

DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY

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Approval level	Executive Board

Approved by (Name, date, signature)

Executive Board, 3rd February 2022
Executive Board Chair, David Kreyling
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DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY

MISSION

We believe in investing in people. As professionals in the teaching and training professions, we strive to provide a better future for the children, young people and home settings we work with. Success for us means unleashing the potential of each individual so they can grow, develop and reach the potential of which they are capable. Our values are grounded in our determination to be the change we want to see in the world, through passion, commitment and integrity. We strive to plant a seed of kindness and compassion in a generation that will produce resilience and hope and enable them to aspire and achieve productive and fulfilled lives. Our success is measured in the lives we changed.

At the Omnia Foundation, we create a secure and safe environment that encourages communication, self-belief, mutual respect and success. We provide a rich and balanced curriculum that develops every child, allowing them to achieve their true potential.

Aims of the policy

- To ensure that the Omnia Foundation offers a positive working environment for employees from all backgrounds to facilitate their potential in creating a platform for our pupils to enjoy, learn and excel in
- To secure the identity of the organization as one who attracts and employs a diverse workforce
- To ensure that we reflect the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and eliminate unlawful discrimination against any job applicant, employee, volunteer, agency worker, contractor or Director
- To remove barriers people can experience in employment – we understand that creating equality of opportunity is about individuals and is not the same as treating everyone identically. For example, we make adjustments for disabled job applicants and employees wherever reasonable to do so
- To demonstrate that we will respect those we work with, ensure that our employees are treated with respect and take action against all forms of bullying, harassment or victimization
- To showcase how the foundation reviews all employment policies and practices, including our working environment, information protocols and technology, to remove inequality.
- To ensure that all members of the foundation community are aware that we are committed to diversity and equality and that they are expected to uphold the organizational values in this regard

Diversity and Equality in Employment

Diversity and equality means not only that the Omnia Foundation respects the law: it means working to remove barriers that stop us attracting and retaining talented people from a wide range of backgrounds. A diverse workforce brings new thinking to service delivery, helping us understand the perspectives and needs of all our pupils. We will always seek to employ the best people for the positions at the foundation.

Making reasonable adjustments

The Omnia Foundation takes steps to remove the barriers faced by disabled people and their carers. Reasonable adjustments prevent a disabled employee from being significantly disadvantaged by any provision, practice, or the premises. By law, such steps need to be made promptly, and be reasonable within the resources available to the foundation.

Judging what is reasonable / Assessing potential adjustments

- How effective will the adjustment be in preventing the disadvantage?
 - How practical is the adjustment to make?
 - How much disruption will it cause to make?
 - Does KF have the financial capacity to do this?
 - How much of the cost can be funded through Access To Work or other schemes?
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Although not called a 'reasonable adjustment', the same principle applies to accommodating the needs of employees from other minority groups, including carers. It is good practice to consider making adjustments, weighing up the request in the light of business needs, such as:

- An employee approaching retirement who wishes to reduce their hours (flexible retirement)
- Flexible working, so a team member returning from maternity leave or a single parent can care for a child
- A short period of home-working while an employee cares for a civil partner following an emergency
- A later start time for an employee with a broken wrist, until he/she is able to drive again.

Defining unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination happens when people are treated less well because of any Characteristic(s) as in the table below, and this cannot be justified (a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate end.)

Protected diversity characteristics

Race; disability; gender; gender reassignment / transgender status; age; sexual orientation; religion or belief; pregnancy / maternity; marriage or civil partnership.

Direct and indirect discrimination

Discrimination can be either direct or indirect. It may be unintentional – such as a thoughtless joke or remark which causes offence to the hearer - but still unlawful.

Direct discrimination

Treating one person less favourably than another because of a protected diversity characteristic (see list above), or because they are thought ('perceived') to have, or they associate with someone who has such a characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

A requirement is applied which negatively affects people in one or more of the protected groups, compared with those who are not in the group, AND Essex County Council cannot justify this requirement.

Example

Direct discrimination – a manager fails to arrange screen-reader computer software for a blind or partially sighted employee. He or she is seriously disadvantaged compared to a fully sighted team member.

Defining disability

The Equality Act (2010) covers everyone who has: 'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

Not everyone who is protected by law has a visible impairment, or considers themselves disabled.

'Normal day-to-day activities' include things like shopping, travelling, lifting and carrying objects, personal care, communicating, and reading. The impact of an impairment or condition on everyday activities needs to be 'more than trivial' – not just a minor restriction. A condition is judged as it would be without medication or aids.

The only exception is eyesight – this should be judged when you are wearing your usual spectacles or lenses. For example, if you are short-sighted but you have a reasonable field of vision and your lenses allow you to drive a car or see bus numbers at a distance which allows you to stop at the right one, you are not disabled.

'Long term' means lasting (or recurring) for a year or more, or likely to last (or recur) over the period of a year or more.

Preventing harassment, bullying or victimisation

Senior Leaders will act to investigate and address all forms of bullying or harassment, and prevent victimisation where an employee complains of, or agrees to give evidence as a witness of, discrimination. Such behaviour is unacceptable whether towards or by customers, employees, contractors, board members or job applicants.

Defining disability

If you recover from a condition which falls within the definition above, you may continue to have the same protection in law.

Examples

In broad terms, the law protects people with:

- a sensory or physical impairment – such as partial sight, deafness, or restricted movement
- learning disabilities
- dyslexia and learning difficulties
- mental health conditions
- progressive conditions like cancer and HIV
- severe disfigurement
- fluctuating conditions, like multiple sclerosis.

Monitoring & Review

This policy will be monitored by the Chief Operating Officer and reviewed every two years.
