**SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY**

**09/24**

**The Wilderness Grove Single Equality Policy**

**Background**

* In accordance with our aims, we pledge to respect the equal human rights of all our customers and to educate them about equality.
* We will also respect the equal rights of our staff, other members of the Forest School community and all others with whom we have contact.
* In particular, we will comply with relevant legislation and implement Forest School plans in relation to racial equality and gender equality.

**Responsibilities**

The Wilderness Grove Manager and Forest School Leader is responsible for ensuring:

* The provision has developed and annually updates and reviews its Single Equality Policy
* The provision complies with the relevant equality legislation.
* That the provision Equality Policy and its procedures are followed
* Ensuring the Race, Disability and Gender sections of this document are readily available and that Team staff, students and their parents and guardians are aware of and have access to them.
* Ensuring all staff know their responsibilities and receive the appropriate training and support in carrying these out.
* Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including but not limited to; racist bullying, homophobic bullying and bullying related to gender or disability.

All Staff are responsible for:

* Dealing with racist, homophobic and other hate incidents
* Being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping.
* Promoting equal opportunities and good race relations
* Avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of ethnicity, disability, gender and sexuality
* Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination
* Taking up training and learning opportunities

Visitors and Contractors are responsible for:

* Knowing and following Single Equality Policy which is available on our website and a paper copy is available.

**About this policy**

This Single Equality Scheme brings together The Wilderness Grove’s approach for promoting equality in all of our policies and procedures and, most importantly in our day-to-day practices and interactions with all of the community.

We acknowledge that it is very important for us all to work together in achieving our aim of being fully inclusive and accessible and ultimately in providing a quality learning experience for our children and young people.

**What is the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan?**

Our Single Equality Scheme (SES) and action plan integrates our statutory duties in relation to race, disability and gender and promoting community cohesion.  The duties cover staff, children and people using the services such as parents.

It also addresses the legislation relating to religion or belief, sexual orientation and age and therefore includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

Our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan enables us to achieve a framework for action which covers all six equality strands and ensures that we meet our responsibilities of the public sector duties in an inclusive way.

We will continue to meet our statutory duties by reporting annually on the progress of the Single Equality Scheme and action plan.  This will be reviewed by our Manager and will cover fully the activity undertaken in relation to the equality strands and the promotion of community cohesion.

**Meeting our Duties**

Under the statutory duties The Wilderness Grove has responsibilities to promote race, disability and gender equality.

*Race equality*

The general duty to promote race equality means that we must have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.
2. Promote equality of opportunity
3. Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

(The following policies have been assessed in regard to the general duty under the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000)

* Anti-Bullying Policy
* Behaviour Policy
* Development Plans
* Forest School Handbook
* Health and Safety Policy
* Complaints Procedure
* Child Protection Policy

The Wilderness Grove’s guidelines insist that all racist incidents are recorded in a log and dealt with as soon as possible.

*Disability equality*

The general duty to promote disability equality is owed to all disabled people which means that we must have due regard to:

1. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
2. Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
3. Eliminate disability related harassment.
4. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
5. Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
6. Take steps to take account of disabled people’s disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

*Accessibility*

There is specific disability legislation in relation to disabled pupils and accessibility which means we must plan strategically over time to:

1. Increase access to the curriculum.
2. Make improvements to the physical environment of the site to increase access.
3. Make written information accessible to pupils in a range of different ways.

We must ensure that disabled pupils do not receive less favourable treatment and so each has a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

*Gender equality*

The general duty to promote gender equality means that we must have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and
2. Promote equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys.

The duty also includes the need to consider actions to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

*Transgender*

Transgender people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty.  The term transgender refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender. We will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender re-assignment and will provide a supportive environment within its community.

*Community cohesion*

We also have a responsibility to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across different cultures, ethnic, religious and non-religious and socio-economic groups.

*Age, sexual orientation, religion, and belief*

We must ensure that we do not discriminate on these grounds. The Scheme includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

**The Wilderness Grove Values regarding Equality**

In meeting the duties described above will mean that all our actions at our Forest School will embody the key principles and values, which include:

* Striving to make the best possible provision for all students, regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious belief, national origin or status, gender or sexual orientation.
* Respecting diversity. Treating people equally is not simply a matter of treating everyone the same. The Trust adopts the Norfolk Inclusion Statement view that inclusion is: “The process of taking necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given an equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life.” This means that we do our best to make reasonable adjustments for disability, recognise and celebrate cultural differences, and understand the different needs and experiences of our customers.
* Knowing that equalities are not simply about protecting the potentially vulnerable. We believe that all children may be are disadvantaged by the holding of prejudicial views, and seek to promote good relationships between all groups, and positive attitudes towards disabled people, people from different ethnic or cultural groups or faith backgrounds and people of different gender or sexual orientation.
* Valuing staff for their ability and potential to help us make the best possible provision for the children in our academies, regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious belief, national origin, gender or sexual orientation.
* Proactive efforts to identify and minimise existing barriers or inequalities.
* Recognising our role in promoting community cohesion, and actively encourage the participation in public life of all learners.

**Collecting and analysing equality information for employment at The Wilderness Grove**

We are committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment.

The Wilderness Grove also aims to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce that is representative of all sections of the community in order to provide a service that respects and responds to the diverse needs of our local population.

We collect the following profile information for our staff;

* Applicants for employment
* Attendance on staff training events
* Staff attendance
* Disciplinary and grievance cases
* Staff appraisals/performance management

**Annual Review of Progress**

We will continue to review annually the actions we have taken in the development of our Single Equality Scheme

**Action Plan to Address the Accessibility Plan**

Improvements in access to the curriculum

Action:  *Ensure the curriculum is personalised and appropriate for all learners and in particular the students who have special educational needs*

Responsibility: FSL and managing Partners

**Action Plan to Address the Disability Equality Duty**

*This plan sets out how The Wilderness Grove will work to promote equality of accessibility for all students and staff.  This plan addresses our specific duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. It forms part of our general Equality Scheme and also relates to Accessibility Plan.*

The definition of disability is:

*‘A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial, adverse and long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities’*

Physical impairments include sensory loss and medical conditions. Mental impairments include learning difficulties. Substantial is defined as ‘not minor or trivial’ and long term is lasting twelve months or more. A person who has been disabled in the past is protected by legislation even if they no longer have a disability.

The definition includes people diagnosed with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV and are deemed to be disabled from diagnosis.

The definition includes students with Autism, ADHD, Speech and Language impairments, severe Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and mental health issues. Diabetes, Epilepsy, Disfigurement, Severe Asthma and Obesity are all disabilities under the law.

The Wilderness Grove celebrates diversity and promotes achievement of individuals regardless of their gender, sexuality, race, culture, religious or social background, ability and physical or sensory ability.

Students are encouraged to fulfil their potential through education, play, therapy, socialization, therapeutic intervention programmes of the highest standards including access to the National Curriculum.

There must be no discrimination on the basis of a person’s age, gender, ethnic group, ability, religious or social background, physical or sensory ability

Equal opportunities for training, career development and promotion to suitable posts will be made available to disabled staff in the same way as they are to other employees

Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons

Actions to develop Disability Equality:

* Action: *Review recruitment process and policy to ensure there is equality of access for disabled applicants*
  + Responsibility: Manager
* Eliminate harassment related to disabilities
  + Action: *This is not currently an issue. It will however be closely monitored and should any such incident occur this will form part of the action plan.*
* Promote positive attitudes to disability
  + Action: *Ensure the curriculum is personalised and appropriate for all learners*
  + Responsibility: Individual Forest School leaders
* Encourage participation by disabled people
  + Action: *To encourage adults with disabilities to be part of the School Community.*
  + Responsibility: Manager

**Gathering Information**

The Wilderness Grove will continue to collect data and evidence to ensure that policies and practices meet the legal responsibilities of the Disability Equality Scheme. Data will be collected on the number of applications from disabled people and the success rate at interview.

**Development and Retention of Disabled Employees**

The Wilderness Grove will monitor the satisfaction of disabled employees with the arrangements made for them (e.g. access to the office and provision of specialist equipment)

**Gender Equality Action Plan**

Actions to develop Gender Equality:

* To ensure that our Recruitment and Selection Policy has no gender bias. *This will be achieved by recruiting staff according to their qualifications, skills, experience and suitability for the post without recriminations, discrimination or prejudice.*
  + Responsibility: Managers

**Race Action Plan**

Actions to develop Race Equality:

* To ensure staff and parents are aware of the Race Equality Policy and Equality of Opportunities Policy. *This will be highlighted in the Admissions Process and then reinforced through the induction process and racial incident reporting process.*
  + Responsibility: Managers
* To ensure the Recruitment and Selection process has no racial bias. *This is to be achieved through recruiting staff according to their qualifications, skills, experiences and suitability for the post without preconceptions, stereotypical assumptions and neither positive or negative discrimination.*
  + Responsibility: Managers

**Evaluation of Disability Equality Scheme and Access Plan**

There is a legal requirement to have both an Access Plan and a disability Equality Scheme in place.  Since the two documents will have many overlapping elements, it is acceptable to dovetail the two pieces of work.  However, it is also important to ensure that no elements are missed in the overarching document.