

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Ethical Working Policy

Introduction to Equality & Diversity

Equip Education understand that equality is not about treating everyone the same, but rather about ensuring that access to opportunities are available to everyone - through taking into account the differing needs and capabilities of people. Diversity, is about recognising and valuing differences through inclusion of as many people as possible, regardless of whether those differences relate to protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation and/or identity; or are differences linked to such things as commitments outside work, working part-time or shift work, language, union activity, health status, perspectives, opinions and/or an individual's personal values **etc.**

Definition of equality

For Equip Education, practicing equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and their talent; and a belief that no one should have a poorer life chance because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe - or whether they have a disability. Equality is also about recognising that certain groups of people have historically experienced discrimination.

It is because of this belief and understanding that Equip Education is committed to the following principles relating to equality and diversity:

Equality

1. All children, young people and adults at risk - regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity - have the right to equal protection from all types of harm, abuse and/or exploitation.
2. To this end Equip Education will ensure that its services are provided in a way that promotes equality and diversity - eliminates discrimination in all of its forms (ensuring that no one is excluded) - and which respects the needs of each and every individual.
3. Equip Education will not unlawfully discriminate against any child, young person or adult at risk because of their protected characteristics - and will always give full consideration to how everyone with protected characteristics are being supported.
4. Equip Education is conscious that children, young people and adults at risk (with protected characteristics) may be more at risk of harm - and therefore will always seek to integrate that awareness into Equip Education's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Further information relating to Equip Education's approach to equality is detailed in the Equal Opportunities Policy contained in this Safeguarding Handbook. Please also see the Equip Education's Dignity at Work Policy.

Where proportionate, Equip Education will always take positive action to deal with disadvantages faced by any child, young person or adult at risk because of their protected characteristics - e.g. by making reasonable adjustments for a child with a disability, or by supporting girls if there was evidence that they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment etc.

Definition of ethical working

Equip Education believes that working ethically is to behave with integrity, to be honest and to do the right thing at all times. Behaving ethically is underpinned by **fairness, justice, inclusion and respect for diversity** - and about **ensuring that unfair discrimination is eliminated.**

Ethical working policy statement

Equip Education is committed to ethical and safe working practices in order to help protect children, young people and adults at risk who engage with the organisation. To this end, Equip Education will ensure that regardless of age, disability, racial heritage or religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, everyone is treated fairly and impartially. Equip Education firmly believes that everyone has a right to an environment that is free from intimidation, harassment and abuse; and will not tolerate any behaviour that is in breach of this **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Ethical Working Policy.**

Expectations of Equip Education staff

Equip Education firmly believes that adhering to its **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Ethical Working Policy** will not only protect children and adults, but also reduce the risk of allegations being made in the first place. To this end, staff receive induction training and on-going refresher training to enable them to be ambassadors of fairness, justice and inclusion, as well as to respect and celebrate diversity. Equip Education expects all staff to oppose discriminatory behaviour and to work to promote equality of opportunity.

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A culture of listening

Equip Education commits to safe working practices that will be enhanced through a culture of listening to all of our stakeholders (Directors, staff, volunteers, children, adults, parents, carers, partners **etc.**); gathering information from them regarding their experiences and priorities; and involving them in decision making. Using this input will assist Equip Education to develop safeguarding policies, procedures and processes that promote ethical working. Examples of this in practice are Equip Education's **Consent Policy** and **Sharing of Information Policy**.

Principles of working ethically

Equip Education ensures that working ethically is an underpinning principle of all its policies, procedures and processes **e.g.** in safer recruitment it is about living and breathing Equip Education's **Equal Opportunities** and **Valuing Diversity Policies**. Elsewhere, it is the foundation of how we work and interact with children, adults, parents and carers etc.

Therefore, Equip Education's approach to equality, diversity, inclusion & ethical working is that we will adhere to our safeguarding policies, procedures and processes. In summary this means that Equip Education will:

Working Ethically

- Recruit and appoint staff using Equip Education's safer recruitment procedures
- Induct Directors, staff and volunteers to understand their accountabilities and responsibilities for the protection of all children and adults
- Underpin all of Equip Education's arrangements with contractors, suppliers, partners, external organisations, customers and clients with our safeguarding ethos
- Use Equip Education's child and adults at risk safeguarding policies, procedures and processes to manage and - where necessary - report any safeguarding concerns
- Support all Equip Education safeguarding personnel to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively
- Ensure the ongoing coaching, training and development of all Equip Education staff, as appropriate, to be effective in their safeguarding roles and to be able to fulfil their responsibility to protect all children and adults at risk
- Live and breathe all safeguarding policies, procedures and processes related to **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Ethical Working, Equal Opportunities, Dignity at Work, Anti-Bullying, Safer Activities** and the **Sharing of Information**
- Value our staff and seek their input and contribution to the development of Equip Education's equality, diversity, inclusion & ethical working practices and best safeguarding practice.

Furthering equality, diversity, inclusion and ethical working

Equip Education will ensure that it works in furtherance of this Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Ethical Working Policy by committing to (and training and supporting staff to do) the following:

Ethical Working

- Respecting the rights of children and adults at risk
- Recognising and respecting the qualities and potential of each individual
- Understanding the vulnerabilities of different groups
- Creating safe and healthy environments
- Respecting and acknowledging the relationships between children, adults and their families and carers
- Providing all children, adults - and their families and carers with special needs and/or disabilities - access to appropriate support services
- Valuing and respecting everyone's culture, language, ethnicity and family structure
- Working to prevent discrimination in all its guises
- Working to develop relationships of mutual trust
- Encouraging children and adults - as appropriate - to make (or be involved in making) decisions that affect them
- Maintaining confidentiality in line with the **Confidentiality Policy**
- Seeking input from all stakeholders to develop policies, procedures and processes
- Working in partnership with other organisations, agencies and statutory bodies to promote effective safeguarding best practice.

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Reporting breaches of this policy

Equip Education requires its staff to report any kind of behaviour which is against the principles of this policy. Equip Education strongly encourages all children, adults, parents and carers **etc.** to raise concerns about any breaches of this policy that they may encounter within the organisation. Equip Education will always listen when issues are raised and take the appropriate action.

Monitoring ethical working

Equip Education will regularly monitor the implementation of its **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Ethical Working Policy** in order to assess whether fairness, justice, inclusion and respect for diversity is being achieved. Monitoring will take the form of observation and staff input, as well as seeking feedback and input from children, adults, parents and carers **etc.**

Where changes are required, Equip Education will implement them without delay - and then further review the impact and effectiveness of those changes.

This Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Ethical Working Policy should be read in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Policy and the Dignity at Work Policy detailed in this Safeguarding Handbook.

Equip Education will review this Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Ethical Working Policy and best practice at least annually. In addition, more frequent reviews will be undertaken following a change in safeguarding legislation; following the implementation of a new activity or service which involves contact with children and/or adults at risk; following a safeguarding incident within Equip Education (or one which directly concerns or affects Equip Education); and/or following a significant organisational change.

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