

Equal Opportunities Policy

WE Bridge Academy
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Wood Street
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UK

Last review: September 2018 / May 2019 / December 2019 / June 2020 / May 2021
Next Review: May 2022

Policy Statement

1.1 WE Bridge Academy is committed to providing a learning, working and social environment that promotes equality of opportunity for all members of staff and students (existing and prospective).

1.2 WE Bridge Academy values diversity and recognises that the Institute is greatly enhanced by the disparate range of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs and cultures represented within its staff and students. The Academy embraces diversity in all of its activities and proudly acknowledges that variety and diversity are essential to the wellbeing and future development of the Academy.

1.3 It is the aim of WE Bridge Academy that individuals and groups within the institution are not only treated on an equal basis, but their diverse contributions to the academic, social and cultural life of the Institute are recognised and developed.

1.4 WE Bridge Academy will support and develop all members of staff and students through providing all with access to facilities, personal and career development opportunities, employment and study on an equal basis regardless of their ethnic origin, national identity, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief or socio-economic background.

1.5 WE Bridge Academy will make every effort to respect and accommodate students' gender identity with regard to, for example, choice of names and pronoun preferences. Students' use of single-sex facilities such as toilets will be governed by the relevant policies of the management of Southgate House, which stipulate that individuals who satisfy the requirements for gender recognition of the Gender Recognition Act (2004) will use the facilities which align with their acquired gender.

1.6 This policy builds upon the foundation of equality legislation and anti-discrimination guidance and strives not only to comply with legal requirements, but to use these to ensure that WE Bridge Academy endeavours to demonstrate best practice.

1.7 The Equality and Diversity policy underpins WE Bridge Academy's mission and is integral to the success of the organisation as a business and employer of choice.

Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to all students, to all applicants for posts with WE Bridge Academy, all employed staff, whether on a full time or part-time basis, permanent or temporary contracts, to agency staff and visitors undertaking duties in the name of WE Bridge Academy and to subcontractors undertaking work on the Academy's site.

The achievement of this Policy will require commitment and co-operation from students and employees at all levels. It is the responsibility for all staff and students to abide by the Policy. Any breach of the Policy will not be tolerated by WE Bridge Academy and may result in appropriate disciplinary procedures.

Legal Background

Under Equality and diversity legislation it is unlawful to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone and treat anyone less favourably than others on account of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion or belief
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone by applying a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular race, gender, sexual orientation or religion or belief or disadvantages people with disabilities
- Subject someone to harassment on account of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion or belief
- Victimise someone because s/he has made, or intends to make, a complaint or allegation or has given or intends to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, religion or belief
- Discriminate against someone in certain circumstances on account of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion or belief after the working relationship has ended

Objectives

- To ensure that all potential students and employees are given an equal opportunity when applying to WE Bridge Academy
- To ensure that all students and employees are given an equal opportunity to develop to their full potential while studying or working at WE Bridge Academy
- To ensure that all policies and procedures within WE Bridge Academy are fair and are implemented equitably
- To become an employer and institution of choice

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility of WE Bridge Academy:

In relation to staff, the policy and practice of WE Bridge Academy require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment and that entry into employment with WE Bridge Academy and the career progression will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job is the primary consideration. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of his or her sex, marital status, sexual orientation, racial group, or disability.

In relation to students, WE Bridge Academy aims to provide education of excellent quality at all levels for able students whatever their background. In pursuit of this aim, the Academy is

committed to using its best endeavours to ensure that all of its activities are governed by principles of equality of opportunity and that all students are helped to achieve their full academic potential. This statement applies to recruitment and admissions, to the curriculum, teaching and assessment, to welfare and support services, and to staff development and training.

Responsibility of Staff:

- Promoting equality and diversity and avoiding unfair discrimination, challenging any incidents of unfair discrimination or racial, sexual or other stereotyping perpetrated by students or other staff
- Keeping up to date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training to eliminate prejudice and extend good practice

Responsibility of Students:

- Respecting others in their language and actions
- Abiding to WE Bridge Academy's Equality and Diversity policy at all times
- Actively encouraging non-discriminatory practices and reporting any incidences of behaviour that fail to comply with this Policy

Definitions

- Equal opportunities refer to the elimination of unlawful and unfair direct and indirect discrimination of particular groups
- Diversity can be defined as the wide range of differences, both visible and non-visible, that characterise people (such as nationality, race, gender, background or belief)
- Discrimination takes place when an individual or a group of people is treated less favourably than others because of factors unrelated to their merit, ability or potential
- Direct discrimination occurs when factors unrelated to merit, ability or potential of a person or group are used as an explicit reason for discriminating against them
- Indirect discrimination occurs when there are rules, regulations or procedures in place that have a discriminatory effect on certain groups of people
- Bullying can be defined as persistent actions, criticism or personal abuse, either in public or private, which humiliates, denigrates, undermines, intimidates or injures the recipient
- Harassment is unwanted conduct which may create the effect (intentionally or unintentionally) of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment which interferes with an individual's learning, working or social environment or induces stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the harassed person
- Victimisation is punishing or treating an individual unfairly because they have made a complaint, or believes to have made a complaint, or to have supported someone who has made a complaint. It is unlawful, as is post-employment victimisation.