



Intent

Forward House is committed to providing a workplace that is free from unlawful discrimination. All employees are entitled to a working environment where they are treated with respect and dignity and have equal opportunity to fully contribute. All individuals are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner on company premises or while performing work and refrain from engaging in discrimination. All employees have the right to a workplace free from discrimination based upon characteristics protected under Ontario Human Rights Code, including:

Age

*Ancestry, colour, race

*Citizenship

*Ethnic origin

*Place of origin

*Creed

*Disability

*Family status

*Marital status

*Gender identity, gender expression

*Record of offences

*Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)

*Sexual orientation

Guidelines and Definitions

Discrimination occurs when an employer's rules, policies, procedures, or working conditions adversely affect an employee because of the employee's membership in a protected group. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and may result from intentional conduct or from policies, practices or assumptions that have an unintended adverse impact on individuals protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Forward House recognizes unlawful discrimination may also arise through microaggressions and unconscious bias, and is committed to fostering a culturally safe workplace where all employees are treated with dignity, respect and inclusion.

Microaggressions are commonplace verbal, non-verbal or behavioural comments, actions or omissions that communicate hostile, derogatory, dismissive or negative messages toward individuals based on protected characteristics. Microaggressions may be intentional or unintentional. While a single incident may not always constitute discrimination, repeated or serious microaggressions can contribute to a poisoned work environment and may amount to discrimination or harassment contrary to this policy.

Unconscious bias refers to the assumptions, stereotypes, attitudes or preferences that individuals may hold about social or identity groups without conscious awareness. Unconscious bias can influence workplace decisions and interactions, including recruitment, hiring, promotion, work assignments, performance management, accommodation, discipline and day-to-day communications. Employees, Managers and Directors are expected to be aware of the potential impact of unconscious bias and to make workplace decisions fairly, objectively and based on legitimate business considerations.

Cultural Safety refers to an environment in which individuals feel respected, valued and safe from discrimination, harassment or the denial of their identity, culture or lived experiences. It recognizes that power imbalances, systemic barriers and historical inequities may affect workplace relationships and experiences. Forward House is committed to fostering a culturally safe workplace by promoting respectful interactions, inclusive practices and equitable decision-making, and by taking reasonable steps to identify and address conduct or practices that undermine cultural safety.

Distinctions based upon bona fide occupational requirements, merit or legitimate qualifications will not constitute discrimination.

This Human Rights policy applies to all full-time, part-time, casual, contract, permanent and temporary employees, and to job applicants. It applies to all aspects of employment including, but not limited to, recruitment, promotions, transfers, working arrangements, compensation and benefits and termination of employment.

To ensure that persons who are otherwise able to work are not unfairly excluded from doing so based upon protected characteristics, Forward House is committed to making every reasonable effort to accommodate the needs of employees related to the protected grounds of discrimination, short of causing undue hardship.

Accommodation requests should be directed to your immediate Manager or the Human Resources department in a timely manner. Forward House is committed to responding to accommodation requests in a timely, confidential and sensitive manner. Employment accommodation is assessed and provided on an individualized basis. Employees and the Union are expected to cooperate in the search for and implementation of reasonable accommodation.

Forward House will make every reasonable, practicable effort to ensure no employee is subjected to unlawful discrimination. If Forward House becomes aware of a potential incident of discrimination, it will investigate the complaint or incident in a fair, timely and confidential manner, in accordance with Forward House's investigation procedures.

Any violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with Forward House's Progressive Discipline Policy.

No reprisal or penalty will be taken against a person for bringing forward a complaint of unlawful discrimination in good faith. Any employee who makes a complaint in bad faith, maliciously or without a reasonable and probable basis, or engages in a reprisal against an employee for filing a discrimination complaint will be subject to discipline, in accordance with Forward House's Progressive Discipline Policy.

This Human Rights Policy will be reviewed and updated whenever there is a change that affects its effectiveness in preventing unlawful discrimination.

Human Resources is responsible for the administration of this policy.