Educate U

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy

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Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Introduction

Educate U is committed to maintaining an inclusive environment where diversity is valued and all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. This policy outlines our commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of school life.

Educate U is committed to creating and sustaining a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where every individual is valued. We celebrate diversity and promote equality of opportunity for all members of our community including staff, students, families, and visitors.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Part 6, we ensure that no one is subjected to discrimination, harassment, or victimisation on the basis of any protected characteristic. These protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This includes protection for individuals who identify as transgender, non-binary, or gender neutral, as well as those who are questioning their gender identity. We respect each individual's choice of name and pronouns, and we expect all members of our community to do the same.

We recognise both our legal and moral duty to remove barriers to participation, engagement, and achievement, and to develop positive relationships built on mutual respect, understanding, and fairness.

Policy Aims
Through this policy Educate U aims to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity for all.
- Develop good relations between individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs.
- Ensure fair and transparent access to opportunities, resources, and services.
- Promote positive attitudes towards diversity and actively challenge prejudice and stereotyping.

Principle Terms

- **Equality:** We are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.
- **Diversity:** We recognise, respect, and value differences in individuals' backgrounds, characteristics, and perspectives.
- **Inclusion:** We aim to create an environment where everyone feels included and able to participate fully in school life.
- The Company and Educate U are terms used to describe EducateUWestSussex Ltd.

Compliance Statement and Legal Framework
This policy is implemented in accordance with our statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and reflects our commitment to advancing equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination, and fostering good relations between all members of our school community. We monitor the impact of our policies and practices to ensure ongoing compliance with the Act and to uphold the principles of equity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.

Scope
This policy applies to:

- All Educate U staff (teaching, support, administrative, and leadership).
- All prospective staff during the interview process
- All students enrolled with Educate U aged 5-18

- All prospective students during the admissions process.
- All families and carers engaged with Educate U.
- All visitors, contractors, and external professionals on site or involved in our work.
- All Educate U activities, trips, placements, and events.

Current and prospective students and families

In line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010, Part 6, our school is committed to ensuring that no pupil is subjected to discrimination, harassment, or victimisation on the basis of any protected characteristic. These protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. We are dedicated to providing an inclusive and supportive environment where all pupils have equal access to opportunities, resources, and the curriculum (teaching and learning), regardless of their background or personal circumstances.

We actively promote respect, understanding, and fairness, carefully cultivating a school culture where diversity is valued and difference is celebrated. Our policies, practices, and decision-making processes are designed to ensure that every pupil is treated with dignity and respect, and that barriers to participation and achievement are identified and removed wherever possible.

Safeguarding and Duty of Care:

- Educate U recognises its legal duty to safeguard all students, including those aged 5–18.
- Staff must identify and respond promptly to any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or abuse.
- Students under 18 and vulnerable young adults will receive support and protection appropriate to their age and circumstances.

Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

- Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure full access to learning, assessments, resources, trips, and school activities.
- Examples include: assistive technology, alternative formats for learning materials, extra time in exams, and accessible physical spaces.
- Adjustments are made in consultation with the student and, where appropriate, their family or carers.

Bullying, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment Among Students

- Peer-on-peer bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment will not be tolerated.

- Clear reporting procedures are in place for students to report incidents confidentially.
- Allegations will be investigated promptly and sensitively, with support provided to both complainants and respondents as appropriate.

Student Involvement and Voice

- Students aged 5–19 are encouraged to participate in shaping a positive, inclusive school culture.
- Opportunities include: student councils, feedback surveys, and consultation on school plans and policies
- Reporting incidents and contributing to policy development are recognised as part of responsible citizenship.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

- Educate U provides support structures for mental health and wellbeing, recognising the particular challenges faced by students aged 5–19.
- Services include counselling, mentoring, and adjustments to learning or assessment where needed.
- Staff are trained to recognise signs of stress, anxiety, or other wellbeing concerns and to signpost students to appropriate support.

Transition, Careers, and Post-16 Pathways

- Equality of opportunity is promoted in careers advice, apprenticeships, further education, and post-16 progression.
- No student will be disadvantaged in accessing opportunities based on protected characteristics or personal circumstances.

Current and prospective employees

Educate U is committed to the fair treatment of its employees, job applicants, purchasers of the Company's goods or users of its services and suppliers regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender or gender reassignment, religion, creed or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibilities for dependants, age, disability or background.

In line with legislation, the Company actively promotes equal opportunity for all its employees with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates. The Company selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

The aims of this Policy are to ensure that all employees, job applicants, former workers, purchasers of the Company's goods or users of its services and suppliers:

- will receive equal treatment regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender or gender reassignment, religion, creed or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibilities for dependants, age, disability or background;
- are not disadvantaged by any conditions, requirements, provisions, criteria, procedures or practices that cannot be justified;
- are not victimised for taking action against discrimination or harassment or instructed or put under pressure, to discriminate against or to harass someone;
- to ensure that the Company is free from unwanted conduct that violates the dignity of workers or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, offensive or humiliating environment;
- to ensure that opportunities for employment, training and promotion are equally open to candidates regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender or gender reassignment, religion, creed or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibilities for dependants, age, disability or background;
- selection for employment, promotion, transfer and training, access to benefits, facilities and services, will be fair and equitable and based solely on merit;
- to prevent harassment and bullying in the workplace.

The Company will not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender or gender reassignment, religion, creed or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibilities for dependants, age or disability in the allocation of duties between employees employed at any level with comparable job descriptions.

The Company will put in place any reasonable measures and / or adjustments within the workplace for those employees who become disabled during employment or for disabled appointees.

All employees will be considered solely on their merits for career development and promotion with equal opportunities for all.

This Policy applies to all aspects of employment within Educate U, from recruitment to dismissal and former employees' rights. The Policy applies to work related functions that take place outside your normal working hours or outside of the workplace and at all times whilst you are engaged on or are deemed to be engaged on, Company business.

Implementation

- Training: Providing regular training to staff on EDI issues and best practices via Smartlog.
- Curriculum: Ensure the curriculum reflects and celebrates diversity and promotes inclusivity in subject areas and whole school events.
- Recruitment: Fair and inclusive recruitment practices to attract a diverse workforce.

- Working practices: Educate U encourages staff to include their pronouns in email signatures as a visible commitment to respecting gender identity and normalising inclusive communication. This is a voluntary practice that can help create a more welcoming environment for everyone, particularly for those whose gender identity or pronouns may not be immediately apparent.
- Making reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities to remove barriers to access and participation.
- Encouraging open dialogue and feedback to continually improve our inclusive culture.
- Monitoring: Regularly review and assess the effectiveness of the EDI policy and make necessary adjustments.

Recruitment and Promotion

Advertisements for posts will give sufficiently clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the post.

Information about vacant posts will be provided in such a manner that does not - unless there is a genuine occupational requirement, in which case it will be clearly stated - restrict its audience in terms of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender or gender reassignment, religion, creed or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibilities for dependants, age or disability.

All vacancies will be circulated internally, including to those on maternity leave, adoption leave and paternity leave.

All descriptions and specifications for posts will include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job.

Recruitment literature will not imply a preference for one group of applicants, unless there is a genuine occupational qualification that limits the post to this particular group, in which case it will be clearly stated.

All selection will be conducted against defined criteria and will only deal with the applicant's ability to do the job. Where it is necessary to ask questions relating to personal circumstances, these will be related purely to job requirements and will be asked of all candidates.

Training

Employees will be provided with appropriate training, as necessary, in accordance with the Company's training and development policy, regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender or gender reassignment, religion, creed or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibilities for dependants, age or disability.

Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation in the Workplace

The Company is committed to promoting a harmonious working environment where every employee and worker is treated with respect and dignity. Bullying, Harassment and/or victimisation at work is unlawful, unacceptable and will not be permitted or condoned. Examples of bullying or victimisation might include:

- physical contact;
- verbal or non-verbal conduct;
- victimisation including, but not limited to, unjustified criticism that occurs on more than one occasion, punishment imposed without reasonable justification and changes in the duties or responsibilities of the employee to the employee's detriment without reasonable justification;
- name calling;
- abusive language;
- mockery;
- jokes;
- harassment or intimidation of a general nature or that is specifically targeted at someone because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender or gender reassignment, religion, creed or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibilities for dependants, age, health, physical characteristics or disability.

These examples are not exclusive or exhaustive and conduct of a similar nature may be dealt with under this Policy

- bullying or intimidation of a general nature or that is specifically targeted at someone because of their:
    - race,
    - colour,
    - ethnic or national origins,
    - gender or gender reassignment,
    - religion,
    - creed or belief,
    - sexual orientation,
    - marital status,
    - responsibilities for dependants,
    - age,
    - health,
    - physical characteristics
    - disability.

These examples are not exclusive or exhaustive and conduct of a similar nature may be dealt with under this Policy.

Harassment, Bullying or Victimisation From Third Parties

If you have been subjected to harassment or victimisation behaviour of any kind from any third party who you have come into contact with through carrying out your duties, then you should report any incidents to your Line Manager, the Headteacher or a Director.

Third parties may include any of the following:

- Students
- Student family members or friends
- Subcontractors
- Advisors or associates
- Intermediaries
- Previous staff members
- Previous families or friends

Whilst an individual cannot bring a claim for third party harassment alone, it can still result in legal liability when raised in other types of claims. The Company will not tolerate any third parties abusing its employees, subcontractors or contractors, and we take any claims of harassment seriously. The Company will investigate any reported incidents and will take appropriate action including speaking to the individual(s) involved, their employer and in extreme cases ceasing commercial relationships with the third party.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

As an employer we do not condone any incident or behaviours that may be considered to be sexual harassment and/or unwarranted sexual behaviours. The law requires employers to take “reasonable steps” to prevent harassment in the workplace of employees in the workplace.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. If carried out, it has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Behaviour and action, in itself, does not have to be intentionally and/or directed at a specific person. It is also acknowledged that behaviours can be seen as subjective. However any person made to feel uncomfortable or be faced with unwanted behaviours in the workplace is not considered acceptable to us.

All employees of the Company, regardless of status, are protected from sexual harassment in the workplace. This applies to one-off incidents and ongoing incidents. Sexual harassment can happen in any number of ways, including but not limited to the following examples:

- written or verbal comments of a sexual nature, such as remarks about an employee's appearance

- questions about their sex life or offensive jokes
- displaying pornographic or explicit images
- emails with content of a sexual nature
- unwanted physical contact and touching
- sexual assault
- office banter

Further sexual harassment can happen to anyone at any time, in any place. It can happen to any person and harassment can be from people of the same or opposite sex.

Any person who feels they have been sexually harassed or feels they have seen sexual harassment take place can make a complaint of sexual harassment. All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken very seriously and handled fairly and sensitively via the Grievance procedure. Where possible the complaint should be made in writing to a member of the senior management team.

It is appreciated that reporting such an incident may be emotional and distressing and we will do all that we can to support you. In any meeting, you can be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative. However, given the sensitive nature we will extend the definition of an accompanying person to include a friend or family member at our discretion.

Complaints

Everyone has a right to work in an environment that:

- is free from abuse or insults;
- is safe;
- promotes dignity at work;
- encourages individuals to treat each other with respect;
- values politeness;
- is open and fair; and
- encourages individuals to support each other.

If you believe that the Company or a third party has applied inequitable treatment to you within the scope of this Policy or you are the subject of harassment, you should firstly attempt to resolve the matter informally, if appropriate, by raising the matter with the alleged discriminator or harasser and involving your [Line Manager/Director]. If your complaint is against your Line Manager, you should consider involving the Headteacher, or a Director if necessary.

If it is inappropriate to try to resolve the matter informally or such attempts have failed, then you should raise the matter formally in accordance with the Company's Grievance Procedure.

How Educate U will deal with complaints

Educate U will treat all allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation seriously and will deal with them promptly.

Disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure against any employee who acts in breach of this Policy. Any evidence of harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation in the workplace could result in dismissal if this behaviour is exhibited in the following instances:

- in any work situation
- during any work related event, such as a social gathering
- against a colleague or other person connected to the Company, including on Social Media OR
- against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to their ability to carry out their role.

In deciding what disciplinary action should be taken, the Company will take into account aggravating factors such as abuse of power and position in the Company.

Consistent application of this Policy will assist in the creation of the right environment for its success, and it is for each employee to make his or her own contribution to ensure that this success is maintained.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Headteacher:** Ensure the implementation and monitoring of the EDI policy and ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Promote and model an inclusive culture across all Educate U sites.
- **Senior Leadership Team:** Promote and support EDI initiatives and ensure compliance with the policy. Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities under this policy. Take prompt and appropriate action in response to any breaches.
- **Staff:** Uphold the principles of EDI in their daily interactions, show respect for all members of the community and report any incidents of discrimination, harassment, or bullying.
- **Students** will: show respect for all members of the community, report any incidents of discrimination, harassment, or bullying

- **Families and Visitors** are expected to engage respectfully with staff, students, and each other and uphold the values and expectations of Educate U while on site or involved in our work.

Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and proprietor annually.
- Equality objectives will be published and reviewed in line with statutory requirements.
- We will monitor the impact of this policy through feedback, data analysis, and evaluation of our practices.

The Company will review this Policy from time to time and may amend or modify any part thereof, in the light of revised guidance and best practice.