

POLICY & PROCEDURAL STATEMENTS

Topic	Access and Equity
Purpose	<p>Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley Inc. (ANH@E) has developed and implemented this policy to support the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).</p> <p>This policy supports and provides clear instruction and guidance to students and staff to ensure all aspects of RTO operations are responsive to the individual needs of the student including, but not limited to age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, financial or unemployment circumstances that may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of course outcomes.</p>
Policy	<p>ANH@E will promote fair and equal access for all students and potential students, regardless of characteristics or personal association with persons having any of the following attributes including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Gender/gender identity;▪ Sex/sexual orientation;▪ Race;▪ Colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin;▪ Age;▪ Pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding;▪ Marital status;▪ Status as a carer, including parental status;▪ Physical features;▪ Family responsibilities including childless or a de facto spouse;▪ Lawful religious or political belief or activity;▪ Impairment (including physical impairment, intellectual impairment or mental illness).

This policy seeks to create a training and education environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, which enables all students regardless of background and/or personal characteristics to be treated in a fair and considerate manner and enrol and undertake a training program in an environment that enables them to reach their full potential. Access and equity principles are integrated within all the services offered to students.

Access and equity covers three broad areas: discrimination, harassment and affirmative action. Each of these areas is supported by legislation at a State or Federal level; this includes but is not limited to the following:

Federal Legislation

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth);*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth);*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth);*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth);*

- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth);*
- *Work Place Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth);*
- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth).*

State Legislation

- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic);*
- *Multicultural Victoria Act 2004 (Vic);*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001(Vic);*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).*

ANH@E is committed to providing a fair and equitable learning and working environment for all students and staff. In offering education program(s) as part of ANH@E's Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status we aim to provide learning programs and pathways where program design, course content, training facilities and all aspects of the training and assessment process are available in a way that allows equality of educational opportunity to all students.

Procedures

ANH@E will adopt the following procedures which include detailed actions and responsibilities that promote access and equity.

- The House Manager and Further Education Coordinator are responsible for overseeing and implementing all areas of access and equity practices within the day to day operations of the RTO. The House Manager and Further Education Coordinator are responsible in the first instance for any queries relating to equity and access, and The House Manager is responsible for escalating any unresolved issues to the Committee of Management for further action.

Students

ANH@E puts its commitment to access and equity into practice by:

- Identifying and removing any barriers to access and participation;
- Ensuring all products and services offered under the RTO are free from limitation to users based on age, gender, physical, mental, social or other protected characteristics;
- Ensuring all students and prospective students are informed that ANH@E will, where practicable accommodate their learning needs;
- Implementing reasonable adjustments as necessary to ensure delivery and assessment of all training programs meets individual student needs;
- Ensuring all practices are free from discrimination;
- Consulting with students regularly about the adequacy, design and standard of services;
- Being sensitive to the needs and requirements of students from diverse backgrounds and/or personal characteristics, and be responsive as far as practicable to the particular circumstances of individuals;
- Optimising the use of available training resources through a user-responsive approach to service delivery that meets the needs of clients;
- Having a reporting mechanism in place which ensures it is accountable for implementing access and equity objectives for students (client satisfaction and continuous improvement data);

- Assessing new or substantially revised courses for their direct impact on the lives of people with a disability and /or diverse backgrounds and/or personal characteristics prior to any decision to pursue such courses;
- Having a communication strategy developed and sufficiently resourced (staff, support workers and volunteers) to inform students with a disability and/or diverse backgrounds and/or personal characteristics of any new/or substantially revised policies or changes to their training program;
- Providing where practicable for the special needs of students with a disability and/or diverse backgrounds and/or personal characteristics through the provision of assistance in the classroom, English or other language assistance or through the use of interpreters or facilitators;
- Providing where necessary, information in languages other than English, and through print, electronic media, and disability-appropriate methods of communication;
- Appropriately consulting with other providers and Government agencies to ensure co-ordination of services appropriate to student needs;
- Delivering education, training and assessment programs and services that are relevant, accessible, fair and inclusive; and
- Providing all students with information about access and equity issues and ANH@E's complaints and appeals policy and procedures.

Access and equity principles are communicated to students using the following methods:

- Student Handbook;
- Access to organisational policies and procedures;
- ANH@E website.

Staff

ANH@E will observe the organisation wide commitment to access and equity requirements by ensuring staff:

- Are informed of policies relating to access and equity and these are readily available;
- Are aware and informed of equal opportunity guidelines and the complaints and appeals policy and procedures;
- Undertake an induction and have the opportunity to undertake ongoing professional development that ensures they have the knowledge and understanding to implement the policies and procedures of the organisation in relation to access and equity,
- Are able to communicate and support all students to achieve their learning goals; and
- Interact with students in a courteous, professional and non-discriminatory way.

Access and equity principles are communicated to staff through the following methods:

- Tutor Handbook;
- Access to organisational policies and procedures;
- Annual professional development activities.

Complaints and Appeals process

For full information on the complaints and appeals process please refer to the ANH@E Complaints and Appeals Policy.

All students have the right to object to discrimination and harassment in any form, and to complain when such discrimination takes place. It is unlawful to harass or otherwise victimise another student because they have lodged a complaint of harassment or victimisation or because they have assisted in the investigation of such a complaint.

Related policies

This policy is to be read and used in conjunction with the Harassment & Bullying Policy and Recruitment Employment & Induction Policy.

This policy was reviewed in March 2020 and will be reviewed again in March 2022.