

# EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Attendance Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy and Behaviour and Code of Conduct Policy.**

## **Introduction**

Onwards 'n' Upwards is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Each person is given fair and equal opportunity to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, sexual orientation, disability or special education needs and ability.

Onwards 'n' Upwards is committed to the positive promotion of equality of opportunities in all aspects and works to promote equality and foster positive attitudes. We strive to identify and remove all barriers to participation in any of our activities.

## **Equality**

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Act gives three general duties:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This policy sets out Onwards 'n' Upwards position on Equality and Diversity as a service provider in all aspects including recruitment and provides guidance and encouragement to all members of staff to act fairly and prevent discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

The Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality related legislation, standardising the protection available for all groups previously identified. The key characteristics of groups protected are as follows:

- Gender
- Race
- Marital status including civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Disability
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment

## **Definitions**

- Discrimination can be direct, indirect, by association or perceived. All forms of discrimination must be avoided.
- Direct discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have.
- Perception discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they are thought to have.
- Discrimination by association occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another person because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- Harassment can be either directly by a person or through a third party e.g. another learner.
- Victimisation occurs when a person 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.
- Indirect discrimination can occur when there is a condition, rule or policy or even a practice that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. It may be justifiable if it can be shown it was fair and reasonable to the running of the organisation.

## Aims

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by the following aims:

- Everyone is of equal value. All learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers and staff members, are of equal value and are individuals with their own abilities, beliefs, challenges, attitudes, background and experience.
- We recognise and respect difference. Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. Policies, procedures and activities promote:
  - positive attitudes and actions towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and nondisabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people;
  - positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice related bullying and incidents;
  - mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment;
  - positive attitudes and understanding of those pregnant or during maternity.
- We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development.

Policies and procedures benefit all staff and potential staff, for example in recruitment and in continuing professional development:

- Whether or not they are disabled;
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status;
- Whatever their gender and sexual identity and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist. In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by identifying, challenging and removing all practices, procedures and customs which are discriminatory and replacing them with practices that are fair to all.
- We promote mutual respect and value each other's similarities and differences and face equality issues openly and honestly. We will challenge comments and behaviour by staff, learners, parents, external agencies or visitors which are implicitly or explicitly in any way contrary to the principles of equality enshrined in the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to change the attitudes behind these. This includes racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism and prejudice about disability, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

## **Addressing Prejudice and Prejudice Related Bullying**

Onwards 'n' Upwards is opposed to all forms of prejudice. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour (see our Behaviour and Code of Conduct Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy).

The Director is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos
- deal with any prejudice -related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver equality and diversity related sessions that reflect the guiding principles set out above
- support learners for whom English is an additional language
- commit to ongoing training in the implications of equality and diversity relevant to their work

Our learners will:

- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

## **Reporting Complaints**

Any person that believes they have been harassed or discriminated against should make an immediate report to a member of the Management Team or if this is not appropriate, to the Director. Details of the complaint should include:

- Details of incident
- Times and dates of incident
- The names of any individuals involved
- Names of any witnesses
- Date

We aim to deal with any complaints within ten working days as outlined in our Complaints Policy.



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This policy is available in hard copy at the centre, electronically on Findmyshift and on the Onwards 'n' Upwards website.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date updated	Policy approved by	Signed
16/01/2020	Linsey Spicer	