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## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

EPS actively supports legislation for Human Rights, Age Discrimination, Sex Discrimination and Race Relations. Our ethos is to respect and value people's differences, to help everyone achieve more at work as well as in their personal lives so that they feel proud of the part they play in business success.

We believe that all decisions about people at work should be based on the individual's abilities, skills, performance and behaviour and our business requirements. Questions about an individual's race, colour, marital status, age, religion, sex or sexual orientation are never relevant to our business. Issues of disability should only be considered against the particular requirements of the job. Our policy must be strictly adhered to by all our team. Discrimination, abuse or harassment will result in disciplinary action being taken including dismissal for serious cases.

It is the responsibility of all staff in their daily actions, decisions and behaviour to endeavour to promote these concepts, to comply with all relevant legislation and to ensure that they do not discriminate against colleagues, customers, suppliers or any other person associated with the Company.

In adopting these principles EPS:

- Will not tolerate acts that breach this policy and all such breaches or alleged breaches will be taken seriously, be fully investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action where appropriate
- Fully recognises its legal obligations under all relevant legislation and codes of practice
- Will allow staff to pursue any matter through the internal procedures which they believe has exposed them to inequitable treatment within the scope of this policy
- Will ensure that all managers understand and maintain their responsibilities and those of their team under this policy
- Will offer opportunities for flexible working patterns, wherever operationally feasible, to help employees to combine a career with their domestic responsibilities
- Will provide equal opportunity to all who apply for vacancies through open competition
- Will select candidates only on the basis of their ability to carry out the job, using a clear and open process
- Will provide all employees with the training and development that they need to carry out their job effectively
- Will provide all reasonable assistance to employees who are or who become disabled, making reasonable adjustments wherever possible to provide continued employment. We will ensure an appropriate risk assessment is carried out and that appropriate specialist advice is obtained when necessary
- Will distribute and publicise this policy statement throughout the Company



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## Dignity at Work

The Company believes that the working environment should at all times be supportive of the dignity and respect of individuals. If a complaint of harassment is brought to the attention of management, it will be investigated promptly and appropriate action will be taken.

### What and How of Harassment

Harassment can be defined as conduct, which is unwanted and offensive and affects the dignity of an individual or group of individuals.

Sexual harassment is defined as “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of women and men at work”. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct.

People can be subject to harassment on a wide variety of grounds including:

- race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour
- sex or sexual orientation
- religious or political convictions
- willingness to challenge harassment, leading to victimisation
- disabilities, sensory impairments or learning difficulties
- status as ex-offenders
- age
- real or suspected infection with a blood borne virus (eg AIDS/HIV)
- membership of a trade union or activities associated with membership

Forms may include:

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
- verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander, sectarian songs, letters and so on
- visual display of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags and emblems
- isolation or non-cooperation at work, exclusion from social activities
- coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- intrusion by pestering, spying, following someone
- bullying



If you feel you are being harassed you are strongly encouraged to seek early advice/support from your line manager. If you feel your line manager is harassing you, then you should contact his/her immediate line manager. You should also keep a written record detailing the incidents of harassment and any requests made to the harasser to stop. This written record should be made as soon as possible after the events giving rise to concern and should include dates, times, places and the circumstances of what happened.

### **Diversity/Religious Observance**

The Company respects all religious faiths, beliefs and practices equally as they are represented within the workplace. All employees have the right, within the law, to religious freedom and to the peaceful practice and expression of their religious faith, including the beliefs, values and practices involved in them. As part of our culture is the expectation and requirement that religious groups and adherents of all faiths within the Company should accord full respect to the religious faith, beliefs, values and practices of others, and for those who subscribe to no faith.

The legitimate right of religious people, within the law, to religious freedom and the peaceful practice and expression of religious faith should be demonstrated by consideration and by a concern for the freedom and dignity of those of differing religious faith and of those subscribing to none. In practice this implies:

- Respect for another person's expressed wish to be left alone
- The avoidance of the imposition of religious views on individuals who are in vulnerable situations in ways which exploit these
- The avoidance of violent action or language, threats, manipulation, improper inducements or the misuse of any kind of power
- Respect for the right of others to disagree

Disregard for any of the above will be considered a breach of the fundamental principle of respect for others, and may constitute harassment.

### **Dress Code**

The Company welcomes the variety of appearance brought by individual styles, customs and personal choices. The wearing of items arising from particular religious norms (e.g. hijab, kippah, mangalsutra and clerical collar) is seen as part of a welcome diversity. Only health and safety requirements may mean that for certain tasks specific items of clothing such as overalls, protective clothing etc need to be worn. If such clothing produces a conflict with an individual's religious belief, the issue will be sympathetically considered by the line manager or academic supervisor, with the aim of finding a satisfactory resolution that does not compromise the health and safety of any Company employees, customers or business partners.

Wearing slogans or symbols which are discriminatory (e.g. racist or sexist) is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with accordingly.



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## **Religious Observance**

For many religious people the daily practice of corporate, personal or private prayer is a primary responsibility and one of the ways in which religious practice constitutes and sustains a sense of personal identity. Adherents of a religion should advise their line manager, if they have any special requirements in this regard. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that if other staff or students are affected by an individual's spiritual needs, a reasonable degree of respect and understanding is exercised between them and a sensible solution found.

Where facilities are sought by employees, the Company will make reasonable effort to provide accommodation (with appropriate additional facilities, such as washing facilities, nearby).

## **Working Hours**

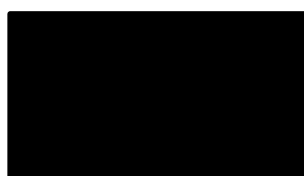
All staff, without exception, are required to work in accordance with their contract, although there is normally some flexibility over how the hours are worked. Where the hours conflict with religious beliefs please speak to your Line Manager and we will try to respond sympathetically whilst meeting the needs of the business.

## **Approved Absence for Religious Festivals**

Appropriate and sympathetic consideration will be given by line managers to requests for leave from employees specifically wishing to participate in their religious festivals where these are not covered by UK Public Holidays. Good communication, well in advance of the festival in question is essential in fostering flexible and appropriate responses. Staff should advise line managers of leave requests for the coming year at the start of the leave year, or on joining the Company. Line managers should follow the normal holiday request format for granting annual leave and in exceptional circumstances, unpaid leave, to facilitate these requests.

Whilst such requests will not be refused unreasonably without adequate explanation, it must be appreciated that managers must always ensure the service to our customers does not suffer.

Signed:



Position: Director

Next Review Date: June 2022