

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Statement

Policy Reference:	A61
Version Number:	1
Applies to:	All services
Associated documents:	<i>Equality information and Objectives Policy HR policies including but not limited to: AHR3. Recruitment Policy AHR7. Dignity at Work Employee Handbook Anti-bullying Policy Trans Policies</i>
Approved by:	<i>People Director and Quality Assurance Director</i>
Implementation date:	January 2022
Next review due by:	January 2023
<i>This policy has been reviewed to ensure it promotes safeguarding and does not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups</i>	

0. Summary of changes since previous version of policy

This is an amalgamation of two separate policies AE1 and AQ7 to provide increased clarity and ensure one policy provides an overarching approach for everyone who is employed by the Aurora Group or uses our services.

1. Aims

This policy sets out The Aurora Group's position, approach and commitment to equality and diversity.

The Aurora Group is committed to creating and sustaining diverse and inclusive environments for our students, residents, employees, stakeholders and visitors. Our aim is to ensure that everyone is equally valued and respected and that our communities are representative of all members of society.

We define diversity as valuing everyone as an individual. This is reflected within our values and behaviours:

- > Caring
- > Ambitious
- > Collaborative
- > Trusted
- > Innovative

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This Policy fulfils the requirements of:

- *The Equality Act 2010*
- *The Human Rights Act 1998*

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of The Aurora Group (and any associated group of companies), the children and young people who attend or live at our settings, plus relatives, carers and all visitors.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Site Leads will be responsible for ensuring the policy is followed and for monitoring effectiveness. Equality and diversity will be analysed and reported on in termly governance reports/meetings and the site lead will maintain the three-year accessibility plan and monitor site-specific equality objectives.

The Operations Director(s) will be responsible for ensuring the policy is followed consistently across their region. They will use the governance meetings to provide support and challenge to ensure the site is promoting equality and diversity.

The Quality Assurance Director will be responsible for monitoring compliance with Independent School Standards and the inspection framework, and for providing feedback on this to the Board.

The People Director will be responsible for reporting on Equality and Diversity within the workplace to the Executive Team and the Board

5. Definitions

The Equality Act 2010 sets out that the nine characteristics that are protected are:

- › Age
- › Disability
- › Gender reassignment
- › Marriage or civil partnership
- › Pregnancy and maternity
- › Race
- › Religion or belief
- › Sex
- › Sexual orientation

6. Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

The Aurora Group is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among all people involved with Aurora (including children and young people who use our services, relatives, carers, its workforce and visitors) and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

All people involved with Aurora, including children, young people, relatives, carers, employees, visitors, placing authorities, Care Quality Commission, Ofsted and all other external agencies involved in the care planning of children and young people shall be made aware of this policy.

The aim is for our workforce to be representative of all sections of society and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

We are also committed against unlawful discrimination of the public.

7. Intent

7.1. Aurora Employees

We intend to:

- › provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether they are temporary, part-time or full-time.

- › ensure we do not unlawfully discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010).
- › oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes:
 - recruitment and selection
 - within pay and benefits
 - terms and conditions of employment
 - dealing with grievances and discipline
 - dismissal
 - redundancy
 - dependant's leave
 - requests for flexible working
 - selection for employment
 - promotion
 - training or other developmental opportunities

The Aurora Group commits to:

- › Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- › Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
 - This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
 - All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public
- › Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities. Such acts will be dealt with in line with the organisation's dignity at work policy and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to

circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

- › Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
 - Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- › Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- › Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this statement. Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion statement, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

7.2 Children and Young People

We believe that everyone stands to benefit when we embrace and value the diversity of thoughts, ideas and ways of working that people from different backgrounds, experiences and identities bring. It helps our students and residents to grow and learn, enables them to realise their potential, improves decision-making, boosts engagement and innovation, and enables us to better meet the needs of our diverse communities.

To this end, we have made the following commitments:

- › To create an environment in which individual differences and the contribution of all our students and residents are recognised and valued.
- › To not tolerate any form of unacceptable behaviour, harassment, discrimination, bullying (including cyber bullying) or victimisation in any area of learning communities or homes.
- › To provide guidance and training to students and residents on diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity.
- › To encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to or witnessed discrimination to raise their concerns.
- › To make every person aware of their personal responsibility for implementing and promoting equal opportunities in their day-to-day dealings with others.
- › To regularly review all our day-to-day practices, policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements of this statement.
- › To monitor the effectiveness in promoting diversity and inclusion.

- › We require all members of our community to recognise these commitments and act in accordance with them. In addition, we will comply with all relevant legislation and good practice.

8. Dealing with discrimination

8.1 Employees

Details of the organisation's dignity at work and disciplinary policies can be found on our intranet. This includes with whom an employee should raise a concern/grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of the organisation's dignity at work and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

8.2 Children and Young People

Unacceptable behaviour, harassment, discrimination, bullying (including cyber bullying) or victimisation of any individual is perceived as contradictory to our aspirations for a supportive working environment and will not be tolerated.

Our behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy and local procedures outline how we will deal with issues of discrimination.

All children and young people we educate and care for should have access to facilities, equipment and the whole curriculum which positive reflects a wide range of diversity. They should also be involved in the development of equal opportunity initiatives and issues.

9. Support, Advice and Communication

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy statement is fully supported by senior management.

Support and advice regarding the policy will be provided by the HR Business Partner who is responsible for the region in which the enquirer is based. In the Central team, the ER Manager can be approached for support and advice. Site Leads can offer further information regarding site-specific objectives and initiatives.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The People Director and the Quality Assurance Director will review the policy on an annual basis.