



ONTARIO

EQUESTRIAN

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

1. PURPOSE

Ontario Equestrian (OE) is committed to fostering a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, and where barriers to participation are actively identified and eliminated. This Policy affirms OE's commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and the fundamental human rights of all Participants, regardless of background or personal characteristics.

2. DEFINITIONS

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

- a) *Athlete*: an individual registered with OE or its affiliated organizations and participates in equestrian sport.
- b) *Discrimination*: Unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of grounds listed within the policy. Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other Members of society. It is not a discriminatory practice for a person to adopt or carry out a special program, plan or arrangement designed to prevent, eliminate or reduce disadvantages that are likely to be suffered by any group of individuals when those disadvantages would be based on or related to the prohibited grounds of Discrimination.
- c) *Diversity*: The presence and integration of a variety of individuals with different personal characteristics, particularly Under-Represented Groups, in a group or organization.
- d) *Equity*: Fairness afforded to individuals with diverse personal characteristics regardless of those characteristics.
- e) *Gender Expression*: How a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender.
- f) *Gender Identity*: Each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's Gender Identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex. Gender identity is fundamentally different from a person's sexual orientation
- g) *Harassment*: Any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates an individual. It is considered by the Ontario Human Rights Code (1962) as a form of Discrimination. This can occur when someone makes remarks that are known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome including but not limited to a person's race, religion, age or disability. Harassment also encompasses any comments or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome because of sex, sexual orientation, Gender Identity or Gender Expression.
- h) *Inclusion*: Acceptance of individuals with diverse personal characteristics into a group or organization regardless of those characteristics.
- i) *Member*: All categories of Membership within OE, as well as individuals employed by or engaged in activities with OE, including but not limited to, Athletes, coaches, judges, Officials, volunteers, directors, officers, administrators, spectators and parents of OE Members.
- j) *Official*: An individual who has the responsibility to enforce the rules and maintain fair play during sport competitions or activities. This includes, but is not limited to, referees, judges, stewards, technical delegates, course designers, timers, scorers, and other individuals appointed to a regulatory or adjudicative role during an event or competition.
- k) *Participant*: Any individual who participates in equestrian sport activities, including but not limited to, coaches, athletes, volunteers, officials, and other members, as defined in the OE Code of Conduct Policy.

- l) *Under-Represented Groups*: Under-Represented Groups include but are not limited to women, children in low-income families, Indigenous people, seniors, people with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, and Members of the LGBTW2 community.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all Participants in the OE community. It should also be read in conjunction with the National Safe Sport Program, OE's *Safe Sport Policy* and OE's *Code of Conduct*. This Policy applies to all OE activities and environments, including competitions, training sessions, meetings, virtual environments, and other interactions carried out under OE's jurisdiction.

OE promotes Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; intentionally ensuring equal and fair opportunities for all individuals within all aspects of our activities, including programs, coaching, and competition as well as leadership positions.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OE affirms its commitment to full compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and to proactively promoting inclusivity, equity, and respect throughout all aspects and levels of its operations.

OE is guided by the following principles:

a) Equity

Equity recognizes that individuals may experience advantages or barriers based on personal circumstances. OE is committed to removing systemic barriers and ensuring fair access to opportunities and resources.

b) Diversity

Diversity refers to the presence and value of differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, Gender Identity and expression, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, age, religion, and language.

c) Inclusion

Inclusion involves creating environments where everyone feels welcome, valued, and able to fully participate. Inclusion is not passive; it requires proactive and intentional efforts.

d) Respect and Dignity

Every person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, free from Discrimination, Harassment, and systemic inequities.

OE is committed to partnering with organizations that uphold principles of equality and respect, and seeks to engage with partners whose policies, practices, and communications align with these values. This includes, but is not limited to, consideration of organizational actions, materials, websites, publications, and social media that may promote or communicate discriminatory treatment on any of the grounds listed above.

5. COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

OE is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect. In addition to prohibiting discriminatory practices, OE works actively to promote inclusivity. Members of OE and Participants in OE programs and activities are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner

consistent with the values of OE. OE is committed to the full Inclusion of individuals from underrepresented, marginalized, or historically excluded groups. OE will work actively to ensure these individuals are represented in all levels of the organization—from participation to leadership.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

a) Ontario Equestrian

- Promote, integrate, and uphold integrate Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in all programs, policies, and communications.
- Provide education and training to employees, Board Members, and volunteers on inclusive practices.
- Regularly assess and improve organizational practices to support Inclusion.
- OE will take all reasonable and practicable measures to support accessibility in its facilities, communications, and environments.

b) Members and Participants

- Act respectfully and inclusively towards others at all times.
- Uphold OE's Code of Conduct and this Policy in all interactions.
- Report behaviours that contravene this Policy through established complaint mechanisms.

c) Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, Others

- Foster inclusive spaces and respectful interactions.
- Identify and report barriers to Inclusion or instances of Discrimination or exclusion.
- Participate in relevant training as required by OE.

7. INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY

All OE publications, communications and marketing materials will use inclusive language and imagery that reflects the Diversity of our community. Gender-neutral terms will be used where applicable, and representations will strive to reflect the demographics of OE's Membership.

8. ACCESSIBILITY

OE is committed to meeting its obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and other relevant legislation. OE will ensure that:

- Physical and digital spaces are accessible;
- Communication supports are available when requested;
- Reasonable accommodations are made to enable full participation of persons with disabilities.

9. RECRUITMENT, HIRING AND GOVERNANCE

OE will implement equitable hiring and nomination practices to ensure Diversity within staff, leadership, committees, and volunteers. This includes:

- Removing barriers in job postings and selection processes;
- Encouraging applicants from underrepresented groups;
- Establishing inclusive onboarding and mentorship supports.

10. PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

To promote and support inclusivity in daily operations OE will strive to:

- Support Board and committee participation that welcomes a diversity of backgrounds, skills, viewpoints, and lived experiences present across the OE community.
- Undertake strong and clear initiatives to encourage participation at all levels of the sport for populations traditionally underrepresented.
- Contribute to raising the awareness and understanding of Equity and Inclusion amongst our Membership through ongoing education opportunities.
- As new documents are developed, or current ones are updated, implement mandatory use of gender-neutral language
- Ensure that inclusivity is implemented when developing, updating or delivering OE programs, policies and materials. Ensure equal effort for all individuals.
- Encourage all Member organizations, facilities and affiliated agencies to ensure equal opportunities for all.

11. ENFORCEMENT

All individuals subject to this Policy are also bound by OE's *Code of Conduct*, *Anti-Harassment Policy*, and *Dispute Resolution Policy*.

This Policy serves as a framework for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, but does not cover every situation. If you are unclear about the requirements of this Policy, please contact the Executive Director at OE as follows:

Ontario Equestrian

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Reviewed and Approved by the Ontario Equestrian Board of Directors: March 25, 2026

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