



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Complied by: Head, HR Print Name: Meftah Yahya Signature: _____ Date: _____	Approved by the Executive Director/Advisory Board Print Name: Signature: _____ Date: _____
Creation Date: August 2022	Next Review Date: July 2025
Related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safer Recruitment Policy• Code of Conduct• Behaviour Policy	Policy Superseded by this Policy: N/A

Introduction

Bridge House College is committed to achieving equal opportunities, respects and values diversity, and is committed to applying equality of opportunity in all its practices and objective/service delivery with regard to ethnic origin, age, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status and disability or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue.

Bridge House College Advisory Board/Committee Members have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all Committee Members, Volunteers and Service users have a duty as part of their involvement with Bridge House College to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice.

The Senior Leadership Team of Bridge House College will bring to the attention of all committee members and volunteers the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

Reference to the policy should be included on the advert and in the contract documents with outside agencies.

Equal Opportunities Policy Implementation

As a provider of services to the community, Bridge House College accepts responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

We will actively monitor all activities to ensure that we are serving the needs of all communities and groups.

It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and service users to ensure that no other committee member, volunteer or service user receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of age, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status or gender.

BHC will encourage its committee, volunteers and the staff of any organization working with college to take positive steps to ensure that the needs of minority communities and disadvantaged people are met.

We will listen carefully to what people tell us they need from Bridge House College and do everything in our power and within our resources to ensure their needs are met.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed every three (3) years or when new legislation requires it.

Physical Access

Bridge House College premises will be reviewed regularly so that access by committee, staff and users with disabilities can be maintained and improved where necessary.

Recruitment and Employment Practices

Bridge House College recognises that everyone has a contribution to make to our society and a right to equal opportunity.

We aim to promote equal opportunities, eliminate discrimination and eliminate harassment through the following:

- Opposing all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- All employees (whether part-time, full-time or temporary), volunteers, members, and beneficiaries will be treated fairly and with respect.
- All vacancies will be advertised internally and externally simultaneously and will include a statement on equal opportunities.
- Selection for employment/volunteering, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All selection/rejection decisions will be recorded.
- All employees/volunteers/members will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of individuals will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

All employees/volunteers/members have a legal and moral obligation not to discriminate and to report incidents of discrimination against any individual or group of individuals to the Head, HR.

Our equal opportunity employer policy reflects our commitment to ensure equality and promote diversity in the workplace.

This equal employment opportunity policy is the pillar of a healthy and productive workplace. Everyone should feel supported and valued to work productively so we are invested in treating everyone with respect and consideration.

Scope

Our equal opportunity employer policy applies to all employees, job candidates, vendors, contractors, stakeholders, partners and visitors.

Equal opportunity is for everyone, but it mainly concerns members of underrepresented groups – they're the ones who are traditionally disadvantaged in the workplace. We don't guarantee employment or promotions for people in those groups, but we will treat them fairly and avoid discriminating against them either via conscious or unconscious biases.

Policy Elements

Being an equal opportunity employer means that we provide the same opportunities for hiring, advancement and benefits to everyone without discriminating due to protected characteristics like:

- Age,
- Gender (including sex, marriage, gender re-assignment);
- Sexual orientation;
- Religion or belief;
- Disability,
- Medical history
- Social status
- Race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin)

We built our equal employment opportunity policy around preventive and affirmative actions to ensure fairness in all aspects of employment. These aspects include:

- Hiring
- Training
- Evaluating performance
- Administering compensation and benefits
- Disengagement/Terminating employees

We also want to make sure that equal opportunity applies to other instances. For example, we don't retaliate against employees and we are committed to prevent and resolve any kind of harassment against our employees, including sexual harassment.

Our HR department is responsible for assessing our company's processes and ensuring they are bias-free. Whenever we find biases interfering, we will act immediately to refine our processes, train our people to combat their biases and protect possible victims of discrimination. We will give everyone the chance to work in an environment where their rights are respected.

Our Commitment and Actions

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff, volunteers, members and beneficiaries are recognised and valued.
- Every employee, volunteer, member and beneficiary is entitled to be part of an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff/volunteers.
- Equality is good management practice and makes sound sense. Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings or membership disqualification.
- This policy is fully supported by the management committee and has been agreed with members and/or employee representatives.

We will also take additional actions to promote fairness and diversity as part of our equal employment opportunity policy. We will:

- Use inclusive language in all signs, documents and webpages.
- Modify structures and facilities to accommodate people with disabilities.
- Provide parental leave and flexible work arrangement policies.
- Hire, train and evaluate employees through job-related criteria.
- Allow employees to take religious or national holidays that aren't included in our college's official schedule.
- Train employees on communication and diversity.
- Implement open door practices so employees can report discrimination more easily.

It is vitally important that Bridge House College committee members/staff understand the full diversity of their clientele.

As far as it lies within our power, we will ensure that our recruitment processes are designed to ensure equal access for all.

All committee or job vacancies will initially be advertised internally to encourage service users and volunteers to apply.

We will design our committee role or job specifications to allow for as wide as possible a range of transferable experience and qualifications to be taken into account.

Application forms will make it clear that life experience as well as formal qualifications and work experience is valid.

During a recruitment process, Bridge House College will take into account the guidelines set out in Nigerian Labour Law on Equal Opportunities Policy.

Grievance Procedure

Advisory Board members, Principal, Vice Principals, HoDs and all Supervisors are responsible to use equal opportunity practices and make decisions based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria. Everyone should comply with our policy at all times.

If you see or suspect that our equal opportunity policy is being violated, feel free to inform Head, HR immediately. If you suspect that someone is behaving in a wrong way but doesn't realize it, you could also talk to him/her directly.

Disciplinary Consequences

When someone discriminates, they will be subject to disciplinary action depending on the severity of their actions. For example, unintentionally offending a co-worker might warrant a reprimand, but harassing someone systematically might result in demotion or termination/disengagement.

The successful implementation of this policy depends on the awareness and commitment of all staff/volunteers/members of the management committee. Hence, all new staff/volunteers/members of the management committee will be made aware of its existence and on joining the organisation, and reminded they must conform to it on a regular basis.

Thank you

Name: _____ **Position:** _____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____