

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Policy statement

The Company is an equal opportunity organisation and is committed to a policy of treating all its staff, volunteers and customers equally. Wightmore School of Dance is committed to promoting equality of opportunities for all, and to ensure no individual is discriminated against in planning and delivering our dance school activities.

It is the policy of the Company to take all reasonable steps to appoint, train and develop staff, volunteers and dancers on the basis of their abilities and qualifications without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex and/or sexual orientation. In this policy, these are known as the 'protected characteristics'. The Company will appoint, train, develop and promote staff on the basis of merit and ability alone.

All staff and volunteers have a duty to co-operate with the Company to ensure that this policy is effective to ensure equal opportunities and to prevent discrimination. Action under the Company's disciplinary procedure will be taken against any member of staff/volunteer who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of the equal opportunities policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the teacher/volunteer liable to summary dismissal. Staff and volunteers should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination.

Staff, volunteers must not harass, bully or intimidate other members and customers at Wightmore School of Dance for reasons related to one or more of the protected characteristics. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under the Company's disciplinary procedure. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

All staff and volunteers should draw the attention of the Principal to suspected discriminatory acts or practices. Volunteers and staff must not victimise or retaliate against staff, teachers, volunteers, customers who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who has provided information about such discrimination. Such behaviour will be treated as potential gross misconduct under the Company's disciplinary procedure. All staff/volunteers should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when, because of one of the protected characteristics, a student, teacher, volunteer, staff member is treated less favourably than other members of Wightmore School of Dance members are treated or would be treated.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to eliminate direct discrimination in all aspects of its services.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is treatment that may be equal in the sense that it applies to all staff members, volunteers, customers but which is discriminatory in its effect on, for example, one particular sex or racial group.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to eliminate indirect discrimination in all aspects of company.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when someone is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion, because they have raised or supported a grievance or complaint of unlawful discrimination, or they have given evidence in connection with unlawful discrimination proceedings brought by another member of the company. However, a company member is not protected if they give false evidence or information, or make a false allegation, and they do so in bad faith.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to eliminate victimisation in all aspects of the company.

Sources of recruitment

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in respect of abilities and qualifications. The Company is committed to applying its equal opportunities policy at all stages of recruitment and selection.

Selection methods

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels.

The selection of new staff/volunteers will be based on the job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question. Person specifications and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment, promotion or transfer will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job.

With disabled job applicants, the Company will have regard to its duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria or practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

Selection tests

Any selection tests which are used will be limited to questions relating to the particular job and/or career requirements. The tests will measure the individual's actual or inherent ability to do or to train for the work or career. Thus, questions or exercises on matters which may be unfamiliar to applicants with a particular protected characteristic will not be included in the tests if they are unrelated to the requirements of the particular job. The tests which are used will be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure that they remain relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism.

Applications and interviewing

All applications will be processed in the same way. The staff responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application.

Wherever possible, all applicants will be interviewed by at least two interviewers. All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job.

If it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job (for example, if the job involves unsociable hours or extensive travel), this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on assumptions about any of the protected characteristics.

Training, transfer and promotion

The Company will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all staff in order to familiarise them with the Company's policy on equal

opportunities, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible. The training will also enable the principal to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

The Company will also provide training to all staff/volunteers to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the Company's equal opportunities and dignity at work policies and what they can do to create a work environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

All persons responsible for selecting new company members, staff for training or staff for transfer or promotion to other jobs will be instructed not to discriminate because of one or more of the protected characteristics.

When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular protected characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, the Company's systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

Grievances and complaints

All allegations of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily. The Company will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints about unlawful discrimination from volunteers, staff. Such complaints should be raised promptly under the terms of the Company's grievance procedure.

If the complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

Employees will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if it is not upheld, unless the complaint was both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring equal opportunity

The Company will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity is being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its standard working practices. If changes are required, the Company will implement them. The Company will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome substantial disadvantages caused by disability.