

**Destiny House International and DHI Education and Arts**



**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

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## **1. Equal opportunities statement**

Destiny House International CIO, referred to as 'the Church,' aims to be an equal opportunity employer.

The church is committed to being a successful, caring and welcoming place for all employees. We want to create a supportive and inclusive environment where our employees can reach their full potential without prejudice and discrimination. We are committed to a culture where respect and understanding is fostered, and the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances will be positively valued.

The policy aims to achieve equality by removing any potential discrimination in the way that our employees are treated by fellow employees or the church, including:

- people with disabilities
- people of different sexual orientations
- transgender and transsexual people
- people of different races
- people on the grounds of their sex
- those of faith and of no faith
- in relation to their age
- in relation to their social class or medical condition
- people who work part-time
- those who are married or in a civil partnership
- women who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breast-feeding

Discrimination can be either direct or indirect discrimination. Some of the above are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and discrimination is prohibited unless there is a legal exception under the Equality Act.

## **2. Direct discrimination**

This is where someone is treated less favourably due to one (or more) protected characteristics. It can be intentional or unintentional discrimination. Occasionally discrimination may occur due to a protected characteristic of another person, so the discrimination may be because of association. An example is an advert for a job that requires 'men only' or 'under 30s only'.

### **3. Indirect discrimination**

This is where someone is disadvantaged by an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice (PCP) that is applied 'across the board' or 'equally across a particular group'. The PCP may have the consequence (usually unintended) of causing a disadvantage, which then actually affects somebody. For example, a PCP relating to clothing or headwear could be applied 'equally' but may cause someone with a protected characteristic to be disadvantaged. The PCP could be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

### **4. Victimisation**

This is not the same as the common meaning of victimisation but is specifically regarding treating someone less favourably because they have complained about or given information about discrimination or harassment, either regarding themselves or someone else.

### **5. Harassment**

This is part of the Equality Act but is covered in more detail in the Anti-Harassment and Bullying policy.

The Equality Act 2010 applies to how employees treat fellow employees, visitors, suppliers and former employees.

The church is committed to equality of opportunity, providing a service, and following practices free from unfair and unlawful discrimination.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that no applicant or member of staff receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It also seeks to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

### **6. Occupational Requirements**

Under the Equality Act 2010, there are some exemptions that apply to the work environment which allow employers to require employees to have (or not to have) certain protected characteristics.

These are called **Occupational Requirements** (OR), and the burden is on the employer to show that there is an occupational requirement attached to a particular job role.

As detailed previously, the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are: sex, race, disability, age, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

For churches, the main consideration concerns religious ORs.

Applying an OR to a role will mean that the church will potentially discriminate against non-Christian prospective candidates. Consequently, such individuals could bring claims of discrimination against the church, and, if so, the burden would be on the church to persuade a tribunal that the use of the OR was justified and proportionate.

Employers would be required to demonstrate that:

- It has an ethos based on the Christian religion. It should be able to demonstrate that the ethos is reflected in how it conducts its functions and in the nature, and context of the work it does; and
- that given the nature and context of the work of the employer and particularly the work the role in question will undertake, that it is an occupational requirement that the post holder is of the Christian religion; and
- that applying that OR is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. A legitimate aim could be any of the aims of the church. Achieving that aim proportionately will require the application of the OR to be “reasonably necessary” in order to achieve it. The application of the OR will not be considered reasonably necessary if the employer could have used less discriminatory means to achieve the same objective.

The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and the application of its principles is essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the church.

Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.

The **Standing Committee of the Church** has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring the equality and diversity policies, and, as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

There will be monitoring and reviews of the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy, including a review of job applicants and the benefits/career progression of existing employees. Comments and suggestions on the policy can be directed **to the Church Board of Trustees**.

**For ministerial roles, please refer to our ministerial contract.**

Approved by:	DHI CIO Board of Trustees
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Last reviewed on:	September 2022
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