



Equal Opportunity Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy provides information concerning equal opportunities and provides guidelines for Staff and Volunteers on good practice. It applies to all Members of Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church.

2. Context

Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church recognises the value of equal opportunities and seeks, wherever possible, to follow the guidelines drawn up by the relevant statutory body.

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28)

3. Definitions

Discrimination = any unlawful discrimination

Although there may be circumstances justifying different treatment, which are not unlawful (for example to comply with a genuine occupational requirement for a position), Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church will not tolerate unlawful discrimination and/or harassment on the grounds of an individual's sex, race, marital status, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, religious belief, union membership, union activities, or employment status. Any reference to discrimination in this policy includes all such possible grounds.

4. POLICY

In relation to matters of religion and belief, Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church reserves the right to appoint Staff who are loyal to the Christian ethos of the Church in order to preserve its distinctiveness in accordance with the Employment Equality Regulations 2003. This is a Christian Church which seeks to operate in and for the name of Christ and those who work in the Church must be in sympathy with the evangelical Christian beliefs as set out in the Church's Basis of Faith and their promotion. For some posts within Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church, more than a loyalty to the Christian ethos of the Church is required and these posts are recognised as having Genuine Occupational Requirements. Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church recognises that Tunbridge Wells has a rich diversity of cultures from around the world and seeks to bring Christian witness equally to all cultures. Accordingly, Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church is committed to equal opportunity, and it is its policy to treat Job Applicants, Employees and Suppliers in the same way, subject to requiring Employees to adhere to the Church's ethos statement and staff code of conduct.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church is an equal opportunity employer. Equal opportunity is about ensuring good employment practices and efficient use of the Church's most valuable resources, its Employees. Every Trustee and Employee has personal responsibility for implementing the policy.

Any instance of doubt about the application of this policy, or other questions, should be directed to the Trustees.

This policy applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and selection, training, conditions of work, pay and to every other aspect of employment. Staff involved in recruitment should request training if they have any doubt about the application of this policy.

Any Member of Staff may use the grievance procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to unlawful harassment, then the grievance may be raised directly with the Trustees. Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church is concerned to ensure that Staff feel able to raise such grievances and no individual will be penalised for raising such a grievance unless it is untrue and made in bad faith.

The policy also applies equally to the treatment of worshippers, visitors or suppliers. Any concern related to the unequal treatment of worshippers, visitors or suppliers should be directed to the Trustees.

Any employee who unlawfully harasses any other employee in the course of their employment will be subject to the Church's disciplinary procedure. In serious cases, such behaviour will be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and, as such, will result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

These equal opportunities statement and equal opportunities policy reflect both the mission and purpose of Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church and the spirit and intentions of legislation which outlaws discrimination.

Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church will not unlawfully discriminate or subject any individual (Job Applicant, Staff Member or Volunteer) to less favourable treatment.

Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church aims to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal opportunity to enter employment. In so doing, it will fully consider making reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises to ensure that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability.

In addition, when Staff Members become disabled in the course of their employment, every effort will be made through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment to enable them to remain in the employment of the Church.

After taking into account any genuine occupational requirement, entry into employment and promotion or change of post within Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church is determined by personal merit and ability, relevant to the mission and purpose of the Church.

It is the responsibility of every individual, both Staff Members and Volunteers, to eliminate discrimination by ensuring the practical application of the equal opportunities policy and reporting concerns about any possible breach of this policy to the Trustees. All allegations of discrimination (including harassment) will be treated seriously. Any unlawful discrimination is totally unacceptable to Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church and offenders will face disciplinary action.

Approved: Oct 2019

Reviewed: Oct 2022

Next Review: Oct 2023