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Role:	Director
Checked by:	Peninsula HR
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Equality and Diversity in the Workplace Policy

**October 2026
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1. Policy Statement and Commitment

Exceptional Ideas Ltd is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness, and where differences are celebrated. We recognise that our strength lies in the diversity of our workforce and the students and families we serve. Equality, diversity, and inclusion are central to our mission of providing a safe, nurturing, and aspirational learning environment for young people with SEND.

We will:

- Ensure equality of opportunity in employment, training, and progression.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics.
- Build an inclusive culture where every voice is heard respectfully and where constructive advocacy and feedback are welcomed.

2. Legal Framework

This policy complies with:

- **Equality Act 2010** (and Public Sector Equality Duty, s.149)
- **Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023**
- **Employment Rights Act 1996**
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **ACAS Code of Practice on Discrimination and Harassment (2023)**
- **KCSIE (2025) and Ofsted EIF (2024)**
- **Gender Recognition Act 2004**
- **Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023**
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**

3. Scope

Applies to:

- All employees
- Contractors, consultants, volunteers, and job applicants.
- Students, parents, and visitors in interactions with staff.

4. Objectives

1. Build and sustain a workforce that reflects our community.
2. Provide equal access to employment, training, and promotion.
3. Ensure all staff understand their rights and responsibilities under equality law.
4. Maintain transparent, fair decision-making in recruitment, pay, and performance.
5. Prevent discrimination, bullying, and harassment, and deal with any breaches quickly and proportionately.
6. Promote psychological safety and constructive dialogue in a high-challenge, high-support culture.

5. Protected Characteristics

In line with the Equality Act 2010, discrimination, harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated on the basis of:

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

Intersectional discrimination—where more than one characteristic overlaps—will also be recognised and addressed.

6. Responsibilities

Director

- Ensures this policy is implemented and reviewed annually.
- Promotes a culture of inclusion and models equitable decision-making.
- Oversees data monitoring and equality objectives.

Headteacher / Head of HR

- Leads on compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and PSED.
- Ensure all HR, disciplinary, and recruitment processes reflect equality law.
- Investigate formal discrimination or harassment complaints promptly and fairly.

Senior and Operational Leaders

- Model inclusive behaviour and language.
- Apply consistent standards under the **Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy**.
- Support early resolution through reflective supervision and mediation.

All Staff

- Treat others with dignity and respect at all times.
- Report discriminatory behaviour, harassment, or victimisation.
- Participate in mandatory EDI training.

7. Dignity at Work and Anti-Harassment

Exceptional Ideas Ltd has **zero tolerance** for harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, or victimisation.

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates a hostile environment.

Procedures

1. **Informal Stage** – Staff are encouraged to raise concerns early with their line manager or HR.
2. **Formal Stage** – Formal complaints will be investigated under the **Staff Disciplinary Policy**.

3. **Safeguarding Interface** – Where allegations involve students or vulnerable adults, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and LADO (if relevant) will be notified immediately.

Third-Party Harassment

We will act where staff experience harassment from parents, visitors, or contractors. Actions may include restricted access, alternative communication channels, or police liaison.

8. Reasonable Adjustments and Support

Exceptional Ideas Ltd is committed to meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability, long-term health condition, or neurodivergent profile. We aim to ensure equitable access to work, progression, and wellbeing for all staff, while maintaining the operational safety and efficiency of our provision.

Disclosure of Health or Access Needs

Exceptional Ideas Ltd recognises that job applicants are not required to disclose any health condition or disability prior to a job offer, except where such disclosure is necessary to arrange reasonable adjustments for the recruitment process itself. Once employment begins, employees are expected to inform the organisation as early as possible of any health condition, disability, or access need that may affect their ability to perform their role safely or effectively. Early disclosure allows for appropriate consideration and planning of reasonable adjustments. Failure to disclose information that materially affects workplace safety, safeguarding responsibilities, or operational delivery may limit the organisation's ability to make adjustments retrospectively.

Assessment and Implementation of Adjustments

Where a need is identified, Exceptional Ideas Ltd may seek Occupational Health advice or other professional input to assess the impact of the condition and to identify proportionate and practicable adjustments.

Employees are expected to cooperate fully with this process and to provide any relevant medical or professional evidence requested to support the assessment.

Adjustments will be agreed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account:

- The needs of the individual;
- The requirements and safety of the role;
- The potential impact on students, colleagues, and service delivery; and
- The financial and operational feasibility of the proposed adjustment.

All agreed adjustments will be documented in a Reasonable Adjustment Agreement (or Access to Work Passport), signed by both parties, and reviewed regularly to ensure continued appropriateness.

Exceptional Ideas Ltd is not obliged to implement adjustments that are not considered reasonable in the circumstances.

Verification and Misuse

Exceptional Ideas Ltd may request appropriate evidence of the caring or health-related responsibility to support planning and verification.

Misuse or misrepresentation of any declared need or entitlement will be treated as a disciplinary matter under the organisation's Staff Disciplinary Policy.

9. Dress and Presentation

Staff are expected to maintain professionalism and sensitivity to the needs of students in line with the **Staff Dress Code Policy**.

Reasonable adjustments for religious or cultural dress and disability will be supported.

10. Conduct and Behaviour

Expected behaviours and professional standards are detailed in the **Staff Code of Conduct**.

Any breach of this EDI Policy may be investigated under the **Staff Disciplinary Policy**.

Unacceptable conduct includes:

- Discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Victimisation of a colleague for raising a concern.
- Inappropriate or offensive communication (verbal, written, or digital).

Carers' Rights

Exceptional Ideas Ltd complies with the Carer's Leave Act 2023, which entitles eligible employees to up to one week of unpaid leave per year to provide or arrange care for a dependent with illness, disability, or age-related needs.

Carers' leave may be taken in full or half days, subject to reasonable notice (normally at least three working days) and operational approval to ensure student safety and service continuity.

Exceptional Ideas Ltd may request appropriate evidence of the caring responsibility to support planning and verification. Misuse or misrepresentation of this entitlement will be treated as a disciplinary matter under the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

For ongoing or substantial caring responsibilities, employees should discuss alternative arrangements through the Flexible Working or Reasonable Adjustments procedures.

All requests will be considered fairly and consistently, balancing the needs of the employee with the operational requirements of the organisation.

12. Training and Awareness

- **Mandatory annual training** for all staff on equality, diversity, and inclusion, including harassment prevention. This training ensures all staff understand how to recognise, prevent, and report discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Staff Code of Conduct.
- **Enhanced training** for senior leaders and recruiters on unconscious bias, accessibility, and fair selection.
- **Refresher inputs** in supervision and team meetings throughout the year.

13. Reporting and Whistleblowing

Concerns may be raised through:

- The **Grievance Procedure**
- The **Whistleblowing Policy**
- Line management or HR (informal routes)

All reports will be handled promptly, confidentially, and without victimisation.

14. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data

- Workforce data (e.g. gender, disability, ethnicity) will be collected confidentially and used only for monitoring equality trends.
- Annual EDI objectives will be published and reviewed by Directors.
- Outcomes of investigations and complaints will be anonymised and used to improve practice.

15. Related Policies

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- **Staff Code of Conduct Policy**
- **Staff Disciplinary Policy**
- **Staff Dress Code Policy**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Safer Recruitment and Employment Policy**
- **Staff Wellbeing Policy**
- **Whistleblowing and Grievance Procedures**
- **Health and Safety Policy**

16. Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes.

Next review October 2027.