



## Equality, diversity and inclusion

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This policy reflects legislation and official guidance at the time it was last reviewed. Any changes in legislation will take precedence over anything printed in this policy. Where other policies are referred to they can be viewed at the Policy Library

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

#### Links with other school policies and practices

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies of our partner universities and links with the following other RSN policies and practices:

- Staff handbook
- Anti-harassment and bullying
- Code of conduct for volunteers
- Complaints
- Confidentiality/privacy
- GDPR
- Freedom of information
- Safeguarding
- Student code of conduct
- Wellbeing
- Grievance procedure
- Remote working

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the Royal School of Needlework's (**RSN**) policy on equality, diversity and inclusion and procedures to be applied.
- 1.2 Its aim is to provide equality of treatment, both as a provider of higher and vocational education to students and as an employer and to eliminate unlawful discrimination. Equal opportunities will continue to play a key role in the development of policy and day-to-day activity within the institution.
- 1.3 This policy represents the minimum we expect from our staff and others involved with the RSN. If applicable law requires a higher standard or additional requirements then these must be adhered to.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of your contract of employment.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to the RSN's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to Members of the Council and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not its employees, but who work at the RSN (collectively the "**Workforce**") and to its students.
- 2.2 All of the Workforce and students have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat each other with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of the Workforce or students, whether junior or senior to them.
- 2.3 The policy statement applies equally to the treatment of its visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by the Workforce and students and the treatment of the Workforce and students by these third parties.

2.4 All forms of discrimination protected under of The Equality Act 2010 will be dealt with according to the RSN's disciplinary procedures covering the Workforce and students to ensure that no one is discriminated against because of the characteristics of :

- Gender/sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Disability
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin)
- Age
- Marital or civil partner status
- Religion or belief

Other forms of discrimination will also be dealt with according to the RSN's disciplinary procedures covering the Workforce and students to ensure that no one is discriminated against because of the characteristics of :

- Trade Union membership
- Part-time or fixed term status
- Pay and benefits
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Dealing with grievances and discipline
- Dismissal
- Redundancy
- Leave for parents
- Requests for flexible working due to disability or impairment
- Selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

2.5 This policy also applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to termination of employment, including redundancy.

### **3 Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Personnel responsible for implementation of policy**

3.1.1 The Council of the RSN holds ultimate responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for complying with its legislative obligations.

3.1.2 The Chief Executive will be responsible for:-

- ensuring that the policy is implemented and that sufficient resources are allocated for that purpose;
- designating a member of the Senior Management Team to be responsible for facilitating, co-coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this policy on an institution-wide basis; and
- ensuring that the operating of the Equality and Diversity Policy throughout the Degree provision at the Royal School of Needlework adheres to the policy of the University for the Creative Arts or Kingston University as appropriate and the reports and recommendation by the Council.

## **3.2 Breaches of this policy**

- 3.2.1 All members of the Workforce and students are responsible for supporting the organisation in meeting its commitment and avoiding unlawful discrimination. If you experience a level of discomfort or disagreement with something that happens when you are at work, you are encouraged to bring it to the attention of a manager or someone in authority.
- 3.2.2 It is possible that others are not aware or have not considered the impact of their actions, have not understood the RSN policy, or possibly RSN practices need to be updated.
- 3.2.3 If you believe that you have been discriminated against you should report this to your line manager or Human Resources representative under the grievance procedure. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

The RSN takes any complaint seriously and you will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

- 3.2.4 If you witness what you believe to be discrimination you should report this to your line manager or Human Resources representative as soon as possible.

If the concern is about the Human Resources representative the Chief Executive should be contacted.

If a concern is about the Chief Executive then the Chair of the Council should be contacted instead and they will then be responsible for dealing with the concern.

- 3.2.5 Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.
- 3.2.6 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against the Workforce and students or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the RSN disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.
- 3.2.7 If you are bullied or harassed by a client, customer, supplier, contractor, visitor or others, or if you witness someone else being bullied or harassed, you are asked to report this to your manager who will take appropriate action.
- 3.2.8 The RSN will not discriminate unlawfully against service users using or seeking to use the services we provide.

## **3.3 Monitoring and revision of the policy**

The Council of the RSN will consider annually the information published under this policy and any proposals made by the Senior Management Team through the Chief Executive for the review of this policy.

- 3.3.1 Following such consideration the Council may review and amend this policy.
- 3.3.2 The RSN will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving the aims by monitoring the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career

progression of its Workforce and student application, enrolment, progression and achievement.

- 3.3.3 The RSN is committed to providing relevant training for all members of the Workforce and students on their responsibilities and duties under this policy.

#### **4. Principles**

- 4.1 The RSN shall, at all times, strive to work within legislative requirements as well as promoting best practice in order to protect and enhance the rights of the Workforce and students and to promote equality of opportunity.
- 4.2 The RSN is committed to providing a learning, working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its Workforce and students are respected and which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment including bullying.

#### **5. Definitions**

##### **Service user**

- A service user includes all clients and customers of the studio and shop, students attending all courses, attendees at talks, exhibitions and other such events.

##### **Student**

- Student includes all individuals attending courses of any type at the RSN.

##### **Types of unlawful discrimination**

- **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. However, discrimination may be lawful if there is an occupational requirement which is core to a job role and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Indirect discrimination** means putting in place, a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.
- **Harassment** is where there is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
- **Associative discrimination** is where the individual treated less favourably does not have a protected characteristic but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does (for example the parent of a disabled child).
- **Perceptive discrimination** is where the individual discriminated against or harassed does not have a protected characteristic, but they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.

- **Third-party harassment** occurs where a member of the Workforce or student is harassed by third parties such as service users, due to a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act. For example, because they have supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** is where a rule or policy or way of doing things has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make a reasonable adjustment. Whilst the Equality Act refers to reasonable adjustments with regards to disability, it may also be discriminatory to ignore making reasonable adjustments for people with other protected characteristics (for example, to enable someone to respect a religious belief, providing gender neutral toilets, making adjustments for a woman experiencing severe menopausal symptoms etc).

### **Reasonable adjustments**

A 'reasonable adjustment' is a change to remove or reduce the effect of:

- a member of the Workforce or student's disability so they can do their job
- a job applicant's requests regarding their disability when applying for a job

What is reasonable will depend on the circumstances of each case, but adjustments could be to:

- the workplace (making changes to overcome barriers created by the physical workplace)
- the ways things are done (where the disabled job member of the Workforce is put at a substantial disadvantage by a provision, criterion or practice).
- providing extra equipment or getting someone to assist the member of the Workforce, student or job applicant

When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable we will consider:

- how effective the change will be in avoiding the disadvantage to the member of the Workforce or student would otherwise experience
- its practicality
- the cost
- our resources and size
- the availability of financial support.

The overall aim will be, as far as possible, to remove or reduce any substantial disadvantage faced by a member of the Workforce, student or job applicant which would not be faced by a non-disabled person.