Equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) are at the heart of the Annie Walsh Old Girls Association (AWOGA UK).

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and developing a culture that values differences, recognising that our members from a variety of different backgrounds bring important and positive contributions to the Association and can improve the way we deliver services.

AWOGA works hard to focus on equality, diversity and inclusion issues, considering both members and pupils of the Annie Walsh Memorial School (Freetown, Sierra Leone) to make sure that this is a truly inclusive association to be a part of, and that we provide the best possible services to all of our members.

Our approach to Diversity and Inclusion reflects our ongoing commitment to mainstreaming inclusion. Building a supportive culture empowers and enables our members to reach their full potential, have the confidence to challenge and be challenged, and ensures that no individual feel isolated.

**How we promote Equality**

The Equality Act (2010) recognises nine protected characteristics, these are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

**1. Purpose of the Policy**

* 1. This policy sets out AWOGA’s understanding of and approach to equality and diversity. It provides members with an overview of the Association’s wide approach to equality. Our equality and diversity policy and their approaches are reflected and highlighted in this policy.
	2. It provides a clear statement of principles in relation to the Association’s vision and demonstrates how implementing good practice on equality and diversity helps the Association deliver their wider aims.

**1.3** It outlines our duty to comply with relevant legislation and other statutory requirements and its commitment to improve the delivery of equality and diversity in the Association and through service delivery.

**2. Our approach to delivering equality**

**2.1** We recognise the diverse needs of our members and are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in service delivery.

**2.2** We value diversity and believe it is essential to provide services which work well for all our members.

**2.3** We are committed to working with all other AWOGA chapters, businesses and the voluntary sector to ensure the best possible outcomes for those who participate in our services.

**3.** AWOGA (UK) will ensure that:

(1) No Member is discriminated against (indirectly, directly or by association) on the grounds of:

* Age
* Disability
* Gender Reassignment
* Marriage and civil partnerships
* Pregnancy and maternity
* Race
* Religion or belief
* Sex
* Sexual orientation

(2) We endeavour to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

(3) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

(4) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

a) Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

b) Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups due to their protected characteristics.

c) Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

d) We will foster an equality culture of continuous improvement and innovation in order to have outcomes that make a difference for all our members regardless of their protected characteristics.

**4. Monitoring and Review**

**4.1** This policy will be updated regularly in line with our other policies.

**4.2** We will collect information about the equality characteristics of our members and to analyse this data, so we understand how effective our services are at reaching and improving outcomes for diverse communities. Collecting equality information will helps us to design policies and services which are effective and meet the needs of these communities.

**4.3** We only collect information when it is relevant and will be used to develop an understanding of take up and need.

**4.4** Confidential information will be handled in accordance with GDPR rules and regulations.