



## Diversity and Equalities Policy

**Statement of intent:** This policy aims to outline Acorns2Oaks Ltd (A2O) commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and equal treatment for staff, Trustees, and customers in terms of employment and access to services; and to provide guidance on anti-discriminatory practice.

The policy applies across the range of employment policies and practice, including those relating to Discipline, Grievance, Harassment and Complaints.

This policy will be reviewed when changes arise. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the Nursery Offices or downloaded via our website.

**Scope:** The policy applies to employees directly employed by A2O, to workers employed via agencies, contractors in terms of employment, volunteers, students, Trustees, and customers in terms of service provision. The policy applies specifically to discrimination and equality of opportunity in respect of 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equalities Act 2010: **Age, Disability, Race, Sex, Religion or cultural beliefs, Gender reassignment, Marital status and civil partnership, Sexual orientation, Pregnancy and maternity.**

**Responsibilities:** A2O values its staff, contractors, workers, Trustees and customers, and expects them to be treated in a respectful manner. Accordingly, all have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The CEO is responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, and to ensure the Policy document is kept up to date.

**Aims:** A2O will provide equality of opportunity and equal treatment as an integral part of good practice. The organisation is committed to a working environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised. We will support our staff, workers, Trustees and contractors in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from colleagues, other organisations or customers. As one of A2O's core values is "Ethical Behaviour", A2O aims to **promote equality of opportunity, celebrate and value diversity and eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination.**

**General purpose:** A2O's practices will ensure that staff, workers, Trustees, and customers will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, race, sex, religion or cultural beliefs, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity. A2O's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination, as set out below:

- Direct discrimination - where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination – when a requirement or a condition is applied which has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.
- Associative discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.

- Perceptive discrimination - direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.
- Third party harassment – potential liability for the harassment of staff by others such as clients or customers.
- Victimisation – when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equalities Act or it is thought that they have done so.

## **Employment Practices**

A2O aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable in the context of the policy. Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Diversity and Equalities Policy. All training opportunities will be published widely to all appropriate employees and not in such a way so as to exclude particular groups.

The aim of the anti-discrimination strategy for staff development practices is to ensure that all staff development procedures incorporate anti-discriminatory principles and practice, ensuring equality of opportunity and outcome for all personnel. There are two key Objectives:

- a) To ensure that no member of the workforce is discriminated against.
- b) To ensure that all members of the workforce are enabled to perform their duties in an anti-discriminatory manner.

A2O will ensure that copies of all relevant policy statements relating to anti-discrimination, equality of opportunity, inclusion and diversity are accessible to all staff. All managers will ensure that their staff are made familiar with these policies and their content. All staff are entitled to training and development opportunities which will enable them to understand and implement anti-discriminatory principles and practices. A2O regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of staff, customers or others in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

**Service Provider:** In developing its products (qualifications); support materials (assessment handbooks and teacher materials) or its awarding organisation services (registration, entry, assessment, certification or web interfaces to the services) A2O will seek to ensure access to its customers and their learners. This will include, wherever practicable, making specific access arrangements for its customers and their learners with disabilities or learning difficulties, or any other protected characteristic which may apply, such as religion and belief. A2O will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.

**Data Collection:** A2O complies with the requirement of the Data Protection Act. Any data, either qualitative and or quantitative, required in order to monitor the requirements or the impact of the Equalities Act 2010, will be collected where it is reasonable, proportionate and practical to do so. Any such requirements will be notified to A2O customers and will follow a common data format.