also has specific duties, which provide us with a clear framework to work by. The main aim of the general duty is to promote gender equality. The LAB and whole school workforce will look at everything we do, on a day-to-day basis, and think about how equality of opportunity can be better promoted. To do this successfully we will embed equality in all our management practices and policy development.
- 1.7 This scheme and the accompanying action plans set out how the Trust will promote equality of opportunity for all.
- 1.8 This scheme is incorporated into the school's improvement action plans to continuously increase access to education for disabled children and young people.

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The Trusts prime responsibility is to make sure that the duty is met and this lies with our LAB, in practice the School Principal and leadership team, with support from the whole school workforce, children and young people, parents and carers, and members of the wider school community, will all need to play a role to ensure the Trust meets its duty.
- 2.2 The whole school workforce will be encouraged to read the guidance and will be given the opportunity to develop their skills to ensure that the Trust is at the forefront of promoting gender equality across all aspects of school life. The guidance will also be shared with other key participants in the process such as children and young people, parents and carers.

## PURPOSE

3.1 The purpose of the Trusts scheme is to show how we are going to meet the duty to promote gender equality for all children and young people, the whole school workforce, parents and carers. Our overall vision strives to reflect the two elements in the general duty.

3.2 We recognise the importance of and wish to create ownership of the scheme for both children and young people, the whole school workforce and parents. The Trust has developed the following statement which identifies the overall purpose and direction of the school's scheme:

*'Vantage Academy Trust will provide an outstanding avenue of opportunity and achievement for children and young people and the whole school workforce who wish to fulfil their potential.'*

3.3 To enable the school to meet the specific duties we will:

- Prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, showing how we intend to fulfil our general and specific duties and setting out our gender equality objectives
- Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap in formulating our overall objectives
- Gather and use information on how our school's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
- Consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine our gender equality objectives
- Assess the impact of our current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- Implement the actions set out in our scheme within three years
- Report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years

## VISION

4.1 The Trust aims to be a cohesive and diverse environment in which:

- There is a common vision and sense of belonging for the whole school workforce, children and young people and parents.

- Difference is positively valued and celebrated
- People from different backgrounds and social groups have similar opportunities
- Strong and positive relationships are developed between people from different backgrounds and social groups
- Everyone understands the importance of equality and local diversity in making the facilities a great place to visit and learn

4.2 We know that in order to provide the leadership necessary to realise this vision we must exemplify the principles of equality in all our activities as a service provider and as an employer.

## INFORMATION GATHERING AND CONSULTATION

5.1 The Trust proposes to meet the general and specific duty by:

- Gathering and using information that is relevant to promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination
- Consulting with stakeholders in the preparation of our scheme, including setting the objectives
- Assessing the impact or likely impact of our existing or proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- Implementing the actions set out in this scheme

5.2 In developing this scheme, the Trust will consult with the following stakeholders:

- All members of staff (including teaching staff, support staff, cleaners/caretakers, adult/student volunteers acting as mentors etc.)
- Local Advisory Board Representatives
- Parents/carers
- Children and young people
- The local authority
- The local community

- Local partners including other local schools, local FE and HE providers, the local Learning and Skills Council.

### 5.3 Developing Involvement

The Trust recognises the importance of ensuring the Involvement is real, and that the views of the whole school workforce, children and young people and parents are reflected in the scheme. To enable the scheme to be most effective it is anticipated that the Trust's first scheme will be developed in the light of the views that the Trust can hear more readily. Part of the action plan will focus on developing the involvement of the whole Trust workforce, children and young people and parents over the three years of the scheme. This will enable the Trust to learn what works and increase the involvement of the whole school workforce, children and young people and parents over time.

## GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT (GIA)

6.1 The Trust will use Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) to help ensure that neither gender are disadvantaged by any school activities and to help identify opportunities to promote gender equality.

6.2 Examples of policies/practices that the schools will impact assess include those relating to:

- Curriculum
- Uniform
- Bullying
- Every Child Matters Objectives
- National Healthy School Status
- Admissions
- Discipline
- Sports
- Careers/Work Experience

We are not expecting to impact assess all of our policies by the date of publication of this scheme, but we will assess all of the policies within the three years of the scheme. The Trust will prioritise policies for impact

assessment by assessing which have the greatest importance and impact on gender equality.

## REPORTING

- 7.1 The Trust will report on the scheme annually. We want to make clear:
- What progress we have made in terms of implementing our action plan
  - What has been the effect of what we have done
- 7.2 The Trust will revisit the information gathered at the start. This information along with the views of the whole school workforce, children and young people and parents will help us to identify the progress we have made and the actions we may still need to take. This will be summarised in the annual report.
- 7.3 As with the scheme itself the report on the scheme will be made in a separate document or may be made within another document, for example, the school prospectus where the school is required to report on its accessibility plan. Where a school reports on its scheme in its prospectus, this should be in the form of a summary, with signposting to a full report elsewhere.

## GENDER & EVERY CHILD MATTERS

- 8.1 The 'Every Child Matters' framework seeks to ensure that every child is supported and enabled to achieve. This means having regard to their physical and mental wellbeing, and providing children and young people with opportunities to make positive contributions to their local communities.
- 8.2 The framework is structured around five outcomes:
- Be healthy
  - Stay safe
  - Enjoy and achieve
  - Make a positive contribution
  - Achieve economic well-being

The Trust understands that these five areas have significantly different dimensions for girls and for boys. By examining these differences the school can better deliver on the outcomes and their gender equality objectives under the GED.



8.3 Below are examples and evidence that the Trust will use to illustrate some of the gender dimensions of the framework.

8.3.1 **Be healthy:** Biological and social factors of sex and gender are important determinants of health outcomes. There are particular issues for girls and boys in, for example, mental health, attitudes to sport and exercise, sexual health, sexual abuse and smoking. The 'identification and assessment of young people's health needs' has to recognise these and other factors. In the 'promotion of healthy lifestyles', we will recognise that sports provision has to address the needs and preferences of girls and boys, and indeed will be more likely to succeed if it does so.

8.3.2 **Stay safe:** The targets listed under "stay safe" will clearly not be met unless the different needs of boys and girls are taken into account. The key aims "safe from bullying and discrimination" and "safe from violence and sexual exploitation" have high relevance to gender equality. Differences in the way boys and girls are bullied need to be examined - the National Union of Teachers (NUT) has highlighted the problem of sexual bullying for girls, and the link has been made between homophobic bullying and suicide for boys. The problem of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation needs to be addressed, especially in light of research findings reporting worrying attitudes of boys to violence against women.

8.3.3 **Enjoy and achieve:** Boys are still behind girls in overall school performance. The gender gap in attainment is significant in literacy and language. The underachievement of boys is clearly important but this overall gap masks the fact that particular groups of boys are doing well, whilst some groups of girls are underperforming. The school will avoid generalisations and over-simplification, and examine how factors such as ethnicity and social class also impact upon the achievement of boys and girls. Girls' educational achievements, however, are not necessarily helping them to take up well-paid jobs. Eliminating gender stereotyping in school education, in vocational training, and in careers choices is a vital step towards tackling the gender pay gap in employment. Following this, it is clear that the link between the 'enjoy and achieve' and the 'achieve economic well-being' outcomes is vital in ensuring achievements lead to economic gains.

8.3.4 **Make a positive contribution:** 'Develop positive relationships and choose not to bully and discriminate' are among the aims under this part of the framework. As well as having robust and well-implemented

policies to tackle sexist stereotyping, bullying, and sexist and sexual forms of harassment, the school can use their citizenship and social studies classes and school assemblies to challenge the assumptions which underlie this behaviour. Another crucial issue that needs to be addressed is the attitude towards gender-based violence amongst children and young people.

- 8.3.5 **Achieve economic well-being:** Occupational segregation is a major contributor to the gender pay gap and to lower pensions and poverty in old age for women. The EOC's investigation into gender segregation showed that it is girls from lower socio-economic groups particularly who suffer as a result of stereotyping and from a school system without an agenda to widen choices. With little access to information from other sources about wider work opportunities and associated pay rates, many girls are trapped in low-paid, low-status jobs that give little opportunity to improve the quality of their lives.

## GENDER AND THE NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOL PROGRAMME

9.1 In order to achieve National Healthy Schools Status, the school will demonstrate evidence in the core themes of the NHSP, using a whole-school approach involving the whole school community:

- Personal, social and health education, including sex and relationship education and drug education (including alcohol, tobacco and volatile substance abuse)
- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Emotional health and well-being (including bullying)

9.2 As clear gender differences exist within the core themes of the NHSP, by addressing these differences it will help the Trust demonstrate our actions towards the themes. Different patterns of exercise, food and alcohol consumption and different attitudes to risk affect boys and girls, and we will take this in consideration to determine our response to health initiatives.

## A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVEMENT

10.1 The Trust will set a framework that tackles the many factors affecting children and young people' engagement with learning using a holistic commitment to breaking down stereotypical gender cultures, which:

- Recognises that social and cultural factors will impact on how children and young people view gender, and this will affect how they engage with learning, for example boys viewing learning as ‘uncool’
- Encourages classroom and staffroom discussion of gender issues which reflect on gender stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning
- Includes teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population. Research does not support the notion of “boy-friendly” and “girl-friendly” teaching. One learning style is not applicable to all boys or all girls, and approaches that appeal to boys are equally likely to appeal to girls. Good quality teaching will be suitable and desirable for both sexes.

## SEXIST AND SEXUAL BULLYING

11.1 Sexual bullying impacts on both genders. Boys are also victims of girls and other boys. Sexual bullying can be broadly defined as any bullying behaviour, physical or non-physical, that is based on a person’s sexuality or gender. This also includes transphobic bullying on the basis of a persons’ perceived gender, or alternative gender expression. It is not just inappropriate language but also gossiping about someone’s rumoured or actual sex life, comments about someone’s appearance or attractiveness, inappropriate touching, sexual innuendos and propositions, graffiti with sexual content, the creation of internet porn sites, spreading films of sexual abuse on mobiles, and its most extreme form sexual assault and rape.

11.2 Measures the Trust will take include:

- Recognise the sexual and sexist content in verbal abuse
- Adapt anti-bullying policies to refer explicitly to sexism and to define sexual bullying
- Work with children and young people to develop school policies to promote an atmosphere free of intimidation
- Explore gender stereotyping in the curriculum
- Ensure strategic leadership from senior management including training for LAB Representatives and senior staff
- Use disciplinary processes consistently
- Record all incidents of sexist language and bullying

## EMPLOYMENT - LACK OF MEN/ WOMEN IN SENIOR ROLES

- 12.1 The teaching profession is female-dominated but women are under-represented in senior posts. Primary teaching exhibits the highest levels of gender segregation with under 20% of teachers being male.
- 12.2 Teaching is a female-dominated profession – women make up over 80% of full-time regular teachers, 90% of primary teachers and 66% of secondary teachers in England. In addition to teaching staff, schools employ nearly half a million support staff, a majority of which are also female.
- 12.3 However, women are severely under-represented in senior posts in schools making up only 30% of secondary School Principals and 64.6% of Primary School Principals. An NUT survey found that black and ethnic minority women in particular tend to be under-represented in senior management positions.
- 12.4 Action is needed to encourage more women to seek promotion and enable them to do so by widening the opportunities for flexible and part-time working. Schools and local authorities should also consider developing mentoring schemes and training for women looking to move into senior management posts.

To try and address this the Trust has:

- Flexible Working Policy
- Childcare Vouchers
- Part Time Working
- Equality of Opportunity for Training & Promotion
- Work Life Balance

## PROMOTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

- 13.1 The Trust will consider every aspect of life in school and will draw on information and views of the whole school workforce, children and young people and parents to identify priorities for our scheme.
- 13.2 Many of the reasonable adjustments that the school will make and much of the action taken as part of our accessibility plans already promote equality of opportunity.

## ACTION PLAN

- 14.1 The Trust will set out the steps that need taking to meet the general duty. This will involve identifying our priorities and turning them into a series of actions to ensure that the Trust makes progress on these priorities. These actions will be brought together in an action plan to accompany the scheme.
- 14.2 The Trust's action plan will be explicit to enable us to judge whether or not our targets have been achieved. The Action plan (Appendix A) will show:
- Clear allocation of lead responsibility
  - Clear allocation of resources
  - An indication of expected outcomes or performance criteria
  - Clear timescales
  - A specified date and process for review
- 14.3 The school will be able to achieve efficiencies of effort where, for example, we:
- Adopt a staged approach and plan developments over the three-year period of the scheme;
  - Dovetail actions arising from the scheme with actions arising from other school development priorities; and
  - Undertake a review of the impact on people of a school policy at the same time as the policy itself is due for review.

## THE NATIONAL EQUALITY STANDARD

- 15.1 The Trust recognised that The National Equality Standard (NES) is a system for measuring development in policy and practice in equality and diversity.
- 15.2 By using The National Equality Standard we will:
- Has a systematic framework for the mainstreaming of diversity
  - Meets our obligations under the law
  - Integrates equalities in our policies and objectives with Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment

- Encourages the development of anti-discrimination practice appropriate to our local circumstances.
- Has a basis for tackling forms of institutionalised discrimination.
- Over time, has a framework for improving performance.

15.3 An important feature of the National Equality Standard is the importance of diversity practice not just in employment but also as an essential aspect of delivering quality services to the whole school community.

15.4 To do this, the National Equality Standard places considerable emphasis on the establishment of key processes within the school.

15.5 This is set out in the Standard as five levels of achievement which the Trust will be able to use to assess their progress:

Level 1: Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy

Level 2: Assessment and Consultation

Level 3: Setting equality objectives and targets

Level 4: Information systems and monitoring against targets

Level 5: Achieving and reviewing outcomes

## APPENDIX A – GENDER EQUALITY DUTY – ACTION PLAN

### Gender Equality Duty – Action Plan - Eliminating unlawful sex discrimination and harassment

No	OBJECTIVE	HOW	WHY	WHO	WHEN
1	To Challenge Gender stereotyping among children and young people	By offering career events with workshops featuring cross-curricular themes, such as gender stereotyping, healthy living and employability. Workshops will be delivered on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Beauty therapy</li> <li>• Early Years education</li> </ul>	To challenge gender stereotyping.	PSHE teacher	Next term
2	To tackle the issue of sexist and homophobic bullying amongst students.	By assessing the current bullying policy which may identify actions. These actions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering assemblies on sexist and homophobic bullying</li> <li>• Developing lesson materials on the issues of gender based harassment and violence</li> </ul>	To address young peoples, especially boys, worrying attitudes towards this problem.	PSHE teacher and all staff and students.	Gender Impact assessment to be carried out on bullying policy this term. Actions to be implemented the following term.

3	To prevent harassment of staff, both male and female, by children and young people and other staff members	To actively promote the school's sexual harassment policy by making staff aware of the policy and process. Make the policy accessible. Increase children and young people knowledge and understanding of the issues. To treat the prevention of sexual harassment as part of the school's health and safety procedures.	To be proactive in the prevention of sexual harassment and to ensure that employees are aware of the correct process and are not frightened or embarrassed of raising issues.	School Principal	Full staff update this term. Incorporate into induction process to capture new staff.
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## Gender Equality Duty – Action Plan - Promoting Equality of Opportunity between Men and Women

No	OBJECTIVE	HOW	WHY	WHO	WHEN
1	To ensure that girls and boys actively participate in PE and sporting activities.	Provide different activities such as dance, aerobics, yoga etc. that might appeal to girls, whilst still providing activities that appeal to boys, i.e. football, cricket etc. Make all these activities accessible to both. Find out whether the PE kit is appropriate, i.e., girls may feel uncomfortable wearing a gym skirt which will put them off joining in sporting activities.	To ensure that girls and boys have equal opportunity to join in sporting activities, allowing them to enjoy sport and keep fit.	Teacher responsible for PE and sports.	By next academic year.
2	To raise the attainment levels of the lowest performing children and young people in English.	Offering catch up classes solely to the children and young people in the bottom 10%, who happen to be boys. Offering catch up classes solely to boys would be lawful as it is based on criteria and not gender, i.e. performance. Continue to monitor results to ensure that should any girls drop into the bottom 10% they receive the same support.	To raise performance levels in English and ensure equality in attainment.	Subject leader	Immediate, following assessment.
3	To challenge traditional career aspirations by offering non-traditional work experience placements to boys and girls.	Networking with local agencies and companies. Provide career advice to cover all jobs and sectors. Encourage students to try non-traditional placements.	To reduce gender segregation in training and work and to give students the best chance to succeed in their chosen careers.	Work placement co-ordinator.	By next academic year.