

SLOUGH BAPTIST CHURCH POLICY	Equality Policy
POLICY NUMBER: SBCP-05	



Primary Responsibility:	Secretary	
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DISTRIBUTION

Original	Slough Baptist Church Office
Copy	Website (PDF)

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Church meets its vision to be a place of welcome to all, to ensure that there is no discrimination in any area of church life, and to fulfil our obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

In addition, we will conform to best practices and any guidelines given by the Baptist Union:

- [Guideline Leaflet L09: Equality law and your church](#)
- [L09A – Equality law and recruitment – can we justify employing a Christian?](#)
- [L09B – Equality law and recruitment – the organised religion exception](#)
- [L09C – Equality law and the importance of defining your Christian ethos](#)
- [L09D – Equality law: goods, facilities and services](#)
- [L09E – Equality law and your church membership and leadership](#)

2. Policy

Slough Baptist Church is committed to a Biblical approach to Equality. This means our primary guide as to how we treat staff, members and visitors is the Bible, and secondarily, all applicable laws. In accordance with our understanding of the Bible and with the law, we will seek to prevent any discrimination by church staff, members or guests within the church against any person in any way, whether in our employment or treatment of individuals, based on any of the protected characteristics.

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

The Equality Act 2010 makes it illegal to discriminate against anyone based on any of the following 'protected characteristics':

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership

- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

For more detailed information on the “protected characteristics” see [Part 2, Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010](#).

3. Types of Discrimination

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic that they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably in managing your business, i.e. that it is ‘a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim’. A legitimate aim might be any lawful decision you make in running your business or organisation, but if there is a discriminatory effect, the sole aim of reducing costs is likely to be unlawful. Being proportionate really means being fair and reasonable, including showing that you’ve looked at ‘less discriminatory’ alternatives to any decision you make.

Discrimination by Association

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perception Discrimination

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

Harassment

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual". Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

More detailed information and other categories can be found in the “Discrimination” and “Other prohibited conduct” sections of [Part 2, Chapter 2 of the Equality Act 2010](#).

4. Our Christian Ethos

In relation to matters of religion and belief, Slough 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 Basis of Faith and their promotion.

For some posts within Slough 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.

Slough Baptist Church recognises that Slough has a rich diversity of cultures from around the world and seeks to bring Christian witness equally to all cultures.

Accordingly, Slough Baptist Church is committed to equality, and it is its policy to treat job applicants, employees, users and suppliers in the same way, subject to requiring employees, trustees, members and groups hiring the church premises to adhere to the church's ethos

5. Staff and applicants for Staff Positions

Slough Baptist Church is committed to equality in employment. Equality is about ensuring good employment practices and efficient use of the church's 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 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. Other Church Users

The policy also applies equally to the treatment of worshippers, visitors or suppliers.

7. Reporting discrimination

If it is discovered that there is any form of discrimination based on one of the protected characteristics in any of the church's activities, this should be reported to the trustees who will investigate the cause and take reasonable measures to rectify the issue. The trustees will endeavour to prevent any negative repercussions against anyone suggesting unlawful discrimination has occurred and will create an atmosphere where concerns may be freely raised.

Any member of staff may use the grievance procedure (SBCP-18) to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to unlawful harassment, then the grievance may be raised directly with the Trustees. Slough 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.

8. Equal Opportunities

Beyond avoiding negative discrimination, the church aims positively to provide equal opportunities.

When commissioning new or altered building works, we will explore how they can meet best practice for inclusion.

We will seek to provide worship material in a variety of ways - for example in large print, on the website and through an induction loop.

At least every three years we will undertake an audit of our groups and activities to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for involvement in church life ("Equality Ministry Review").

We will work with small group leaders to ensure they are aware of our desire to welcome and support all, and that they feel supported in putting this into practice. When necessary additional support would be considered for small groups to enable participation by all.

At least every three years we will undertake an audit of our physical environment and main activities ("Physical Audit of the Building for Accessibility") so that we can:

- identify areas where reasonable adjustments could enable greater participation;
- assess the effectiveness of adjustments previously made.