



ODBE

Oxford Diocesan Board of Education

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice Policy

About this policy

ODBE serves more than 280 schools, in over 20 multi-academy trusts across 9 local authorities. We are totally committed to our vision, ‘to serve our schools in a Christ like way and for all to flourish’. In order to fulfil our call to this service, we aim to deliver practices which provide equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination. Our approach is underpinned by the ambition of the Diocese of Oxford to be “Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous for the sake of God’s world” and we also strive to be Collaborative, recognising our position working with a wide range of partners.

This policy ensures that ODBE not only meets its statutory obligations and follows best practice, but it is rooted in these values in order to promote and uphold wisdom, knowledge and joy for all.

We are committed to being an equal opportunities employer and to creating a supportive and inclusive environment where each person in all their unique differences feels a sense of belonging and can flourish, irrespective of physical appearance, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic background, academic ability, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

ODBE will not discriminate or treat any individual less favourably on the grounds of sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. We will challenge discrimination in accordance with [the Equality Act 2010](#).

Sometimes we have to treat people differently, for example in order to accommodate a disability or to meet occupational requirements for a position. Some posts may give rise to an Occupational Requirement that the post-holder has [a commitment to the Christian faith](#).

Key definitions

Equality is about fairness, it is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that everyone’s needs are met in different ways. It is based on the legal obligation to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. Equality protects people from being discriminated against on the grounds of protected characteristics.

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Diversity is to recognise, respect and value the differences and the gifts that everyone has, and to embrace them to their fullest.

Inclusion is to foster a learning environment that allows and enables people with different backgrounds, characteristics, abilities, opinions, and ways of thinking, to work together, grow together, and flourish.

Justice is ensuring fair treatment for all, addressing discrimination when it occurs, and taking responsible action to put things right so that everyone can flourish.

Discrimination means treating a person unfairly because of who they are or because they possess certain characteristics. This is **unlawful discrimination** when based on protected characteristics. Discrimination can be direct or indirect:

- **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another not on the merits, but on the grounds of a protected characteristic they have. For example, overlooking a job applicant because of their gender or sexuality.
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs when a practice, policy or rule applies to everyone in the same way, but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified only if it can be shown that is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Purpose and our commitment

Our aim is for everyone to feel that they belong and are valued for who they are and what they contribute.

This policy sets out our legal obligations and commitments, within the framework of the Church of England, to acknowledge our diverse diocese and to better reflect it thus achieving our vision of serving our schools in a Christ like way and for all to flourish.

- People are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- We create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for everyone.
- Equality of opportunity for learning and development is promoted for everyone.
- Discrimination is challenged including unconscious bias and microaggression.
- Everyone can flourish and reach their full potential, and we respond positively to different needs and circumstances.
- We ensure that the principles of equality, diversity, inclusion and justice are embedded within our recruitment, appointment, and people management processes.

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- We encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so we can apply corrective measures.

Accountabilities

The Diocese of Oxford has a legal obligation under the **Equality Act 2010** to protect people from discrimination in the workplace.

As a diocese we commit to our equality, diversity and inclusion Implementation Plan that accompanies this policy so that we:

- Take seriously and deal with situations where anyone has breached the policy.
- Meet our legal obligations.
- Minimise the risk of discrimination by taking appropriate steps in our recruitment, selection, and management/supervision of employees, officeholders, and volunteers.
- Have a zero-tolerance response to discrimination.

Every individual within the scope of this policy is expected to:

- Familiarise themselves with this Policy, ensuring that their practices and conduct are consistent with it.
- Be aware of their responsibilities and report any cases of discrimination and unfair treatment witnessed that breach this Policy to the relevant manager or supervisor.
- Behave in a respectful way towards others and understand that views and opinions may differ.
- Engage with any training offered within this area.

Monitor and compliance

If you believe you have been subject to discrimination under this Policy, then you are encouraged to raise the matter with your line manager.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this Policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure (Grievance Procedure or the Dignity and Respect in Ministry and at Work Policy and Procedure). ODBE will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably, as a result. However, false allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under the relevant Disciplinary Procedure.

Any person found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Policy.

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For full details please refer to the diocesan Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

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