



EDClass Equal Opportunities, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

POL071

Issue number 4

Approved by Sam Warnes

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EDClass is an online education delivery platform and alternative provision committed to breaking barriers to learning, promoting equality, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. Treating people fairly means valuing personal differences, celebrating diversity, and removing structural barriers that prevent individuals from achieving their full potential.

EDClass recognises the operational and cultural benefits of a diverse workforce and student community. We are committed to maintaining an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation across all services, employment practices, and partner engagements.

This policy governs our decision-making, service delivery, recruitment, workforce management, and partnerships with commissioning schools, multi-academy trusts, local authorities, and learners. All employees, agency workers, contractors, and individuals acting on behalf of EDClass must adhere to this policy.

Statutory and Legislative Framework

This policy is formulated in compliance with UK legislation and statutory guidance:

- ✓ The Equality Act 2010
- ✓ The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 (mandating proactive steps to prevent workplace sexual harassment)
- ✓ The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- ✓ The Human Rights Act 1998
- ✓ Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (latest statutory guidance)
- ✓ The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010
- ✓ Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (The Socio-Economic Duty)

Core Definitions and Understanding

- ✓ **Equality:** Ensuring fairness and equitable opportunities for everyone to succeed, recognising that equality does not mean treating everyone identically, but tailoring support to meet distinct needs.
- ✓ **Diversity:** Recognising, respecting, and celebrating individual differences, including varied backgrounds, life experiences, and viewpoints.
- ✓ **Inclusion:** Designing an organisational culture and learning environment where all individuals feel respected, valued, and empowered to contribute and achieve.
- ✓ **Direct Discrimination:** Treating an individual less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic. This includes:
 - ✓ **Perception Discrimination:** Less favourable treatment based on the belief that someone possesses a protected characteristic, whether accurate or not.
 - ✓ **Associative Discrimination:** Less favourable treatment because an individual associate with someone who possesses a protected characteristic (e.g., caring for a disabled family member).

- ✓ **Indirect Discrimination:** Applying a provision, criterion, or practice across all individuals that disproportionately disadvantages people with a protected characteristic and cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- ✓ **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
- ✓ **Sexual Harassment:** Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. Under the Worker Protection Act, EDClass takes reasonable, proactive steps to anticipate, prevent, and address sexual harassment of all staff and service users.
- ✓ **Victimisation:** Subjecting a person to detrimental treatment because they have brought proceedings, raised a grievance, or given evidence or information regarding discrimination.

Protected Characteristics

EDClass ensures that no job applicant, employee, educator, learner, or visitor is subjected to discrimination, harassment, or disadvantage, directly or indirectly, based on:

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability (including physical, neurological, and mental health conditions; requiring reasonable adjustments)
- ✓ Gender reassignment and gender identity
- ✓ Marriage and civil partnership
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic origin, and caste)
- ✓ Religion or belief (including non-belief)
- ✓ Sex
- ✓ Sexual orientation

EDClass also extends this protection to trade union membership, political belief, and socio-economic background.

Our Responsibilities

As an alternative education provider and employer exercising functions alongside public authorities, EDClass observes the principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- ✓ Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, actively tackling prejudice and building mutual understanding.

We take positive measures to mitigate inequalities resulting from socio-economic disadvantage, place of residence, or disrupted educational pathways.

Inclusive Employment and Safer Recruitment

Our employment practices align with our Staff Handbook, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, and Safer Recruitment guidelines:

- ✓ **Fair Recruitment and Selection:** Job advertisements, role profiles, and shortlisting tools focus solely on genuine, objective requirements. Positive action may be used to encourage under-represented groups, but appointment remains strictly merit-based.
- ✓ **Safer Recruitment Compliance:** All recruitment adheres strictly to current KCSIE requirements, ensuring rigorous background checks, verification of qualifications, and vetting procedures.
- ✓ **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders:** Having a criminal record does not automatically disqualify an applicant. Relevant details must be submitted confidentially to the designated recruitment lead. Decisions consider the nature of the role, safeguarding criteria, and the context of any past offences.
- ✓ **Reasonable Adjustments:** Proactive steps and physical/technological adaptations are provided for disabled staff across recruitment, onboarding, everyday tasks, and career advancement.
- ✓ **Career Development and Training:** Employees have equal access to appraisals, professional development, and promotion opportunities. Equality, diversity, and safeguarding training are mandatory for all personnel.

Accessible Education and Service Delivery

As an accredited online alternative provision, EDClass is designed to remove barriers to engagement for diverse and vulnerable students:

- ✓ **Curriculum and Digital Accessibility:** Platforms, learning content, and live classroom tools comply with modern accessibility standards, ensuring accessibility for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), medical needs, or alternative communication requirements.
- ✓ **Commissioning Partnerships:** We work with commissioning schools, multi-academy trusts, and local authorities to review provisions, implement reasonable adjustments, and tailor remote learning pathways to each student's needs.
- ✓ **Learner Voice:** EDClass regularly collates feedback from learners, parents, carers, and commissioning schools to refine teaching resources, digital interfaces, and pedagogical support.

Safeguarding and Duty of Care

Safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults is an integral element of our equality commitments. Vulnerabilities often intersect with protected characteristics (e.g., SEND, sexual identity, race). All employees undergo statutory safeguarding training to identify discrimination-related safeguarding concerns, such as identity-based bullying, harassment, and neglect.

Governance and Roles

- ✓ **Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team:** Hold ultimate responsibility for ensuring statutory compliance, reviewing policy performance, and fostering an inclusive workplace culture.
- ✓ **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Head of Safeguarding:** Ensures child protection, EDI intersections, and welfare considerations are maintained across all operational practices.
- ✓ **Line Managers:** Ensure daily employment practices, performance reviews, flexible working arrangements, and reasonable adjustments comply with this policy.
- ✓ **All Staff, Tutors, and Contractors:** Must model inclusive behaviour, complete mandatory equality training, and immediately report discrimination or harassment.

Reporting Breaches, Grievances, and Investigations

Breaches of this policy are treated as serious misconduct:

- ✓ **Informal and Formal Grievances:** Employees or service users who experience or witness discrimination, bullying, harassment, or victimisation should raise it immediately with their line manager or senior management via the formal Grievance Procedure.
- ✓ **Whistleblowing and Protection:** Any person raising a concern or participating in an investigation in good faith is protected against victimisation or retaliatory behaviour.
- ✓ **Investigation Process:** Allegations are investigated promptly, impartially, and confidentially. The accused party will have the opportunity to respond to all points raised.
- ✓ **Disciplinary Action:** If an investigation finds that unlawful discrimination, harassment, or gross misconduct has occurred, disciplinary sanctions will be applied, up to and including summary dismissal without notice.

Policy Review and Communication

This policy is published on the EDClass corporate website and staff intranet, and is accessible to all employees, students, commissioning partners, and stakeholders.

This policy is formally reviewed on an annual basis to ensure alignment with DfE updates, evolving legislation, and digital safeguarding developments.

- ✓ **Approved by:** Senior Leadership Team and Head of Safeguarding
- ✓ **Last Operational Review:** October 2026
- ✓ **Next Formal Review Date:** 16th August 2027