

# **Equal Opportunities Policy**

## **General Aim**

As a Christian Church, King's Church Eden is committed to seeking to treat all people as having equal value in God's sight and therefore to treating all people involved with the church and outside in any situation with fairness, dignity and respect.

## **Policy**

King's Church Eden's policy and commitment is to ensure that all who come into contact with the church in any way are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, politics, marital status, or disability. This includes those applying for employment and those who have ceased to be employed by the church.

For those applying for employment or promotion in the church, both in a paid and a voluntary capacity, specific criteria may apply for jobs which have Genuine Occupational Requirements.

## **Responsibility of supervisors**

It is the responsibility of all in supervisory positions (trustees, Leaders etc) to treat all employees in the accordance with the above General Aim and to ensure that all who come into contact with the church are treated by them with fairness and respect. This involves:

- Promoting this policy with staff including making employees aware, if necessary, of the implications of the Criminal Justice Act 1994 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 which make harassment in person or by electronic means a criminal offence.
- Preventing and punishing misconduct. Conduct such as sexual, racial, disability or religious harassment, insulting comments or actions by whatever means; bullying; intimidation; swearing; initiation rites or 'ceremonies' etc. is totally unacceptable and a ground for disciplinary action.
- Encouraging an environment in which concerns are expressed and dealt with openly and speedily.
- Avoiding prejudice so that all actions or decisions relating to staffing are to be based only on the ability of an applicant or employee to perform the job, that no prejudicial judgement is made and that this can be demonstrated.
- Encouraging employee relationships and team development. All employees should be encouraged to succeed individually and as team members.
- Ensuring all employees have equal opportunity of access to training and development.

## **Responsibility of others**

All who are a part of the formal structure of the church whether as trustees, employees, or voluntary workers are required to ensure that this policy is fully complied with in all dealings within the church and with those with whom they come into contact in any way related to the work of the church.

## **Disciplinary action**

Breach of this policy will lead to disciplinary action and in some cases might lead to criminal prosecution and civil action resulting in fines, imprisonment or damages.

## **Complaint and investigation**

Any person who believes that they have been treated in a way that breaches this policy should report the matter to a senior leader or trustee of the church. Investigation will take place as quickly as possible. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of all parties at least until the investigation is complete.

The complainant needs to supply all necessary information to the leader or trustee preferably in writing, including:

- Details of what took place: time, place, circumstances etc.
- Names of any witnesses.
- Extra information if there are any others believed to have been treated similarly or similar situations.

The investigator will report the result of their investigation where possible within one week together with any action or outcome.

## **Sanctions and other action**

As a minimum (if the allegation is substantiated) the person in breach will be instructed to refrain from any similar action in the future and to make apology to the aggrieved person. Failure to comply will be regarded as gross misconduct

Depending on the severity of the breach other sanctions may be applied. In determining the sanction applied, the views of the victim may be taken into consideration.

Since obtaining a good working environment is an objective, consideration will be given to other practical steps such as counselling support for the person aggrieved, (and possibly also the person causing the harassment or discrimination), moving the place of work of one of the parties (preferably the person who has been the cause of the problem) if this is practicable.

## **CONDUCT**

King's Church Eden's objective is to make known the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ in appropriate ways. To that end it is expected that all employees (as well as Volunteers) will maintain high standards of personal conduct both within and outside the work. All working for the church are expected to be good role models and to align their lifestyle to the gospel which they proclaim.

If an employee's conduct at any time is considered to be damaging to the testimony of the church to the gospel, disciplinary action may be invoked.

King's Church Eden recognizes that we all fall short of perfection, but conduct inconsistent with the following beliefs is likely to result in termination of contract as being inconsistent with good Christian testimony.

- Monogamous heterosexual marriage is the form of partnership uniquely intended by God for full sexual relationships between people and that habitual sexual activity outside heterosexual marriage without repentance is inconsistent with employment by, or work with, King's Church Eden.
- King's Church Eden recognises God does not require people to abstain from drinking alcohol, he does not expect people to become drunk. King's Church Eden expects those who work for it to adhere to the letter and spirit of the law on under age drinking.
- God considers our bodies to be temples of the Holy Spirit and consequently that we should not damage our bodies. King's Church Eden therefore requires all its employees to adhere to the law on the possession and use of controlled drugs and considers it inappropriate for employees and volunteer workers to consume these drugs at any time.