Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy
YSA Education

1. Purpose

YSA Education is committed to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and fairness in all aspects of its work.

We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness, regardless of their personal characteristics, background or circumstances.

This policy sets out our commitment to preventing discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and creating an inclusive environment for employees, candidates, education professionals, students, clients, partner organisations and other individuals who work with or are supported by the agency.

2. Scope

This policy applies to everyone involved with YSA Education, including:

- Employees and managers
- Temporary and agency workers
- Education professionals and candidates
- Students and learners
- Contractors and consultants
- Clients and partner organisations
- Visitors and other individuals interacting with the agency

The principles of this policy apply to recruitment, placement, employment, training, education, professional development, service delivery and all other activities undertaken by the agency.

3. Our Commitment

YSA Education is committed to:

- Providing equal opportunities to all individuals.
- Treating people fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Valuing and celebrating diversity.

- Preventing unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Making fair and objective decisions based on relevant skills, qualifications, experience and suitability.
- Promoting an inclusive culture in which people feel safe, respected and able to participate.
- Taking reasonable steps to remove or reduce barriers that may disadvantage individuals.
- Responding appropriately to concerns or complaints relating to discrimination or unfair treatment.
- Ensuring that our practices comply with relevant equality and employment legislation.

4. Protected Characteristics

We recognise the protected characteristics under the **Equality Act 2010**, which include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex / Gender
- Sexual orientation

We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation based on any protected characteristic.

We also recognise that individuals may experience disadvantage or unfair treatment because of other circumstances, such as caring responsibilities, socio-economic background, educational background, language, working arrangements or family circumstances. Where appropriate, we will consider these factors when developing inclusive practices and providing support.

5. Recruitment and Selection

We are committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection processes are fair, transparent and based on objective criteria.

We will:

- Use clear and relevant job or placement requirements.
- Avoid unnecessary requirements that could create barriers for particular groups.
- Advertise opportunities fairly and, where appropriate, through a range of channels.
- Assess candidates against consistent criteria.
- Avoid discriminatory questions or practices during recruitment.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates where required.
- Maintain confidentiality and handle personal information appropriately.
- Take steps to identify and address potential bias in recruitment and selection.

Where we recruit or place education professionals with schools, colleges or other educational organisations, we will work with clients to promote fair and non-discriminatory selection practices.

6. Equality in Education and Placements

Where the agency supports students, learners or education professionals, we will seek to ensure that access to opportunities is based on relevant and appropriate criteria rather than discriminatory factors.

We will work with educational establishments and partner organisations to encourage inclusive practices and, where appropriate, raise concerns where we become aware of potentially discriminatory treatment.

No individual should be disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic or because they require a reasonable adjustment to access an educational or employment opportunity.

7. Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

We recognise that disabled people may face barriers to accessing employment, education and services.

We will consider reasonable adjustments to our recruitment processes, communications, working arrangements and services where appropriate.

Examples may include:

- Providing information in an accessible format.
- Adjusting interview or assessment arrangements.

- Providing additional time where appropriate.
- Adapting communication methods.
- Making reasonable changes to working arrangements.
- Considering accessibility when arranging meetings, training or placements.

Individuals are encouraged to tell us about any reasonable adjustments they require. Information will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

8. Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation

We have zero tolerance for bullying, harassment or victimisation.

Unacceptable behaviour may include:

- Offensive or derogatory comments.
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or otherwise discriminatory language.
- Unwanted jokes or comments relating to a person's characteristics.
- Unwanted sexual behaviour or attention.
- Intimidation or exclusion.
- Unfair treatment because someone has made or supported a complaint about discrimination.
- Sharing offensive or discriminatory material.
- Online behaviour, including discriminatory messages or content on social media.

The fact that behaviour was not intended to cause offence does not necessarily mean that it is acceptable.
Concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

9. Responsibilities

Senior Management

Senior management is responsible for:

- Demonstrating commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented and reviewed.
- Providing appropriate resources and training.
- Taking appropriate action when concerns are raised.

Managers and Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat colleagues, candidates, students, clients and partners fairly and respectfully.
- Follow this policy and related procedures.
- Challenge or report discriminatory behaviour where appropriate.
- Avoid making decisions based on stereotypes or assumptions.
- Support reasonable adjustments and inclusive practices.

Candidates, Students, Clients and Partners

Individuals and organisations working with the agency are expected to behave respectfully and not engage in discriminatory, harassing or victimising behaviour.

Where appropriate, the agency may review or reconsider relationships with individuals or organisations that repeatedly breach these principles.

10. Training and Awareness

We will provide appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion information or training to staff and, where relevant, education professionals working through the agency.

Training may cover areas such as:

- Equality and diversity
- Unconscious bias
- Inclusive recruitment
- Disability awareness
- Preventing harassment and bullying
- Cultural awareness
- Safeguarding and professional conduct

11. Reporting Concerns

Anyone who believes they have experienced discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation should raise their concern as soon as reasonably practicable.

Concerns can be raised with:



Designated Contact: Kate Stewart
Email: kate@ysaeducation.co.uk
Telephone: 02475 900000

We will listen to concerns seriously and seek to deal with them fairly, sensitively and confidentially, subject to our legal and safeguarding responsibilities.

No individual should be treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern or supporting another person's complaint.

12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information relating to complaints, equality monitoring and individual circumstances will be handled appropriately and confidentially.

Personal information will be processed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and the agency's Data Protection and Privacy policies.

Information will only be shared where there is a legitimate reason to do so, including where required to protect an individual from harm or where required by law.

13. Monitoring and Review

We will review our equality and diversity practices regularly to identify potential barriers and areas for improvement.

Where appropriate, we may monitor relevant information relating to recruitment, placements, staff development and other activities. Any monitoring will be carried out lawfully and responsibly.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, organisational practice or relevant guidance.

14. Breaches of This Policy

Failure by an employee to comply with this policy may result in action under the agency's disciplinary procedures.

Where concerns involve a candidate, education professional, client, contractor or partner organisation, we will consider appropriate action based on the circumstances.

Serious cases of discriminatory behaviour, harassment or victimisation may result in termination of an employment, placement or business relationship, where appropriate.

15. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside other relevant policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Code of Conduct

16. Policy Statement

YSA Education is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated fairly, valued for their individual contribution and able to access opportunities without unlawful discrimination.

We recognise that equality and diversity are ongoing responsibilities and will continue to review our practices to promote fairness, inclusion, dignity and respect throughout our organisation and the education sector in which we operate.

Approved by: Kate Stewart
Position: Safeguarding Lead