**DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) POLICY**

**PURPOSE**

[EMPLOYER’S NAME] is dedicated to fostering equal opportunities in employment and building a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusion, ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

As part of our zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, we provide equal treatment to all employees, job applicants, and those we interact with as an organization, including customers and suppliers, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

[EMPLOYER’S NAME] is committed to complying with all applicable Maryland state laws and regulations in promoting equal opportunities and ensuring non-discrimination in the workplace, aligning our practices with legal requirements to protect diversity and inclusion.

**COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

This policy outlines our approach to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. We aim to actively promote a culture that values individual differences and eliminates discrimination across all aspects of employment. This includes recruitment, pay, benefits, working conditions, flexible working arrangements, training, appraisals, promotions, workplace conduct, disciplinary procedures, and termination of employment.

The policy applies to everyone associated with [EMPLOYER'S NAME], including employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers, and agency workers.

[POSITION] is responsible for overseeing this policy and will review it annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.

This policy does not form part of any employment contract or other service agreement. [EMPLOYER'S NAME] reserves the right to amend it at any time.

**AWARENESS THROUGH TRAINING**

Managers will receive tailored training to recognize and prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimization, while fostering equality and diversity in recruitment, development, and promotions. [POSITION] is responsible for implementing this training program for both managers and staff.

All staff will participate in regular training sessions to fully understand and adhere to this policy [and the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy]. After completing training, confirmation of understanding and compliance with these policies will be required. [We are committed to providing ongoing equality and diversity training on a regular basis or every [NUMBER] months.]

**UPHOLDING FAIR TREATMENT**

You must not engage in unlawful discrimination or harassment against anyone, including staff, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, or visitors. This applies in all work-related settings, whether in the workplace, during work-related activities, or when representing [EMPLOYER'S NAME].

The following forms of discrimination are strictly prohibited and unlawful under this policy:

* Direct discrimination: Treating someone unfavorably because of a protected class. For example, rejecting a candidate based on their religious beliefs or presumed sexual orientation.
* Indirect discrimination: Policies or practices that apply broadly but disproportionately disadvantage individuals within a specific protected class and lack a valid business justification. For instance, requiring full-time work when part-time work would suffice may disadvantage women due to caregiving responsibilities and could constitute indirect discrimination unless justified.
* Harassment: This includes sexual harassment and other unwelcome conduct related to a protected class that violates someone's dignity or creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment. [Refer to our Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy for further details.].
* Retaliation: Retaliating against someone for raising concerns about discrimination or harassment, or for supporting another person’s complaint. This includes mistaken assumptions about their involvement.
* Disability discrimination: Includes both direct and indirect discrimination, unfavorable treatment due to the effects of a disability, and failure to provide reasonable accommodations to address disadvantages caused by a disability.

**ENSURING FAIR RECRUITMENT PRACTICES**

Recruitment, promotion, and other selection activities, such as redundancy decisions, must be based solely on merit and objective criteria to prevent discrimination. Our goal is to enhance workforce diversity and provide equal opportunities during recruitment and promotion processes. Where possible, shortlisting [and interviewing] should involve multiple people to ensure fairness. Recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to confirm candidates are assessed objectively based on their qualifications and abilities.

Diverse advertising

Job openings should generally be advertised to reach a broad and diverse audience. Advertisements must avoid stereotyping or discouraging specific groups from applying. [They should include a brief statement highlighting our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and note that a copy of this policy is available upon request.]

Avoiding discriminatory questions

Job applicants must not be asked questions that could imply an intention to discriminate based on a protected class. For instance, questions about pregnancy or plans to have children are prohibited.

Health and disability inquiries

Questions about health or disabilities must not be asked before a job offer is extended, except in limited legal circumstances. These include assessing whether the applicant can perform an essential job function (with reasonable adjustments) or determining if accommodations are needed during the interview. Conditional job offers may require satisfactory medical checks. Health or disability inquiries may be part of equal opportunities monitoring forms but must not influence hiring decisions.

**VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY**

We are legally required to verify that all employees are authorized to work in the United States. Assumptions about an individual's immigration or citizenship status must not be made based on appearance, accent, or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of citizenship status, must provide original documentation (e.g., a passport, Permanent Resident Card, or other documents specified on Form I-9) before starting employment, as required by federal immigration laws. A complete list of acceptable documents is available from the HR Department or the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

**SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES**

If you have a disability or develop one during your employment, we encourage you to inform [EMPLOYER'S NAME] about your condition. This will enable us to assess and implement reasonable adjustments or provide appropriate support to help you perform your role effectively.

**FAIR TREATMENT FOR PART-TIME AND FIXED-TERM STAFF**

Part-time and fixed-term employees will receive the same treatment as comparable full-time or permanent employees. Their terms and conditions will not be less favorable, except where different treatment can be justified. Pro-rata adjustments will apply where appropriate.

**POLICY BREACHES**

We take breaches of this policy seriously, and they will be addressed in line with our disciplinary procedures. Intentional acts of discrimination, harassment, or victimization could lead to disciplinary action, including potential dismissal for gross misconduct.

If you experience or witness harassment, discrimination, or bullying, you are encouraged to report the issue [using the process outlined in this policy] [through our Grievance Procedure] [or Anti-harassment and Bullying policy]. All complaints will be handled confidentially and investigated appropriately.

Retaliation or victimization against those who report or complain about discrimination is strictly prohibited. If you believe you have been victimized for reporting such issues, or have observed this happening to someone else, you should report it through [the procedure outlined in this policy OR the Grievance Procedure].

Reporting potential discrimination helps us uphold diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. However, knowingly making false accusations will be considered misconduct and addressed under our disciplinary procedures.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT AND REVIEW**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (employee name), acknowledge that on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date), I received and reviewed a copy of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]’s [NAME OF POLICY]. I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the policy and adhere to its terms.

I also acknowledge that this policy is not intended to create an employment contract or alter my at-will employment status, unless otherwise specified in a written agreement signed by an authorized representative of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]. Any delay or failure by [EMPLOYER'S NAME] to enforce the provisions of this policy does not constitute a waiver of its rights to enforce them in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date