



# SKIP

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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## Our Commitment

Students for Kids International Projects is committed to encouraging equality and diversity within our organisation and avoiding unlawful discrimination. SKIP is proud to be part of a diverse society and is striving to be an inclusive organisation where individual differences are accepted and valued, and where all communities are able to fulfil their potential. This policy, alongside the SKIP Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan, is intended to assist putting this commitment into practice.

Our aim is for SKIP to be free from harassment and bullying so that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and has access to equal opportunities and support within their voluntary work so that they are able to give their best. SKIP also aims to extend this commitment to unlawful discrimination and active inclusion to all our beneficiaries, partners and members of the public.

Inclusivity is one of SKIP's three key values, as per the SKIP Bylaws: *"We welcome all students into our SKIP family and provide a friendly, supportive community for personal and professional development. We listen to the opinions of every member and continuously strive for improvement. We aim to inspire everyone to help us make positive change."*

## The Law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in volunteer recruitment because of a 'protected characteristic'. The Equality Act defines the protected characteristics as being age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

Discrimination after volunteering may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

It is also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public or beneficiary in the provision of services or goods or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

## Types of Unlawful Discrimination

- **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. However, discrimination may be lawful if there is an occupational requirement which is core to a role and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Indirect discrimination** means putting in place, a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.
- **Harassment** is where there is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
- **Associative discrimination** is where the individual treated less favourably does not have a protected characteristic but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does, e.g. the parent of a disabled child.
- **Perceptive discrimination** is where the individual discriminated against or harassed does not have a protected characteristic, but they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.
- **Third-party harassment** occurs where an employee is harassed by third parties such as service users, due to a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act, i.e. because they have supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an individual is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** is where a rule or policy or way of doing things has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the person to overcome the disadvantage.

## Anti-Harassment and Bullying

SKIP has a "zero tolerance" policy towards bullying and harassment and will investigate any allegations regardless of whether the matter has been raised formally or informally.

Harassment and bullying may be summarised as any behaviour that is unwanted by the person to whom it is directed. It is the impact of the behaviour rather than the intent of the perpetrator that is the determinant as to whether harassment or bullying has occurred.

Any volunteer who wishes to make a complaint of harassment or bullying is encouraged to do so as per SKIP's complaint policy.

## Equal Opportunities in Volunteering

SKIP will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of volunteering, including recruitment (see SKIP Recruitment Policy), opportunities for training and disciplinary procedures. We will base decisions on objective criteria. We will consider making reasonable adjustments in recruitment as well as in ongoing voluntary work.

## Volunteering Overseas with a Protected Characteristic

Whilst SKIP aims to act lawfully according to the Equality Act 2010, it is important to recognise that cultural acceptance and law can vary from country to country. By attending projects overseas there may be additional risks for some volunteers due to protected characteristics which they possess:

**Age:** no known associated risks

**Disability:** The nature of the disability will determine the potential risks, but these could include accessibility, availability of medication, and cultural approach to certain disabilities.

**Gender Re-assignment:** Some countries continue to criminalize transgender identity and individuals may be vulnerable to state violence or hate crimes, and encountering barriers to medical treatment.

**Marriage and civil partnership:** Some countries prohibit public affection between both heterosexual and homosexual couples. Few countries have passed legislation that includes full-fledged legal recognition for LGBT couples.

**Pregnancy and maternity:** No known associated equality risks, but should be considered from a health and safety point of view, for example if vaccinations are required before travel.

**Race:** The threat of racial violence can never be ruled out whenever travelling. It is suggested that the FCO website be used to ascertain any particular racial tensions.

**Religion and Belief:** There are certain territories where atheism, blasphemy or denouncement of a particular religion carries the death penalty. The threat of violence towards people with a particular religion or belief can never be ruled out whenever travelling. It is suggested that the FCO website be used to ascertain any particular tensions.

**Sex or Gender:** Sex discrimination applies to both males and females – there are some countries where females still do not have the same rights as their male counterparts.

**Sexual Orientation:** Few countries have passed legislation that includes full-fledged legal recognition for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) couples such as marriage, adoption, inheritance, and insurance rights. Some countries continue to criminalize homosexuality and persecute LGB people, sometimes violently. LGB people in such countries may be vulnerable to state violence or hate crimes.

It is important to understand that each individual's case and situation will be different. In order to support volunteers with protected characteristics that may result in additional risk with travel overseas, SKIP works with volunteers who disclose protected characteristics on an individual basis.

SKIP also ensures that risks associated with protected characteristics are considered within the project health and safety risk assessment.

## Beneficiaries, partners and others

SKIP will not discriminate unlawfully against beneficiaries or partners. If a beneficiary or partner is bullied or harassed by a member of SKIP, they are asked to report the incident to a member of the SKIP National Committee or Board of Trustees.

If a SKIP member is bullied or harassed by a beneficiary or partner, or they witness someone else being bullied or harassed, they are asked to report the incident to a member of the SKIP National Committee or Board of Trustees.

## Training

SKIP will provide information and guidance to those involved in volunteer recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise, to help them understand their responsibilities, to avoid the risk of discrimination, and to consider further steps they can take to support an inclusive community. SKIP will also provide information and guidance to volunteers regarding equality, diversity and inclusion whilst on project, including potential risks related to protected characteristics whilst volunteering overseas.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

Every SKIP member carries a personal responsibility for their own behaviour and for ensuring that their conduct is in accordance with the principles set out within this policy.

Volunteers who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

## Appendix 1: Events Accessibility and Safety Checklist



### **EVENTS ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY CHECKLIST**

The purpose of the events accessibility checklist is to ensure that all events anticipate potential barriers and make reasonable adjustments to eliminate them. This will ensure all SKIP events are inclusive and safe.

#### **Pre-event venue checklist**

Please share Table 1 with host branch to find out if all listed are in place in advance of the event.

*Table 1. Pre-event venue accessibility checklist*

Topic	Yes	No	Comments
<b>Venue</b>			
Access to stairs if there are more than one level of floors for evacuation purposes?			
Access to ramps or lifts?			
Accessible toilet facilities?			
Hearing system available or can be installed?			
Has the university conducted accessibility audit?			
Accessible car parking nearby? (ideally 50m)			
Is the route from parking accessible without any major obstructions?			
<b>Emergency procedures</b>			
Please find and share with the events coordinator the university arrangements for assisting disabled people			
Please find and share with the events coordinator the weekend first aid and fire warden university contact details			
Please find and share fire evacuation details including fire assembly point			

#### **Pre-event planning and administration**

Please ensure all listed is in place before the event. Host branch can help with some of these.

Topic	Yes	No	Comments
<b>Is budget contingency available for possible additional support arrangements?</b> <i>(Such as costs for sign language interpreter, large print or Braille transcription, specialist headphones for audio description on videos)</i>			
<b>Is programme timetabled to ensure a degree of flexibility to consider any alterations which may be required?</b> <i>(People with mobility impairments may need added time to move between rooms/sessions. Support workers, such as sign language interpreters, may require regular breaks and people with chronic medical conditions [e.g. diabetes] may require regular refreshment breaks)</i>			

<b>Check requirements of speakers and facilitators.</b> <i>(They themselves may need additional requirements/adjustments eg. Chair/ramped access/BSL interpreter/hearing loop)</i>			
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### Pre-event registration information

Topic	Yes	No	Comments
<b>Registration</b>			
Ensure an equality/accessibility statement is included in the event member planet profile information. <b>Suggested equality/accessibility statement wording which should be on both the registration form and any programme announcements:</b> “We aim to ensure that people have equal access to SKIP events. If you need alternative formats or other reasonable adjustments, please contact (name of person) on (telephone number) or via email: (email address here) with your request by close of business on (deadline) so that arrangements, where possible, can be made. Due reliance on university buildings, limitations may be encountered.”			
Ask dietary requirements?			

### On the day

<b>Signage and emergency procedures</b>			
Signs need to be clearly printed in appropriate size, font and colour. Not displayed too high/out of sight for wheelchair users			
If secondary ‘accessible’ entrance route also being used, ensure signage and directions in place there too.			
Ensure signage for route from venue to accessible toilet facilities is in place			
Check with security/host branch where fire evacuation assembly point is			
Ensure emergency evacuation procedures are communicated to those who may require assistance during an emergency, as part of the ‘housekeeping’ information provided at the start of the event.			
<b>Event room set-ups</b>			
Accessible for wheelchair users? (space, desk height etc)			
Space at the front for sign language interpreters?			
<b>Refreshments</b>			
Dietary requirements clearly labelled			
Enough space for wheelchair users?			