



Equality and Diversity Policy 2024-2025

Equinox Education Services Ltd (EES)

Policy Statement

Equinox Education Services Ltd (EES) is committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its practices and activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of dignity, courtesy and respect. EES is committed to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation and to fostering good relations between different groups.

This policy strives, not only to comply with legal requirements, but to use these to ensure that EES follows best practice.

At EES we value diversity and recognise that we are greatly enhanced by the disparate range of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs and cultures represented within its staff and student bodies. This policy applies to all students and staff.

Legislative Background

Under Equality legislation it is unlawful to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone and treat him/her less favourably than others on the grounds of the protected characteristics of: age (unless this can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation. This also includes discrimination based on perception of the person e.g. a belief that someone is gay or a belief that someone is disabled even if this is not actually true.
- Discriminate against someone for reasons relating to their association with a person on the grounds of the protected characteristics of race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, disability, gender reassignment, sex and e.g. discriminating against an employee/student because they have a disabled dependant.
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone by applying a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people with a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation) unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Subject someone to harassment for reasons relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation. This includes behaviour that an individual finds offensive on these grounds even if the behaviour is not directed at the individual. It also includes failure of an employer to take reasonable steps to protect an employee from persistent (3 occasions or more) third party harassment.
- Victimise someone because s/he has made, or intends to make, a complaint or allegation or has given or intends to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination in line with the Equality Act.

Aims and Objectives:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that in carrying out its activities EES will have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity wherever possible.
- Fostering good relations between people of a diverse background.

In the implementation of this policy EES will aim:

- To develop and promote a culture of equality and diversity throughout the institution.
- To develop and promote a culture of dignity, courtesy and respect.
- To support all staff and students, including provision of relevant support relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.
- To work to prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination.
- To deal with all forms of discrimination consistently and effectively.

Definitions:

Equal opportunities refers to the elimination of unlawful and unfair direct and indirect discrimination of particular groups and promoting equal , treatment and outcomes that take into account specific needs of individuals.

Diversity - Diversity encompasses visible and non-visible individual differences that include, but are not limited to, differences protected by anti-discrimination legislation. Appreciating diversity is about valuing differences and recognising that everyone through their unique mixture of skills and experience has their own valuable contribution to make.

Roles and Responsibilities:

It is incumbent upon all members of EES to behave with dignity, courtesy and respect and to act in a manner that does not unlawfully discriminate at all times. In particular, staff are asked:

- Actively to encourage non-discriminatory practices and to report any incidences of behaviour that fail to comply with this policy.
- To support the aims of the EES Equality and Diversity policy.

Application of the Policy: Staff

Recruitment and Selection

- Recruitment advertising will encourage applications from all sectors of the community with qualifications appropriate to the post being advertised.
- Recruitment advertising will appear in publications appropriate to the audience capable of producing the best candidates (subject to budget considerations).
- Job descriptions and recruitment advertisements will be written on the basis of the essential and justifiable requirements of the position.

Staff Development

- All staff will have equal access to induction, personal and career development opportunities and facilities.

Performance Management

- Probation and appraisal procedures will be clear and transparent and will be applied fairly across all staff.

Discipline and Grievance

- Disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all staff.
- Allegations of discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures for staff.

Applications of the Policy: Students

Recruitment, Selection and Admission

- All staff involved in the recruitment, selection and admission of students will have an awareness of equality and diversity.

Assessment

- There will be clear, consistent and transparent criteria for student assessments and all assessments will take place on an equal opportunities basis.

Discipline and Student Complaints

- discipline and student complaints procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all students;
- Allegations of harassment or discrimination will be dealt with in accordance with EES policies on dealing with bullying, abusive behaviour and the employee disciplinary procedure as contained in the Employee Handbook.

Sources of Further Guidance:

Equality Acts 1998-2015

Equality & Human Rights Commission:
<http://www.equalityhumanrights>

