

Equal Opportunities, Discrimination and Diversity Policy – Extract taken from the Staff Handbook

i Equal Opportunities, Discrimination and Diversity

We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all and it is our policy to treat all existing employees and all job applicants in the same way, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion, belief, sex and/or sexual orientation.

It is the responsibility of each member of staff and each Director and Line Manager to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

Any Employee who believes he/she has received less favourable treatment because of a breach of this policy is asked to use the organisation's grievance procedure in the first instance.

Discrimination

Definition

Less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion, belief, sex and/or sexual orientation. without justification is direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition is imposed with which a considerably smaller number of those of a minority group such as a single sex, or those of a certain race can comply, where this causes them a detriment as a result. This kind of discrimination is unlawful unless it can be justified.

Recruitment and Employment Decisions

The Company will recruit employees and make other employment decisions concerning promotion, training etc. on the basis of objective criteria.

Disabled Persons

If you are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, the Company will discuss with you whether you are able to fulfil your proposed duties and whether there are any adjustments that could reasonably be made to your job or working environment to enable you to carry out your proposed duties effectively. The Company may also ask a doctor appointed by it to advise on these matters.

Diversity

a) Diversity in the workplace

The Company respects all religious faiths, beliefs and practices equally as they are represented within the workplace. All employees have the right, within the law, to religious freedom and to the peaceful practice and expression of their religious faith, including the beliefs, values and practices involved in them. As part of our culture it is the expectation and requirement that religious groups and adherents of all faiths within the Company should accord full respect to the religious faith, beliefs, values and practices of others, and for those who subscribe to no faith.

The legitimate right of religious people, within the law, to religious freedom and the peaceful practice and expression of religious faith should be demonstrated by consideration and by a concern for the freedom and dignity of those of differing religious faith and of those subscribing to none. In practice this implies:

- Respect for another person's expressed wish to be left alone
- The avoidance of the imposition of religious views on individuals who are in vulnerable situations in ways which exploit these
- The avoidance of violent action or language, threats, manipulation, improper inducements or the misuse of any kind of power
- Respect for the right of others to disagree

Disregard for any of the above will be considered a breach of the fundamental principle of respect for others and may constitute harassment.

Dress Code

The Company has an appearance policy which must be adhered to whilst welcoming the variety of appearance brought by individual styles, customs and personal choices. The wearing of items arising from particular religious norms (e.g. hijab, kippah, mangal sutra and clerical collar) is seen as part of a welcome diversity. Only health and safety requirements may mean that for certain tasks specific items of clothing such as overalls, protective clothing etc need to be worn. If such clothing produces a conflict with an individual's religious belief, the issue will be sympathetically considered by the Line Manager or supervisor, with the aim of finding a satisfactory resolution that does not compromise the health and safety of any Company's employees, customers or business partners.

Wearing slogans or symbols which are discriminatory (e.g. racist or sexist) is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with accordingly.

Religious Observance

For many religious people the daily practice of corporate, personal or private prayer is a primary responsibility and one of the ways in which religious practice constitutes and sustains a sense of personal identity. Adherents of a religion should advise their Line Manager if they have any special requirements in this regard. Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that if other staff or students are affected by an individual's spiritual needs, a reasonable degree of respect and understanding is exercised between them and a sensible solution found.

Where facilities are sought by employees, the Company will make reasonable efforts to provide accommodation (with appropriate additional facilities, such as washing facilities, nearby).

Working Hours

All staff, without exception, are required to work in accordance with their contract. Where the hours conflict with religious beliefs please speak to your Line Manager and we will try to respond sympathetically whilst meeting the needs of the business.

Approved Absence for Religious Festivals

Appropriate and sympathetic consideration will be given by Line Managers to requests for leave from employees specifically wishing to participate in their religious festivals where these are not covered by UK Public Holidays. Good communication, well in advance of the festival in question, is essential in fostering flexible and appropriate responses. Staff should advise Line Managers of leave requests for the coming year at the start of the leave year, or on joining the Company. Line Managers should follow the normal



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holiday request format for granting annual leave and in exceptional circumstances, unpaid leave, to facilitate these requests.

Whilst such requests will not be refused unreasonably without adequate explanation, it must be appreciated that Managers must always ensure the service to our customers does not suffer.