

F Ethical Policies of IY(UK)

F6 Equity Policy

ACTION FOR EQUITY

The aims of this policy are:

- To promote equality of access, opportunity, outcome and experience for people using services provided by our members and staff employed by them, recognising that every person is a unique individual with a right to being treated with dignity and respect.
- To continue to raise the profile of equity in Iyengar Yoga (UK)
- To promote inclusion and to reduce inequality and stigma for those who fall within one of the 9 Protected Characteristics, and to also consider other characteristics.
- To ensure that members of those groups which are most in need and socially excluded are enabled or empowered to access services and opportunities within Iyengar Yoga UK.
- To ensure fair and equal access to services, training and recruitment opportunities
- To prevent and eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment; and to promote valuing diversity and equality of opportunity within our membership and its spaces
- To celebrate our diverse community, and promote and foster positive relationships between every person that is in contact with the organisation
- To ensure that equity is embedded in the mentoring and assessment process and that all mentors and assessors have received appropriate training/guidance.
- To embed the above aims in each Standing Committee and Member Group.
- To provide guidance on our expectations in terms of language and behaviour related to equality, diversity, and inclusion from our members

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to set out Iyengar Yoga (UK)'s commitment to promoting equity for all its members, volunteers, employees, and practitioners (including students).

For us, equity means fairness and justice; it means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to address imbalances. The process of creating equity is ongoing, requiring us to identify conscious and unconscious barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

The policy provides basic information on legislation, and gives a brief explanation of what the Equality Act 2010 covers and how all Iyengar students, individuals and group members of Iyengar Yoga UK must comply with it both inside and outside a yoga class.

Equality is about treating members fairly and impartially without bias and to create conditions that foster fairness, encourage kindness, and value diversity and promote dignity and inclusion. Equity is ensuring that each individual is given the tools they need to thrive. This Policy is about change and involves trying to redress the imbalances and respond in an appropriate and sensitive way.

All Members must ensure they are familiar with the contents of this policy, which should be read in conjunction with a summary of the Equality Act 2010, [available here Equality Act 2010: guidance – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010)

OUR COMMITMENT

Iyengar Yoga (UK) and its members are required by law not to discriminate against our members, volunteers, employees, and practitioners (including students) taught by Iyengar Yoga UK teachers.

Iyengar Yoga (UK) recognises its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and any later amendments to such legislation or subsequent equality related legislation that may be relevant.

Iyengar Yoga (UK) aims to ensure that all members can expect a fair and accessible route to training, classes, workshops, and conventions; and that assessment methods are made as accessible and diverse as possible. We aim to do this by removing unfair conscious and unconscious bias as far as possible, and improving equitable measures.

Language should contain no bias in content towards any member sharing a particular characteristic, other than those that specifically apply to the purpose of the training, classes, workshop conventions and assessment.

In all instances where restrictions apply the reason will be clearly explained. For example, women only classes or age specific.

Iyengar Yoga UK is committed to:

- Complying with all the relevant UK legislation and regulatory requirements in force prior to or at the time this document was created.
- Ensuring that ALL Iyengar Yoga (UK) training and assessments are undertaken and graded without unfair bias or prejudice. Iyengar Yoga (UK) strives to provide guidance to all its members on equality and diversity during induction and other training and monitoring activities.
- Ensuring that ALL Iyengar Yoga (UK) registered teachers, trainee teachers and non-teacher members comply with the Equality and Diversity guidance given by Iyengar Yoga (UK).
- Upholding the core values of Iyengar yoga with regards to unity and regarding all people as equals, to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.
- Ensuring any complaints raised are acted upon in a fair and timely manner

WHAT IS THE EQUALITY ACT?

The Equality Act 2010 applies to everyone who accesses, buys, or uses your facilities or services. All service providers and those providing goods and facilities in the United Kingdom are covered by the Act.

The Act protects anyone who accesses your services from discrimination on the basis of a **'protected characteristic'**.

The Act also protects members from being discriminated against or harassed because of a protected characteristic they do not personally have. (Example: That is held by a member of their family, partner or associate.)

The **nine** protected characteristics are:

- **Age** – Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or a range of ages (e.g. 18-30 year olds)
- **Disability** – A person has a disability if they have a physical/mental impairment or progressive condition which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability and/or which may require physical adaptations to carry out day to day activities. A person meets the disability definition under the Equality Act 2010 where they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to carry out daily activities.
- **Gender reassignment** – The process of transitioning or having transitioned or intending to transition from one gender to another. People who define as non-binary or gender fluid may be afforded protection under this protected characteristic
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership** – Marriage is defined as a 'legal relationship between two people'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

- **Pregnancy and Maternity** – Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a person unfavourably because they are breastfeeding.
- **Race** – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality.
 - **Race** - A social construct used to categorise people by their physical appearance
 - **Colour** - The colour or shade of one's skin
 - **Ethnicity** - *includes aspects of both race and culture; as well as other characteristics such as traditions, language, religion, spirituality, upbringing, nationality and ancestral place of origin. It is also a personal expression of identity influenced by life experience and place of habitation; it is a dynamic and changes over time.*
- **Religion or belief** – Religion has the meaning usually given to it, but belief includes religious, spiritual and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (example: Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- **Sex** – Referring to the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones and their interactions, including male or female, but also intersex, something that is commonly assigned at birth
- **Sexual orientation** – Patterns of emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction and the individual sense of personal and social identity based on those attractions.

Other Characteristics: Although not legally protected, those characteristics that are unprotected should be considered important to treat equitably. Some examples of unprotected characteristic that could lead to unfair discrimination are (N.B. this is not an exhaustive list):

- Accent
- Body expression and modification (tattoos, piercings, hairstyles, etc.)
- Culture
- Having a criminal record
- Political beliefs
- Socioeconomic status
- Subcultural identity
- Weight/body size/shape discrimination

TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION UNDER THE EQUALITIES ACT (2010):

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a member is treated less favourably than another member in the same circumstances because of a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination also includes:

Discrimination by association

Discrimination by association occurs when a member is treated less favourably because they are linked, or associated, with a person who has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by perception

Discrimination by perception happens when a member is discriminated against because they are *thought* to have a particular protected characteristic or are treated as if they do. Members are protected from this sort of discrimination even if someone who discriminates knows that the other person does not have the particular protected characteristic

Indirect discrimination

The Act makes indirect discrimination by businesses unlawful. This will take place when a business applies a policy, criterion or practice in the same way to all individuals, but that policy, criterion or practice is discriminatory in its effect on, for example, one particular sex or racial or social group. (For example, the advertisement of vacancies for jobs, training or other opportunities in "limited" journals or media.) The business would need to show that the policy can be objectively justified. In other words, it must be a fair, reasonable and proportionate way of achieving a legitimate aim, i.e., diversification.

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 fair, reasonable and proportionate includes showing that you have looked at whether there are other ways of achieving the same aim which would avoid discrimination.

Harassment, Victimisation and Bullying

IY(UK) encourages all members to contribute to the building of positive environments where all are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. All members of IY(UK) have a responsibility to ensure that their behaviour towards each other reflects the principles of treating others with dignity and respect.

Bullying, harassment and intimidation are never acceptable and are not tolerated by IY(UK). All members of IY(UK) (or employees) be they elected officials, volunteer committee members or association members, should be able to recognise, challenge and, where necessary, complain about bullying and harassment, should it arise, with confidence that their concerns will be treated in good faith and investigated fairly and appropriately.

Please read this policy alongside IY(UK)'s Policy on Harassment and Bullying which can be found in the Complete Guide to IY(UK) (section F3)

Learning and development

Iyengar Yoga (UK) and the Equity Standing Committee will identify areas that require specific training and aim to embed this throughout the organisation including in the mentoring process.

Feedback and complaints about breaches of this policy

Iyengar Yoga (UK) does not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying and will investigate all complaints of this nature, whether the suspected perpetrator is a teacher, member, volunteer, or employee.

Should any individual feel they have been subject to discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying, they are recommended to follow Iyengar Yoga (UK)'s Speak Up for Change policy which can be found in the Complete Guide to IY(UK) (section G1).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Equity Standing Committee and the group will make onward recommendation for appropriate action to be taken where the results of equality and diversity monitoring indicate inequality and / or fall below standard equality and diversity practice.

Review

This policy was created on 22 April 2022 and is subject to annual review by the Equity Standing Committee.

LINKS

Equality Act 2010 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Human Rights Commission <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>