



New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C.

Equality & Inclusion Policy

Statement of Intent

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) is committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity and creating an inclusive environment where every child, young person, family, member of staff, volunteer and visitor is treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

We believe everyone should have equitable access to our services and opportunities to participate, regardless of their background, identity, abilities or individual circumstances. We are committed to removing barriers wherever reasonably practicable so that everyone feels welcomed, valued and able to achieve their potential.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that NFOS operates in a fair, inclusive and non discriminatory manner across all areas of our organisation. It outlines our commitment to providing equitable access to support, play, learning and engagement, while ensuring all decisions are made in the best interests of the children and families we support.

Legal Framework

This policy has been developed with reference to the following legislation and guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

Our Commitment to Equality

NFOS is committed to ensuring that no individual experiences discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment.

We do not discriminate on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership (where applicable)

We also recognise that barriers may arise through language, socio-economic disadvantage, caring responsibilities and individual circumstances. Wherever possible, we take reasonable steps to reduce these barriers and promote equal opportunities for everyone accessing our services.

All decisions regarding access to services are based upon the individual needs, safety and best interests of the child.

Inclusion in Practice

Inclusive practice is at the heart of everything we do.

We recognise that every child is unique and may require different approaches to participate successfully. Our staff adapt activities, environments and support strategies to meet individual needs wherever reasonably practicable.

Inclusive practice may include:

- Reasonable adjustments
- Adapted activities
- Flexible communication methods
- Sensory adaptations
- Individualised support strategies
- Emotional regulation support
- Accessible resources
- Positive behaviour support approaches

SEND Inclusion

Supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is a core part of our organisation.

We work closely with parents, carers, schools and other professionals to develop individualised support that enables each child to participate confidently and safely.

Support is regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to meet the child's changing needs and outcomes.

Removing Barriers to Access

NFOS is highly committed to identifying and reducing barriers that may prevent individuals from accessing our services.

These barriers may be:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Social
- Communication-based
- Sensory
- Environmental

Where barriers are identified, reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented in a sensitive and discrete manner wherever practicable to promote meaningful participation.

Reasonable Adjustments

We recognise that some children and families require additional support to access services fairly.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Adapted environments
- Alternative communication methods
- Visual supports
- Flexible routines
- Sensory equipment
- Additional staffing where appropriate
- Personalised activity planning
- Admin Support with booking and accessing our services

Adjustments are considered individually and reviewed as needs change.

Anti-Discriminatory Practice

NFOS actively promotes respect, kindness and inclusion.

Discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or prejudice of any kind will not be tolerated.

Staff receive appropriate guidance and training to understand their responsibilities and are expected to challenge discriminatory behaviour appropriately, report concerns promptly and model inclusive practice at all times.

Cultural Sensitivity and Respect

We value and celebrate the diversity of the communities we serve.

Families are encouraged to share information about their culture, beliefs, traditions, language and individual preferences so we can provide support that respects their identity.

Our aim is to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected and included.

Working in Partnership with Families

We believe positive outcomes are achieved through strong partnerships with families.

Parents and carers are encouraged to share information about their child's strengths, needs, preferences and any concerns so that support can be planned collaboratively.

We value open communication and recognise parents and carers as experts in their child's individual needs.

We believe trust is built through openness and transparency. Parents, carers and professionals are always welcome to ask questions, discuss any aspect of our services and, where appropriate, visit our setting, remain on-site and observe how we work with children before deciding whether New Forest Outreach Support is the right choice for their family. We want every family to feel informed, confident and reassured before accessing our services.

Accessibility

NFOS is committed to making our services and information as accessible as reasonably practicable.

Where possible, information can be provided in alternative formats and reasonable adjustments will be considered to ensure everyone can access our services.

Confidentiality

Information relating to equality, protected characteristics or individual needs will be treated confidentially and managed in accordance with our Privacy Policy and Data Protection procedures.

Information will only be shared where necessary, lawful or where safeguarding responsibilities require it.

Responsibilities

Everyone associated with NFOS has a responsibility to promote equality and inclusion.

Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team will:

- Promote inclusive practice throughout the organisation.
- Review policies and procedures regularly.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training.
- Respond appropriately to concerns or complaints.
- Monitor equality and inclusion across services.

Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers are expected to:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Promote inclusion in everyday practice.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour appropriately.
- Report concerns promptly.

Parents, Carers and Visitors

Parents, carers and visitors are expected to:

- Treat others respectfully.
- Support an inclusive environment.
- Raise concerns appropriately through NFOS procedures.

Reporting Concerns

Any concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying or exclusion should be reported to a member of the Senior Management Team.

All concerns will be taken seriously, investigated fairly and managed in accordance with NFOS policies and procedures. Where appropriate, safeguarding procedures may also be followed.

Monitoring and Review

Equality and inclusion are monitored through:

- Staff supervision
- Service reviews
- Feedback from children and families
- Professional feedback
- Complaints and compliments
- Incident reporting
- Ongoing evaluation of our services

This helps us identify opportunities for continuous improvement and ensures our commitment to equality remains embedded throughout the organisation.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Accessibility Statement

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where required due to changes in legislation, guidance or operational practice.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for ensuring this policy remains effective, relevant and reflects current best practice.

Next Review Date: 01/01/27

Version 1.2