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1. Introduction

IES is made up of a wide range of people with diverse backgrounds and circumstances, which we value and regard as a great asset.

It is the policy of IES Ltd to ensure equal employment opportunity for everyone without discrimination on the basis of any of the protected characteristics as defined in the UK by The Equality Act 2010 (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs, sex and sexual orientation) and in the Republic of Ireland by the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2011 (i.e. gender, marital status, family status, age, race, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation and membership of the Traveller community). This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, compensation, and training.

This policy covers all employees of IES Ltd, including applicants for employment and third parties over whom IES Ltd has control.

The business case for diversity includes:

- A wider choice of potential employees
- Access to a broader resource of skills and creativity
- Better understanding of markets and customers
- An enhanced business reputation
- A proactive approach to legislative compliance.

2. Guiding principles

- IES will treat all employees fairly and equally and will strive to create a productive environment representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups where everyone has an equal chance to succeed.
- IES will create a supportive working environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.

- IES will proactively challenge all stereotypes which may be associated with the protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act 2010.
- IES will make decisions on recruitment, termination, promotion, reward based on merit and performance considering skills and attitudes which are appropriate for the job.
- IES will ensure that appropriate adjustments are made in the workplace to enable all employees to achieve their full career potential. Some examples include:
 - changing the workplace layout to accommodate someone with a physical disability.
 - providing suitable rest facilities for workers who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

3. The protected characteristics

Age: applies to anybody regardless of how old or young they are.

Disability: a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Long term means that the condition must last or be likely to last for more than 12 months or that it is terminal.

Trans-gender Status: People who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment or those who decide to live as another gender but do not undergo any medical procedures are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment. IES will take positive steps to support a trans-gender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: relates to the marital or civil partnership (same sex) status of employees.

Pregnancy and Maternity: A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled.

Race: includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or Belief: any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief.

Sex relates to the gender of employees.

Sexual Orientation: means sexual orientation towards people of the same sex, the opposite sex or both the same and the opposite sex.

4. Types of discrimination

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic. For example see Annex 1a.

Discrimination by association

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example see Annex 1b.

Perception discrimination

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic. For example see Annex 1c.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is when a working condition or rule disadvantages one group of people more than another. For example see Annex 1d.

5. Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. IES will not tolerate harassment of our employees by other employees or by third parties such as customers or clients.

Examples of harassment

- unwanted physical contact
- unwelcome remarks about a person's age, dress, appearance, race or marital status
- jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, sectarian songs and letters
- posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting and emblems
- isolation or non-cooperation and exclusion from social activities
- coercion for sexual favours
- pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- intrusion by pestering, spying and stalking
- failure to safeguard confidential information
- shouting at staff
- setting impossible deadlines
- persistent criticism
- personal insults.

The above examples need not take place face-to-face to constitute harassment and staff should be aware of how they communicate with others online, for example via email or social networking

channels¹. Employees may complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them. For example see Annex 1e.

6. Reporting discrimination or harassment

IES Ltd requires that you report any incident of discrimination or harassment. If you believe you are being discriminated against, harassed or have observed harassment or discrimination, you should notify your line manager or, if this is not appropriate, you should notify a director or a member of the HR team.

Investigation

When an employee reports discrimination or harassment as specified above, IES Ltd will undertake a prompt investigation as may be appropriate under the circumstances. The steps to be taken during the investigation cannot be fixed in advance, but will vary depending upon the nature of the allegations. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigative process to the extent it is practicable and consistent with the need for IES Ltd. to undertake a full investigation.

Resolving the Matter

Upon completion of the investigation, appropriate remedial action will be taken, if necessary and supported by the facts. Remedial action may include oral or written counselling, referral to formal counselling, disciplinary action or probation, or dismissal from IES Ltd.

If you are in any doubt, or wish to discuss anything relating to diversity and equality, please contact the HR team.

¹ The company has produced guidelines on using social media, a copy of which can be obtained on Scotia, or from HR.

7. ANNEX 1a – 1e

Annex 1a

Direct discrimination

Paul, a senior manager, turns down Angela's application for promotion to a supervisor position. Angela, who is a lesbian, learns that Paul did this because he believes the team that she applied to manage are homophobic. Paul thought that Angela's sexual orientation would prevent her from gaining the team's respect and managing them effectively. This is direct sexual orientation discrimination against Angela.

Annex 1b

Discrimination by association

June works as a project manager and is looking forward to a promised promotion. However, after she tells her boss that her mother, who lives at home, has had a stroke, the promotion is withdrawn. This may be discrimination against June because of her association with a disabled person.

Annex 1c

Perception discrimination

Jim is 45 but looks much younger. Many people assume that he is in his mid 20s. He is not allowed to represent his company at an international meeting because the Managing Director thinks that he is too young. Jim has been discriminated against on the perception of a protected characteristic.

Annex 1d

Indirect discrimination

By saying that applicants for a job must be clean shaven puts members of some religious groups at a disadvantage.

Annex 1e

Harassment

Paul is disabled and is claiming harassment against his line manager after she frequently teased and humiliated him about his disability. Richard shares an office with Paul and he too is claiming harassment, even though he is not disabled, as the manager's behaviour has also created an offensive environment for him.