

Title:	Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy (student facing)
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Approved by:	Senior Management Team
Policy owner:	Head of Education

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. WaterBear Education Limited (“the college) is committed to creating a learning environment where everyone feels respected, valued and empowered to achieve their full potential. We celebrate diversity and actively promote equality of opportunity for all students, regardless of background or identity.
- 1.2. The College also aims to provide a service that does not discriminate against its students in the means by which they can access the services provided by the College. The College believes that all students are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.
- 1.3. The college is dedicated to:
 - Promoting equality of opportunity for all students
 - Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Fostering good relations between people from diverse backgrounds
 - Creating an inclusive academic and social environment.
- 1.4. Any and all personal data used in connection with this Policy shall be collected, held, and processed in accordance with current Data Protection regulations.

2. Objectives of This Policy

- 2.1. To prevent, reduce and stop all forms of unlawful discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2. To ensure that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment, benefits, pay, terms and conditions of employment, redundancy and dismissals are determined on the basis of capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity.

3. Definition of Discrimination

- 3.1. Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which that leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same



or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex, gender, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and includes discrimination by perception and association.

4. Types of Discrimination

- 4.1. Direct Discrimination. This occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- 4.2. Indirect Discrimination. This happens when a policy or rule applies to everyone but disadvantages a particular group.
- 4.3. Harassment. Unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates a hostile environment
- 4.4. Victimisation. Treating someone unfairly because they complained about discrimination or supported someone who did.
- 4.5. Systemic or Institutional Discrimination. Discrimination that is embedded in policies, practices, or culture of an organisation
- 4.6. Positive Discrimination (or Affirmative Action). This involves favouring individuals belonging to groups known to have been discriminated against previously
- 4.7. Intersectional Discrimination. When someone faces discrimination based on multiple overlapping identities.

5. Unlawful Reasons for Discrimination (Protected Characteristics)

- 5.1. Sex. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably on the grounds of sex, marital status, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or transgender status. This applies to men, women and those undergoing or intending to undergo gender reassignment. Sexual harassment of men and women can be found to constitute sex discrimination.
- 5.2. Age. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their age. This applies to people of all ages. This does not currently apply to the calculation of redundancy payments.
- 5.3. Disability. It is not permissible to treat a disabled person less favourably than a nondisabled person. Reasonable adjustments must be made to give the disabled person as much access to any services and ability to be employed, trained, or promoted as a non-disabled person.
- 5.4. Race. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their race, the colour of their skin, their nationality or their ethnic origin.

- 5.5. Sexual Orientation. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their sexual orientation. For example, an employer cannot refuse to employ a person because s/he is homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.
- 5.6. Religion or Belief. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their religious beliefs or their religion or their lack of any religion or belief.
- 5.7. Gender Reassignment. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because they are undergoing, have undergone or plan to undergo a process to change their gender.
- 5.8. Marriage or civil partnership. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because they are married or are in a civil partnership.
- 5.9. Pregnancy and maternity. It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because they are pregnant or on maternity leave.

6. What This Means for You

6.1. You have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Learn in an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- Access support and reasonable adjustments if you have a disability or specific learning need.
- Express your identity and beliefs in a respectful and inclusive setting.

6.2. You have the responsibility to:

- Treat others with respect and consideration.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour when safe to do so, or report it.
- Engage with EDI initiatives and training where appropriate.

7. Inclusive Learning and Teaching

7.1. We strive to ensure that:

- Course content reflects diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Teaching methods are accessible and inclusive.
- Assessment practices are fair and equitable.
- Reasonable adjustments are made for students with disabilities or additional needs.

8. Reporting Discrimination

- 1.1. Reporting incidences of discrimination can be done by the following means:



- By speaking to a member of the education team or student services team.
- By using the College anonymous Support and Report tool.
- By initiating the College complaints procedure.

9. Responsibility for the Implementation of This Policy

- 9.1. All staff, tutors and students of the College are required to act in a way that does not subject any other person to direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of their race, sex, gender, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.
- 9.2. The co-operation of all is essential for the success of this Policy.
- 9.3. Anyone found to be acting in a discriminatory manner may be held independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts by the College, in line with relevant policies.
- 9.4. The College takes responsibility for achieving the objectives of this Policy, and endeavours to ensure compliance with relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice.

10. Acting on Discriminatory Behaviour

- 10.1. In the event that a student is the subject or perpetrator of, or witness to, discriminatory behaviour, please refer to college policies: complaints policy and procedure, bullying and harassment policy, student disciplinary policy, sexual misconduct policy.

11. Advice and Support on Discrimination

- 1.2. Students may contact the following:
- WaterBear Student Services
 - studentservices@waterbear.org.uk
 - The Equality and Human Rights Commission
 - correspondence@equalityhumanrights.com
 - 0161 829 8100
 - Correspondence Unit
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Arndale House
The Arndale Centre



Manchester
M4 3AQ

- Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS)
 - 0808 800 0082
 - www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/app/ask
- Citizens Advice Bureau
 - www.citizensadvice.org.uk

12. The Extent of This Policy

12.1. The Company seeks to apply this Policy in the recruitment, appraisal, development and promotion of all employees. The Company offers services in a fashion that complies with the spirit of this Policy.

12.2. This Policy does not form a part of any employment contract with any employee, and its contents are not to be regarded by any person as implied, collateral or express terms to any contract made with the Company.