



FORMISSION

## Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy 2023-4

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|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Version:</b>       | 2                              | <b>Policy Number:</b>         | 11   |
| <b>Policy Owner:</b>  | Diversity and Inclusivity Lead | <b>Date of last revision:</b> | 25/06/2023   |
| <b>Authorised By:</b> | SMT                            | <b>Authorisation Date:</b>    | 26/07/2023   |
| <b>Review Date:</b>   | 31/7/2024                      | <b>Place of Publication:</b>  | ForMission OneDrive<br><a href="#">ForMission Moodle</a> |

### List of Related Policies:

| Policy No | Policy Title                |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 03        | Admissions Policy           |
| 04        | Appeals Policy              |
| 08        | Disability Policy           |
| 16        | Freedom of Speech Policy    |
| 17        | Grievance Procedure         |
| 19        | Learner Community Agreement |
| 31        | Student Complaints Policy   |

# Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy 2023-24

## 1. Statement

- 1.1. ForMission College recognises its responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equal opportunities and is committed to building and supporting a diverse and inclusive community so that all who work or study at the College can benefit from an environment which is open and inclusive, and which values everyone equally.
- 1.2. The College recognises the benefits to the organisation of drawing on a wide range of skills and experience from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. Staff and students will benefit from learning and working in an inclusive environment that allows them to contribute fully and effectively to the organisation.
- 1.3. The College is committed to equal opportunities for all regardless of a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 1.4. Discrimination, whether direct or indirect is not an acceptable behaviour in any staff, volunteers, students or any other person associated with the College.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy sets out the approach which the College will take to establish and maintain an environment which is in keeping with the principles of equality and diversity, for the benefit of all staff and others associated with ForMission.
- 2.2. It will ensure that all those associated with the College understands:
  - 2.2.1. the organisation's commitment to the principles of equality and diversity; and
  - 2.2.2. their own responsibilities in supporting that principle.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy and the procedures which it contains apply to all who are associated with ForMission College.
- 3.2. As the College is a Christian College, all staff must be in sympathy with our objectives and values, and do nothing to undermine the values, mission and purpose of the organisation.
- 3.3. In addition, to support the charitable objectives, there is a genuine occupational reason (GOR) for the postholders in specific roles to be practicing Christians within a recognised denomination.
- 3.4. After any GOR has been taken into account, entry into employment, promotion, or change of post within the College will be determined by merit and ability.

#### **4. Definitions**

- 4.1. *Direct discrimination*: where a person is treated less favourably than others (in the same or similar circumstances) on grounds of person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 4.2. *Indirect discrimination*: when a condition or requirement adversely affects one particular group considerably more than other groups and which cannot be justified in terms of the requirements for performing the job.
- 4.3. *Victimisation*: it is unlawful to victimise individuals who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or have provided information about cases of discrimination. The College will treat any proven act of equality-related victimisation as a serious disciplinary matter.
- 4.4. *Harassment*: it the unwarranted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour, which is intimidating, degrading, offensive or distressing to the recipient and which is motivated or related to the person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 4.5. *Staff/all staff*: in terms of this policy, this means all those who undertake work for ForMission, whether paid staff, contractors, or volunteers.
- 4.6. *Hub Leaders*: at any location where there is no Hub Leader, the most senior person who is usually based at that location becomes the relevant person under this policy.

#### **5. Policy**

- 5.1. ForMission College undertakes to:
  - 5.1.1. ensure that this statement and policy is effectively communicated to staff and all concerned;

- 5.1.2. provide staff training, information and updates on equality matters to all staff; and
- 5.1.3. consult with staff and students where appropriate on matters relating to equality matters, including via the Diversity and Inclusivity Lead.
- 5.2. The organisation will take reasonable steps to:
  - 5.2.1. treat all members of the College community in a manner which is free of direct or indirect discrimination, victimising or harassment in respect of person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation;
  - 5.2.2. protect staff from discrimination arising from disability, so that a disabled person is not treated less favourably because of something connected with their disability, unless it is not possible to make reasonable adjustment, or such discrimination is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim;
  - 5.2.3. give equal opportunity and encouragement to all staff to progress within the College;
  - 5.2.4. ensure equality of opportunity in terms of access to training, development and support in enabling each individual to improve their knowledge and skills;
  - 5.2.5. take positive action such as providing training to particular groups of staff, if appropriate as a proportionate means of enabling or encouraging people with a protected characteristic to overcome or minimise disadvantage or participate in activity where they are underrepresented; and
  - 5.2.6. provide both formal and informal procedures for any member of the College Community who believes that they have been treated inequitably within the scope of this policy.
- 5.3. This policy is part of the suite of documents which form the Staff Handbook. As such, all staff will be required to sign a declaration to the effect that they have read and understood its provisions, and that they agree to abide by them.
- 5.4. Place this policy on the College website so that it is accessible to all who require it.

## **6. Recruitment**

- 6.1. Recruitment shall be conducted in a way which is compatible with this policy.

- 6.2. Advertising, indicative job descriptions and selection criteria must be phrased in such a way as to ensure that no potential applicant is disadvantaged or receives less favourable treatment due to their person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation which cannot be shown to be justified.
- 6.3. Selection processes, including interviews, for both internal and external recruitment will be designed and carried in a manner which:
  - 6.3.1. is based on objective, job-related criteria;
  - 6.3.2. will ensure that individuals selected and promoted on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities;
  - 6.3.3. can be shown to be consistent, fair and transparent; and
  - 6.3.4. will be designed to counter inadvertent or subconscious bias.
- 6.4. All information provided by applicants will be treated as confidential.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 7.1. The Board of Trustees is responsible for approving the College's Equal Opportunities policy and ensuring that it is kept up to date. The statement and policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary to ensure continuing compliance with legal developments and with the needs of the College.
- 7.2. The Senior Management Team is responsible for implementing this policy and monitoring ForMission's compliance with the statement and policy.
- 7.3. The Professional Services Manager is responsible for:
  - 7.3.1. being the main point of contact regarding enquiries and complaints on matters relating to this policy, whether raised under the College's Grievance Procedure or through any other route; and
  - 7.3.2. maintaining records on all actions taken in regard to equal opportunities.
- 7.4. Hub Leaders (or their equivalent) are responsible for:
  - 7.4.1. ensuring that staff and students at their location have read this policy;
  - 7.4.2. ensuring that staff and students at their location are aware of where to access a copy at any time they need to do so;
  - 7.4.3. exercising awareness of speech and behaviour on the part of any visitors which may contravene this policy and addressing any such issue as appropriate for the duration of the visit; and
  - 7.4.4. informing the Professional Services Manager where an issue has been identified at their location.

- 7.5. All staff, students and visitors are responsible for complying with this policy and for being mindful of how their words and actions may impact those around them.
- 7.6. Any member of staff who feels that they have been the subject of direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on any of the grounds contained in this policy should follow the College's Grievance Procedure.
- 7.7. Any student who feels that they have been the subject of direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on any of the grounds contained in this policy should speak to the Hub Leader at their location in the first instance. If the Hub Leader is the subject of the complaint, the student should contact the Professional Services Manager.
- 7.8. Any visitor who feels that they have been the subject of discrimination on any of the grounds contained in this policy should be advised to contact the Professional Services Manager and given the contact details to enable them to do so.
- 7.9. All staff and students are responsible for carrying out any necessary duty, which the law requires and cooperate with ForMission to allow legal obligations to be met.

## **8. Review**

- 8.1. This Policy will be reviewed annually.
- 8.2. The review will include an assessment of any incidents which have occurred since the previous review, and also an assessment of ForMission College's performance in meeting the principles and intentions underlying this policy.