

WESTCITY CHURCH

POLICY DOCUMENTATION

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY & PROCEDURE

The Goal

The purpose of the Equal Opportunity Policy, as part of the broader Westcity Healthy Church Framework, is to ensure that the Westcity staff and community volunteers are empowered in a way that is congruent with Westcity's mission and values, whilst adhering to relevant legislation and Churches of Christ WA guidelines.

The Vision

Westcity Church, within the Healthy Church Framework seeks to be an authentic, healthy church community that supports the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming individuals to become 'More like Jesus'. The Westcity community aspires to be a safe space where individuals in all stages of faith are able to rest, heal, grow, to recognize and practice their God given gifts and talents to the benefit of the wider community.

Policy Statement

Westcity is committed to ensuring that all people seeking employment are treated fairly and equitably and are not subjected to any form of unlawful harassment or discrimination.

Westcity is also responsible for ensuring that team members are aware of their rights and obligations as outlined in this Policy and that team members must comply with the Policy.

All levels of employment within the church are responsible and accountable for ensuring that the provisions of this Policy are adhered to and that the principles of equal opportunity are upheld in the decision-making process, in the performance of their duties and whilst acting as a representative of Westcity.

All team members will be afforded opportunities for employment, promotion, training, transfer or benefit based on merit, meaning that assessment is made with regard to the abilities, knowledge, aptitude, experience and relevant qualifications of each individual applicant in relation to the requirements of the particular position. The ultimate aim is to employ the 'best person' for the job.

In fulfillment of their responsibility, Westcity seeks to hire the best person who:

1. Shares a common commitment to the Faith and Mission of Westcity Church of Christ;
2. Best fits the qualifications of the position and needs of the church;
3. Possesses the highest ethical standards;
4. Is committed to working in accordance with the Westcity core values and expected behaviours;
5. Is loyal to the best interest of Westcity and to the people it serves;
7. Is efficient and reliable and committed to being a good steward of the role for the good of the church;
8. Is courteous to the feelings and opinions of others; and
9. Can maintain the confidentiality of the church's business (see Westcity Code of Conduct).

Westcity will demonstrate efficient, ethical and professional behaviour in all recruitment undertakings, whether applicants are successful or not. The selection of candidates is based on objective selection criteria including competency assessment and must be consistent with the Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity procedures contained within this Policy.

When forming the selection process for recruitment and/or promotion, church leadership will take into consideration any known potential for conflict of interest (such as a member of a current employee's family being a member of the selection panel). It is an employee's responsibility to report any conflict of interest, or potential conflict of interest, to the Chair of the Selection Panel. Failure to do so may be the subject of disciplinary action.

As part of the employment process, Westcity has a commitment to consider flexible working arrangements that take into account the individual needs of all Team member in relation to their personal care responsibilities for family members, with respect to the operational requirements.

“Discrimination” in employment means treating a person less favourably than others because of a particular attribute or status, for example their sex, which is unrelated to the performance of the position. It is unlawful to discriminate in employment under the following Federal and State legislation:

- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth);
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth);
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992;
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth);
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (State);
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 (Cth);

Both the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 contain provisions preventing sexual harassment.

“Sexual harassment” refers to any unwanted, unwelcome, and uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature that results in a person feeling humiliated, intimidated and offended, and under the circumstances, it would be reasonable for them to feel this way. The perception by an employee that they have been sexually harassed is sufficient for them to lodge a complaint.

Westcity will not tolerate any form of discrimination based on any of the following grounds:

- sex;
- sexuality;
- race, colour, nationality, descent and ethnic, ethno-religious or national origin;
- physical or intellectual disability;
- family responsibilities;
- age;
- religion;
- political opinion;
- criminal record (dependent upon the nature and details of the offence and in relevance to the position);
- trade union activity;
- social origin;
- medical record;
- pregnancy or potential pregnancy; or
- marital status.

Westcity will ensure that equal opportunity principles are incorporated into, and discrimination is eliminated from all employment matters, including:

- recruitment and selection;
- policies, practices and procedures;
- terms and conditions for work including wages and other benefits;
- training, promotion and transfer of Team members;
- the methods and reasons for ending employment, and
- allocation of work and roles.

“Victimisation” means treating someone unfairly because they have acted on their rights under equal opportunity or harassment law or because they have supported someone else who acted upon those rights.

Current legislation prohibits the victimisation of individuals who:

- intend to make a complaint;

- make a complaint;
- intend to provide information as a witness;
- provide information as a witness, and
- support an individual who intends to make a complaint or who has made a complaint.

Westcity will take all necessary steps to ensure that people involved in a complaint are not victimised by anyone for coming forward with the complaint or for helping to resolve it.

If any person feels that they have been discriminated against or harassed, they may make a complaint by following the Grievance procedure.

The church will ensure that all complaints of discrimination or harassment will be investigated quickly and fairly and treated with complete confidentiality. Any Team member found guilty of perpetrating or condoning discrimination or harassment will be disciplined up to and including, termination of employment.

Equal Opportunity Procedure

If any team member believes or perceives that they are being discriminated against, they should report the behaviour or incident to their manager/supervisor or one of the following contacts:

- Executive Leader (staffing issues)
- Lead Pastor (for congregational issues)

Following the initial report, if the matter is deemed to warrant further action, the Team member will be requested to put their complaint in writing, which will include the action they want taken against the Team member concerned. This action may include:

- arranging for someone to speak to the person(s) responsible for the alleged discrimination or harassment;
- arranging a mediation meeting where an independent party will assist to resolve the issue(s); and/or
- making a formal complaint, which will involve the conduct of an investigation into the alleged incident(s).

All complaints will be investigated promptly, fairly and confidentially by a delegate of the undersigned. The investigation will involve the interviewing of any Team member who has been complained about, who will be provided with an opportunity to respond to the allegations made against them. Any other person(s) who may have been involved or who may have witnessed the incident(s) will also be interviewed as part of the investigation.

All details of complaints of discrimination will remain confidential unless specific permission from the complainant is granted. Any person who breaches confidentiality may be disciplined. It is also important that the complainant keeps this matter confidential (this will endeavour to avoid idle gossip and the possibility of defamation proceedings against the complainant or Westcity).

During any meetings or discussions, the complainant will have the right to be represented or accompanied by a person of their choice.

Following the investigation, the complainant will be informed of what action (if any) is proposed to be taken by Westcity, the reasons for such action or the next steps to be taken.

If any Team member is not comfortable in approaching the nominated representative of Westcity in the first instance, or if they are not satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Westcity they have the right to refer the matter to the Equal Opportunity Commission.

This Policy will be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis (minimum annually) to ensure it remains current and practice to Westcity requirements and legislation.