



FAIRNESS & EQUALITY POLICY

*Setting out the principles which underpin our approach
to fairness and equality*

**ASCENSION EAGLES CHEERLEADERS
and
TALENT CENTRAL CHEER & DANCE**

Last updated:

13 June 2022

Trustee lead for this policy:

Larsen Mabika

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1. Who does this policy apply to?

This Policy is for and applies to:

- Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders
- Talent Central Cheer & Dance.

In this document the above will jointly be referred to as “The Group”, “We” or “Us”.

The Policy applies to all:

- employees of The Group
- employees of contractors working for The Group
- [participants](#) at The Group
- professional advisers to The Group
- volunteers working with The Group (including trustees).

Every person working or representing The Group has a personal responsibility to uphold and promote these principles in their day-to-day dealings with each other and with people they come into contact with while they are representing The Group.

If you are employed by The Group, this policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be changed at any time.

Wherever this document uses the expression “parent” or “parents” this includes the responsible adult/s who is/are the principal caregiver/s for a child.

2. What this policy covers

This policy sets out the principles which underpin our approach to fairness and equality at The Group. It outlines what you can expect from us and what we expect of you when we work together; for example our approach to fairness and equality underpins how we manage everyday activities at The Group, including things such as discipline and grievance procedures.

Our Fairness and Equality policy aligns to our other policies, including our Professional Ethics and Whistleblowing Policy, as well as our Staff Handbook and our Members’ Code of Conduct.

Additionally it sets out how to raise concerns if you feel that you have not been treated in accordance with this policy and its principles.

3. Definition of terms used in this policy

A participant:	Any person who uses the benefits, facilities and services provided by The Group, including personal participation in any squad or any programme run by The Group; membership by an immediate family member in any squad or any programme run by The Group; or access to any facility owned, leased or operated, either permanently or temporarily, by The Group.
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4. Why this policy is important

We are committed to ensuring that our employees, volunteers and participants are treated with dignity and respect.

Discrimination in any form or any breaches of this fairness and equality policy by any employee, volunteer or participant will be taken extremely seriously and may lead to disciplinary action.

This could include dismissal from employment or volunteer services, and restrictions and/or limitations on participation in/access to any benefits, facilities or services provided by The Group.

5. Our principles

Ensuring fairness and equality

We are committed to ensuring that none of The Group's employees, volunteers/trustees or participants receives less favourable benefits, facilities, services or treatment (either directly or indirectly) on grounds of the characteristics set out in the [Equality Act of 2010](#).

To achieve this, we will abide by the following principles:

- We will not tolerate discrimination of any description, on any grounds.
- We will comply with our statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 which specifically prohibits discrimination on the grounds of:
 - age, disability, gender or gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- We aim to create an environment in which everyone can give their best, where there is no bullying or harassment, victimisation or discrimination.
- To help you understand what is/is not acceptable behaviour we provide clear, written guidance in this policy, and also in our Members' Code of Conduct (for participants) and our Professional Ethics Policy. Please do ask if you need additional guidance on what is or is not acceptable behaviour (email: director@ascensioneagles.com)
- Harassment of any kind is a breach of this policy and will be considered a disciplinary offence. Harassment may include:
 - derogatory, discriminatory or insulting actions, including written, verbal and non-verbal actions
 - unwanted physical contact
 - encouraging others to engage in harassment or discriminatory behaviour.

When applying these principles we will:

- Recognise your individual circumstances, as well as those of The Group, when applying procedures and processes;
- Be clear about how we will deal with any policy breaches and how you can [raise any concerns or complaints](#);

- Report any complaints of grievance and harassment to our Board of Trustees, to allow them to decide if any action is required to address adverse patterns or trends;
- Review this policy at least annually; and
- Review our processes regularly to make sure they remain fair and lawful.

Ensuring diversity and inclusion

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is key to The Group's identity and it permeates through everything we do. For us, it means ensuring the fair and equal representation and participation of different groups of people: we believe each individual should be treasured and valued for their whole identity.

Our aim is that our stakeholders (ie our employees, contractors, professional advisers, volunteers and participants) all feel valued, appreciated and comfortable in their relationship with The Group. We want them to feel able to be themselves - to bring their whole selves and on their own terms - when engaging with us and any others with whom we collaborate.

We are committed to embedding this ethos in everything we do, which includes:

- our recruitment procedures
- the training we provide for our participants and our (ie the sports training we give to participants and the professional training our employees and volunteers receive)
- professional development
- Participation in any squad or any programme run by The Group.

To ensure we deliver our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we abide by the principles outlined in the section on [Ensuring fairness and equality](#).

By cultivating a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture, we celebrate authenticity and we constantly strive to better reflect and serve the community The Group serves and of which we are a part.

6. Raising a concern

Everybody associated with The Group has the right to raise a concern if they feel that, while engaged as an employee, volunteer/trustee or participant at The Group, they have been subject to conduct which contravenes this Fairness and Equality Policy (or any other of The Group's policies relating to conduct, such as our Professional Ethics Policy or our Whistleblowing Policy).

What you can expect if you raise a concern

We encourage anyone who has experienced or witnessed conduct which contravenes our policy to report it as soon as possible. Anyone who does can expect:

- to be given full support from the Board and the management team
- to be taken seriously
- to be treated with respect.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if that is your wish.

If your report leads us to take disciplinary action or results in legal proceedings, it may not be possible to take action as a result of your disclosure without your help, so you may be asked to come forward as a witness.

Anonymous allegations

While we respect your right to anonymity, we encourage you to put your name to your report whenever possible. If you do not tell us who you are it will be much more difficult for us to protect your position or to let you know what we are doing to respond to your concerns.

Untrue allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith which you reasonably believe to be true, but which is subsequently not confirmed by the investigation, The Group will recognise your concern.

However, if you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action that could include disciplinary action, may be taken.

7. What happens when a concern is raised

Step one: reporting your concern

In the first instance, any concerns should be raised with the Director (email: director@ascensioneagles.com or telephone 07854 487309). They will arrange to investigate the matter. This investigation may require you and other individuals involved to give a written statement.

If the issue you wish to raise is a concern about the conduct of The Director and therefore you do not feel confident that your concern will be appropriately addressed, you may contact the Board of Trustees (email: trustees@ascensioneagles.com). Please see [the Escalation process](#) section for further guidance.

If your concern involves one or more of The Group's trustees, you should contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees directly, by telephone or email. Please see further details below in the [Contact Information section](#).

You may raise your concern by telephone, in person or in writing. The earlier you make us aware of your concern, the easier it will be for us to take any necessary action. When you raise your concern you should provide the following information:

- the nature of your concern - ie what has gone wrong?
- details of incidents, including dates/times
- why you believe it is a breach of our Fairness and Equality Policy
- the impact of the issue (ie on you or on others).

The Group will acknowledge receipt of your report as quickly as possible (see further detail in the [Timeframes](#) section)

Step two: the investigation

The Group will carry out initial enquiries to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

The investigation may need to be carried out under terms of strict confidentiality (eg if there is a police inquiry or there are additional safeguarding concerns); in this case, the subject of the complaint may not be informed of the report/complaint until (or if) it becomes necessary to do so.

In certain cases however (such as allegations of ill treatment of others or safeguarding concerns), immediate suspension from work may have to be considered to ensure we perform our duty of care.

Your statement will be considered, and you will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained.

Step three: the outcome

At the conclusion of any investigation, you will be told the outcome and what The Group has done, or proposes to do, about it. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

The person conducting the investigation will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and any appropriate government department/s or regulatory agency/ies.

Where appropriate, the matters raised may:

- be investigated by management, internal audit, or through the disciplinary/grievance process
- be referred to the police
- be referred to the external auditor
- be referred and put through established child protection/abuse procedures
- form the subject of an independent inquiry.

The Director, together with representatives of the Board of Trustees, will be responsible for instigating any disciplinary action required as a result of the investigation.

8. Timeframes

Within ten working days of being notified of a concern by you, The Group will write to you:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how The Group proposes to deal with the matter
- providing information on support mechanisms
- telling you whether further investigations will take place - and if not, why not.

The amount of contact between you and those in The Group responsible for investigating the issues will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of your information. It is likely that you will be interviewed and/or asked to provide a written statement.

Any investigation meetings can be arranged away from your workplace and, if you wish, someone may accompany you in support (but they cannot participate in the investigation).

The Group will do everything it can to minimise any difficulties that you may experience as a result of raising a concern.

You will be kept informed of the progress and the outcome of any investigation (unless there are specific legal reasons why this cannot be done – eg an ongoing police investigation or pending court proceedings).

9. Escalation process

You should escalate the matter to the Chair of the Board of Trustees (via an email to: trustees@ascensioneagles.com if you are concerned that the Director:

- is involved in the wrongdoing
- has failed to make a proper investigation - or
- has failed to report the outcome of the investigations to a relevant authority.

The Chair will arrange for a review of the investigation to be carried out, make any necessary enquiries and make their own report to the Board of Trustees.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their nominated representative, will notify you of the outcome and what The Group has done, or proposes to do, about it. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

10. Data protection

We will process any personal data collected as a result of a complaint in accordance with our data protection policy.

Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the complaint will be held securely and only accessed by, and disclosed to, those individuals who require access for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure (eg to conduct an investigation, to keep you informed about progress/the outcome etc).

11. Contact information

The Director:	Angela Green
Contact no:	07854 487309
The Director - email:	director@ascensioneagles.com

Chair of Board of Trustees:	Sue Winston
Contact no:	07975 688644
Board of Trustees - email:	trustees@ascensioneagles.com

12. Policy updates and next review date

This policy will be reviewed every year in May, or whenever there is a major change in the organisation, in relevant legislation or relevant legislation or any changes in the cheerleading industry.

This policy was updated on:	13 June 2022
Updated by:	Angela Green, The Director
Reviewed by:	Larsen Mabika, Trustee
Other reviewers:	Sue Winston, Chair of Board of Trustees
	Susan Spiller (09/06/2022)
	Peter Sharp, Trustee
Approved by the Board:	13 June 2022
Next review due:	May 2023
To be reviewed by:	Angela Green, The Director
Review to be approved by:	The Board of Trustees

13. The category of this policy

This policy is categorised as:

Category	Description
1.	This document is publicly available and is published on the AEC website