



Equal Opportunities Policy

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Contents

Sections	Page
General Statement	3
Responsibilities	3
The Legal Framework	4
Discrimination	4-5
Disability Discrimination Act (1995)	5
Monitoring and Review	6
Publication	6

General Principles

The Outdoors Group Ltd recognises the benefits of having a diverse community of staff and students, who value one another and the different contributions they can make to achieve the Company's mission to be a centre of excellence.

The Outdoors Group Ltd is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and education provider, providing equality of opportunity for all staff and students, applicants, and visitors. In the provision of equal opportunities, The Outdoors Group Ltd recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law.

This policy aims to provide equality of opportunity regardless of gender, ethnicity, colour, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or marital status.

The Outdoors Group Ltd seeks to create an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination, and which encourages all staff and students to participate fully in The Outdoors Group Ltd activities.

This is an overarching policy that should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and guidance notes such as the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Volunteer Policy, and Complaints Policy.

This policy applies to all aspects of The Outdoors Group Ltd staff and student activity, including sub-contracted/freelance staff and volunteers.

Responsibilities

Staff are encouraged to assist in promoting equal opportunities by bringing discriminatory practices to the attention of the Company Directors or line manager.

The Outdoors Group Ltd Company Directors and those staff in management and leadership roles will, through their responsibilities, be proactive in promoting diversity and equal opportunities, and in tackling discrimination.

The Outdoors Group Ltd will ensure that:

- All staff (The Outdoors Group Ltd staff and The Outdoors School staff) and learners are aware of the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- The implementation of equal opportunities is adequately monitored.
- Staff and learners are provided with appropriate forums to discuss and deal with equal opportunities issues.
- Clear and publicly accessible procedures are in place for the fair teaching of students, free from discrimination.

- The Outdoors Group Ltd Company Directors are responsible for ensuring that staff and learners adhere to the Equal Opportunities Policy.

All The Outdoors Group Ltd staff will support and implement the Equal Opportunities Policy and ensure that their behaviour and/or actions do not amount to discrimination or harassment in any way.

The development and monitoring of the Equal Opportunities Policy is supported by the Company Directors, who are responsible for developing and co-ordinating initiatives that will enhance diversity and equality of opportunity within the Company.

The Outdoors Group Ltd staff are required to comply with this policy and with the relevant legal requirements and are expected to promote a culture free of discrimination, prejudice and all forms of harassment and bullying. Any incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying will be investigated and may be grounds for disciplinary action.

The Legal Framework

The following legislation applies to all:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended 2003)
- The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended 2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended 2001, 2003)
- Prevention from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relations Amendment Regulations 2003

Discrimination

The Race Relations Act (1976) outlines four main forms of unlawful discrimination:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Victimisation
- Harassment

The following definitions are taken from the Race Relations Act (1976). These classifications also apply under the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief) Regulations (2003).

Direct Discrimination - this occurs when a person is treated less favourably on racial grounds than another person is, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances.

Direct discrimination is automatically unlawful, whatever the reason for it, and no justification can be put forward to excuse the difference in treatment.

Indirect Discrimination - consists of applying in any circumstances covered by the Act, a requirement or condition which, although applied equally to persons of all racial groups, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of a particular racial group can comply with it and it cannot be shown to be justifiable on other than racial grounds, for example, a rule about clothing or uniforms which disproportionately disadvantages a racial group and cannot be justified.

Victimisation - this occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another is, or would be, treated because they have brought, or are suspected of having brought, legal proceedings under the Act, or because they have given evidence or information on behalf of someone else's complaint, or because they have complained of discrimination.

Harassment - this occurs when a person harasses another on grounds of race, or ethnic or national origin when his or her behaviour is unwanted, and when it has the purpose or effect of violating the other person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment for them.

Disability Discrimination Act

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended 2001) discrimination against disabled people can take place in either of three ways:

1. When a responsible body treats a disabled person less favourably, for a reason relating to the person's disability, than it treats (or would treat) a person to whom that reason does not, or would not, apply and that treatment cannot be justified.
2. By failing to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled people are not placed at a "substantial disadvantage" compared to other people, without justification. This is known as the reasonable adjustments' duty.
3. Victimisation is a special form of discrimination covered by the Act. It applies whether or not the person victimised is a disabled person, as defined above under the Race Relations Act.

All material published by The Outdoors Group Ltd will seek to avoid the use of offensive and discriminatory language and images. Publicity materials will include a statement outlining The Outdoors Group Ltd.'s commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity (this may be indirectly stated through a referral to our policy section on our website).

Monitoring and Review

The Outdoors Group Ltd Directors will review reports from Staff or participating Students or Staff Members and will agree appropriate actions; reports will then go on record in the company system. The whole policy will be reviewed annually.

Advice and information on equal opportunities implementation and issues can be sought from the head office, site office, course directors or company partners. A copy of this document and amendments will be published on our website.

Publication

The Outdoors Group Ltd will:

- Publicise and promote the policy through our website.
- Make a copy of the policy available to current staff and new staff.
- Make Partnership Schools' staff aware of this policy as part of the Partnership process.
- Make students, volunteers, and course participants aware of this policy when they are working with or on behalf of The Outdoors Group Ltd.