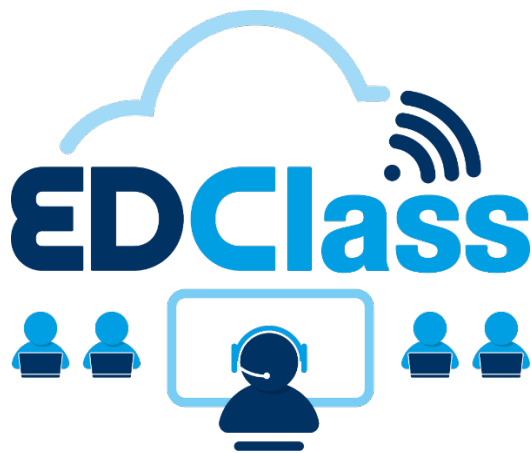


EDClass Equal Opportunities, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy



www.edclass.com

An online education delivery platform and alternative provision you can trust whilst breaking barriers to Learning.



Equal Opportunities, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Policy

EDClass is committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. This means treating people fairly, valuing differences and removing the barriers that prevent people from fully participating in public life and realising their full potential. We work extremely hard to reduce inequality, yet we know that some people still experience disadvantage and unfair treatment simply because of their personal characteristics or circumstances.

EDClass recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and is committed to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination.

This Policy sets out how we will make equality integral to the way we reach decisions, provide services, recruit and support our employees, work with other organisations and involve local people. Our aim is to make EDClass a fully accessible and inclusive organisation.

The Company will seek to promote the principles of equality and diversity in all its dealings with employees, workers, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors, recruitment agencies and the public.

All employees and those who act on the Company's behalf are required to adhere to this policy when undertaking their duties or when representing the Company in any other guise.

This policy is set within the following legislation:

- ✓ Equality Act (2010)
- ✓ Protection from Harassment Act (1997)

Understanding equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality is not about 'treating everyone the same' but recognising that everyone is different, and that people's needs are met in different ways. We would define equality as essentially being about fairness and ensuring that we all have the best possible chance to succeed in life whatever our background or identity.

Diversity is about understanding that everyone is unique, recognising, respecting and celebrating the added value that differences bring.

Inclusion is where difference is seen as a benefit and where perspectives and differences are shared, leading to better decisions. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels valued, that their contribution matters, and they can perform to their full potential, regardless of background, identity or circumstances. An inclusive workplace enables a diverse range of people to work together effectively.

Unlawful discrimination of any kind in the working environment will not be tolerated and the Company will take all necessary action to prevent its occurrence.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a condition or requirement has been put in place which applies to all, but, in practice, has a detrimental effect upon a group of individuals that cannot be fully justified.

Harassment there are three types of harassment which are unlawful under the Equality Act:

- ✓ Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic
- ✓ Sexual harassment;



- ✓ Less favourable treatment of a person because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

Our aims

Specifically, the Company aims to ensure that no employee or job applicant is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality, caste and ethnic origin), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part-time status, pregnancy or maternity, age, religion or belief, political belief or affiliation or trade union membership. This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- ✓ recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures
- ✓ training
- ✓ promotion and career-development opportunities
- ✓ terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities
- ✓ grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures
- ✓ selection for redundancy

Equal opportunities practice is developing constantly as social attitudes and legislation change. The Company will review all policies and implement necessary changes where these could improve equality of opportunity.

EDClass is committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity in all of its practices; and in so doing ensuring an inclusive culture.

Equality Act 2010

Under Equality legislation it is unlawful to:

- ✓ discriminate directly against anyone and treat them 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 (including discrimination arising from a disability and failure to make reasonable adjustments), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, 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 age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation e.g. discriminating against an employee or 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.
- ✓ treat a person less favourably because they either submit to, or reject, sexual harassment or harassment related to their sex.



- ✓ victimise someone because they have made, or intend to make, a complaint or allegation, or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination in line with the Equality Act.

Our responsibilities

As an employer and educational provider, will meet all legal duties in respect of equality and diversity. The key piece of legislation is the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination on the basis of the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality, which requires all public bodies and private bodies that deliver a public function, to consider the needs of protected groups when designing and delivering services.

Under the Act, EDClass must have due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- ✓ Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- ✓ Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to protected characteristics
- ✓ Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- ✓ Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low
- ✓ Tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between different communities.

Within Section 1 of the Equality Act, the Socio-economic duty, requires public bodies to adopt transparent and effective measures to address the inequalities that result from differences in occupation, education, place of residence or social class (the additional characteristics not explicitly covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty).

EDClass is committed to ensuring equality, fairness, inclusion and good relations are at the heart of everything we do - be it policy-making, service delivery or employment practice.

Employing, supporting and developing our workforce

Our employment practice is guided by the principles of equality and fairness. This includes recruitment, terms and conditions, appraisals, learning and development, promotion and when ending employment.

Our activities and approach to achieving this are set out in our Employee Handbook, which contains our suite of HR policies and our staff handbook

EDClass follows safer recruitment and adheres to the requirements set out in KCSIE 2023, our Safeguarding policy and safer recruitment

Specific commitments in employment

EDClass is committed to being a fair and supportive employer, developing the skills and talent within our workforce so that employees are able to deliver high quality services to everyone. To achieve this we will:

- ✓ Carry out recruitment fairly



- ✓ Provide training to employees so that they can implement this policy
- ✓ Treat all employees fairly, with dignity and respect at all times
- ✓ Tackle unacceptable behaviour in the workplace
- ✓ Provide employees with opportunities to influence the development of our policies and practice
- ✓ Reward all employees fairly and provide employment conditions which support them to do a good job
- ✓ Promote a good work-life balance and opportunities to work flexibly
- ✓ Support disabled employees by making reasonable adjustments

Who is responsible for equalities?

Equality is the responsibility of every manager, employee of EDClass, and any other person or organisation employed by the EDClass to work or to deliver services on its behalf.

Making our services accessible and easy to use

We constantly strive to deliver educational teaching, learning and support services that are easily accessible by learners, staff and commissioning school employees.

We are committed to listening to our learners, commissioning school, users and customers to develop an understanding of how we can break down barriers and better meet their needs. This may involve making adjustments to the way we deliver services where it is reasonable to do so.

We are committed to engaging effectively with learners, commissioning school, users, customers and other stakeholders. We actively seek their views about the learning platform, resources, teaching and learning and the services they receive, as well as involving them in shaping services and local decision making.

Protecting people

We take safeguarding children and vulnerable people seriously.

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is everybody's business, wherever they work and whatever they do for EDClass. We will endeavour to ensure all staff are aware of our Safeguarding responsibilities and receive the appropriate training in safeguarding awareness.

Recruitment of ex-offenders

The Company actively promotes equality of opportunity for all candidates, including those with criminal records where appropriate.

The Company requires you to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Any such information should be sent in a separate confidential letter to the designated person. Only those who need to see it as a formal part of the recruitment process will have access to this information.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from being appointed.

Any recruitment decision will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offence(s). The Company will discuss with you the relevance of any offence to the job in question.

If you fail to reveal any information relating to disclosures in accordance with the Company's Disclosures Policy, this may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Career development

While positive measures may be taken to encourage under-represented groups to apply for employment opportunities, recruitment or promotion to all jobs will be based solely on merit.



All employees will have equal access to training and other career-development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities.

However, the Company will take appropriate positive action measures (as permitted by equal opportunities legislation) to provide specialist training and support for groups that are under-represented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career-development opportunities.

Communication

This policy is available to all students, staff, commissioning schools and the public from the EDClass website.

Breach of the policy

EDClass will take very seriously breaches of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy by anyone within the scope of this policy. Any breaches will be investigated with the intent of resolving such matters. Where appropriate, such instances may be considered under the relevant disciplinary policy for staff.

Any breaches relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation or hate incidents (this could be experienced as bullying relating to a protected characteristic) should address this formally raising this with their line manager

Complaints of discrimination

The Company will treat seriously all complaints of discrimination made by employees, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, you are encouraged to raise the matter as soon as possible with your manager or other senior employee using the Company's Grievance Procedure (outlined elsewhere in the Employee Handbook).

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly. If you make an allegation of discrimination, the Company is committed to ensuring that you are protected from victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment. Any such incidents will be dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary Procedures.

Investigating accusations of unlawful discrimination

If you are accused of unlawful discrimination, the Company will investigate the matter fully.

During the course of the investigation, you will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation of your actions.

If the investigation concludes that the claim is false or malicious, the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

If the investigation concludes that your actions amount to unlawful discrimination, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.