



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Blairgowrie Parish Church

The Church of Scotland seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities. In pursuit of this purpose, we are committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion and want every member, adherent, volunteer and worker to feel respected and able to give their best.

The congregation commits to:

- Providing an environment of equality, fairness and respect for all our members, adherents, volunteers and workers, whether temporary, part-time or full-time;
- not unlawfully discriminating on grounds of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation;
- opposing all forms of unlawful discrimination including in recruitment, pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities;
- Developing awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion among our volunteers and workers as a matter of good practice;
- Creating an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all volunteers and workers are recognised and valued.
- Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow volunteers and workers, members of the congregation or those in contact with us and the wider community and any others in the course of the congregation's activities.

Such acts may be dealt with as misconduct. If the misconduct arises from a volunteer role the volunteer may be asked to immediately vacate the role. If the misconduct arises from an employed role the congregation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures may be engaged and appropriate action thereunder taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, certain conduct, including sexual harassment, may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

- Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all volunteers and workers, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential.

- Reviewing employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and adherence to legal requirements, including updating policies and/or contracts when required.
- Maintaining an awareness of the make-up of our membership and workforce in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this equality, diversity and inclusion policy. This will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy are working in practice, reviewing them annually and considering and acting to address any issues.

This equality, diversity and inclusion policy is supported by the Kirk Session.

Details of the congregation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in our contracts of employment, including with whom an employee should raise a grievance. This will usually be their line manager.

If a volunteer considers that this policy is not being honoured, the volunteer's first point of contact should be the Session Clerk.