Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

Straight A Training is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its business. We are dedicated to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with dignity, fairness and respect and are able to participate fully, regardless of their background, personal circumstances or protected characteristics.

We recognise that a diverse workforce and learner population enriches the learning experience, improves outcomes and supports innovation and excellence.

Straight A Training adopts a zero-tolerance approach to unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying and hate-related behaviour. We are committed to creating an inclusive culture where differences are valued and everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential.

This policy supports our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and aligns with our commitments to safeguarding, the Prevent Duty, Fundamental British Values and the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE), Ofsted and apprenticeship funding rules.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity for all learners, staff and stakeholders.
- Foster good relations between individuals from different backgrounds.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulatory expectations.
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive learning and working environment.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees and directors
- Apprentices and learners
- Job applicants
- Employers and workplace mentors
- Contractors and subcontractors
- Partner organisations and stakeholders engaged with Straight A Training

4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Definitions

Equality

Equality means ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and provided with equal opportunities to participate, develop and succeed.

Diversity

Diversity recognises, respects and values the differences between individuals, including background, experiences, beliefs and characteristics.

Inclusion

Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected, supported and able to contribute fully.

5. Our Commitments

Straight A Training is committed to the three aims of the Equality Act 2010:

Eliminating Discrimination

We will work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by law.

Advancing Equality of Opportunity

We will identify and remove barriers which may prevent individuals from participating fully in learning, employment or development opportunities.

Fostering Good Relations

We will promote understanding, respect and positive relationships between individuals from different backgrounds and communities.

To support these aims, Straight A Training will:

- Treat all individuals fairly and consistently.
- Provide equal access to training, assessment and employment opportunities.
- Promote a culture of respect and inclusion.
- Challenge prejudice, stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Monitor equality outcomes and address identified inequalities.
- Ensure equality considerations inform decision-making across the organisation.

6. Protected Characteristics

Straight A Training recognises and complies with the Equality Act 2010.

We will not discriminate against any individual because of their:

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

- Sexual orientation

Any form of discrimination related to a protected characteristic will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

7. Inclusion and Removing Barriers

Straight A Training recognises that barriers to participation and achievement may arise from circumstances beyond protected characteristics.

We are committed to supporting individuals who may experience disadvantage due to:

- Socio-economic circumstances
- Caring responsibilities
- Being a care leaver
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Learning difficulties and disabilities
- Mental health needs
- Long-term health conditions
- Refugee or migrant status
- Previous involvement with the criminal justice system
- Other personal circumstances that may affect participation or achievement

Support will be considered on an individual basis to ensure fair and equitable access to learning and employment opportunities.

8. Forms of Unlawful Discrimination

Straight A Training prohibits:

Direct Discrimination

Treating a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Applying policies, procedures or practices that disadvantage a particular group without objective justification.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation

Treating someone unfairly because they have made, supported or raised concerns about discrimination.

9. Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Through Learning

Straight A Training actively promotes equality, diversity and inclusion throughout its learning programmes.

This includes:

- Embedding equality and diversity themes into teaching and learning.
- Promoting understanding of different cultures, beliefs and perspectives.
- Challenging stereotypes and discrimination.
- Encouraging respect for others and appreciation of diversity.
- Supporting learners to understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Promoting active citizenship and positive workplace behaviours.
- Encouraging respectful discussion of current social and workplace issues.

Equality, diversity and inclusion activities support the promotion of Fundamental British Values and compliance with the Prevent Duty.

10. Recruitment and Employment

Straight A Training is committed to fair, transparent and inclusive recruitment and employment practices.

We will:

- Recruit on merit against clearly defined criteria.
- Ensure recruitment decisions are free from bias and discrimination.
- Encourage applications from diverse groups.
- Make reasonable adjustments during recruitment and employment.
- Provide equal access to training and development opportunities.
- Monitor recruitment and workforce data to identify potential barriers.

No applicant or employee will be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

11. Learner Recruitment, Training and Assessment

Straight A Training will ensure that:

- Learner recruitment is fair, transparent and objective.
- Admission decisions are based on eligibility and suitability criteria.
- Learners receive equal access to learning opportunities.
- Assessment practices are fair, valid and accessible.
- Appropriate support is provided to meet individual learning needs.
- Learner achievement and progression are monitored to identify inequalities.

We are committed to ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to succeed regardless of background or personal circumstances.

12. Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

Straight A Training recognises its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled individuals.

We are committed to ensuring that training, assessment and employment practices are accessible and inclusive.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Adapted learning resources
- Alternative formats

- Assistive technology
- Specialist support arrangements
- Additional learning support
- Modified assessment arrangements
- Flexible delivery methods
- Adjustments to recruitment processes

Requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered individually and implemented where reasonable and appropriate.

Where applicable, access arrangements will be implemented in accordance with awarding organisation and End-Point Assessment Organisation requirements.

13. Digital Accessibility

Straight A Training will take reasonable steps to ensure that learning resources, systems and communications are accessible.

Where appropriate, information may be provided in alternative formats including:

- Large print
- Accessible digital formats
- Audio resources
- Screen-reader compatible documents
- Alternative communication methods

We will regularly review digital systems and learning resources to improve accessibility.

14. Responsibilities

Directors and Senior Management

Directors and senior leaders are responsible for:

- Providing strategic leadership for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensuring compliance with legislation and regulatory requirements.
- Promoting an inclusive organisational culture.
- Providing appropriate resources and training.
- Monitoring performance and policy effectiveness.

Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Implementing this policy.
- Addressing concerns promptly and fairly.
- Promoting inclusive practices.
- Supporting staff and learners appropriately.

Employees and Associates

All employees must:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour where appropriate.
- Support an inclusive learning and working environment.
- Report concerns promptly.

Learners

Learners are expected to:

- Respect differences and individual backgrounds.
- Behave appropriately towards staff, employers and fellow learners.
- Report discrimination, bullying or harassment.
- Contribute positively to an inclusive environment.

Employers

Employer partners are expected to:

- Comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide a safe and inclusive workplace.
- Treat apprentices fairly and consistently.
- Support reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with Straight A Training to address concerns relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

15. Safeguarding and Equality

Straight A Training recognises that incidents involving discrimination, hate crime, harassment, bullying or victimisation may also constitute safeguarding concerns.

Where there is a risk of harm, concerns will be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and may be referred to appropriate external agencies.

Learners and staff will be supported throughout any safeguarding investigation.

16. Reporting Concerns and Complaints

Straight A Training operates a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying and hate incidents.

Individuals who experience or witness inappropriate behaviour should report concerns as soon as possible to:

- A line manager
- Tutor, assessor or learning coach
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- A member of the Senior Management Team

All concerns will:

- Be acknowledged promptly.
- Be investigated fairly and impartially.
- Be handled confidentially wherever possible.
- Be managed in accordance with organisational procedures.

- Protect individuals from victimisation for raising concerns.

Individuals dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may use the organisation's Complaints and Appeals Procedures.

17. Monitoring and Review

Straight A Training will collect and review equality information where lawful, proportionate and appropriate.

Monitoring may include:

- Recruitment and admissions
- Employee recruitment and retention
- Learner retention
- Attendance and engagement
- Achievement and success rates
- Progression outcomes
- Complaints and disciplinary actions
- Staff training and development

Monitoring data may be reviewed by groups including:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Learning support needs
- Other relevant learner and employee characteristics

The purpose of monitoring is to identify trends, address inequalities and support continuous improvement.

18. Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this policy will be treated seriously.

Depending on the circumstances, breaches may result in:

- Informal resolution
- Formal disciplinary action
- Removal from learning programmes
- Termination of employment or contractual arrangements
- Referral to awarding organisations, employers, regulators or external authorities

All allegations will be investigated fairly and proportionately.

19. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Complaints Procedure

- Grievance Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Learner Behaviour and Conduct Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Approval

This policy has been approved by the Senior Management Team and will be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing compliance with legislation, regulatory requirements and organisational best practice.

Straight A Training Ltd is committed to creating an inclusive culture where diversity is valued, barriers are removed and every individual is given the opportunity to succeed.

Approval

Organisation: Straight A Training
Policy Owner: Jayne Raftery
Approved By: Senior Leadership Team
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