Early Education
100 YEARS 1923 - 2023
The British Association for Early Childhood Education

1. Equality and Diversity: statement of principles & policy

Note: this policy should be read in conjunction with other policies including the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.

Early Education is committed to tackling discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in all areas of operations including recruitment, training, management, pay and service delivery.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, our activities and services seek to redress direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership status, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief and sex & sexual orientation.

We aim to create a working environment in which all people are able to give of their best; there is no bullying, harassment or discrimination and all decisions are based on merit. We will seek to promote equal opportunities in our employment practices, including recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal and whistleblowing.

We will also promote equal opportunities in our governance, including representation on central and branch committees, the selection of our officers and patrons; and in our service delivery, including the profile of our membership, the recruitment of Associates and the delivery of training and events.

We will promote principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in our advocacy of high quality early education, highlighting where members and practitioners can act to increase equality of access and experience, and encouraging them to have high expectations for all the children in their care. Early Education maintains that it is vital to foster a positive attitude to these issues from the start, and expects members to set a good example for the children with whom they are in contact, and for their parents and carers.

We endorse the need and entitlement of all adults working with young children to have access to appropriate initial and in-service training. We shall continue to press for all group settings for young children to meet comparable requirements for staffing ratios, space, and health and safety, and for quality assurance to be provided by experienced professionals with relevant expertise and knowledge.

Early Education depends on the goodwill and commitment of all staff, volunteers, members, trustees and consultants to implement, monitor, and develop our equality and diversity practice. Any breaches within the Association must be challenged, and taken up via the appropriate mechanism as set out in policies including the Code of Conduct and Grievance Procedure.

We understand Britain as a multi-cultural society and as such are aware of the Prevent duty which engenders an open attitude to multi-cultural and race issues alongside an understanding of the risks and current good practice.

II. Equality and diversity policy

General principles

1. Early Education is committed to equality of opportunity for all.
2. We recognise that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions, and seek to value and harness this diversity to make our services relevant and approachable for everyone.
3. Our membership and services are open to anyone with a relevant professional interest, or who supports our aims.
4. We believe that all people have a right to employment and services which are free from direct and indirect discrimination on non-material grounds.
5. We seek to promote diversity and inclusion and to respond to the needs of all individuals in a fair and equitable manner.
6. We will work to reduce unfair discrimination in society and seek to eliminate such practices within the Association.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees have overall and final responsibility for ensuring that Early Education meets its responsibilities in relation to equalities legislation. The Board will ensure the development of a strategic commitment to diversity and inclusion which goes beyond adherence to any legal responsibilities.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is put into practice and in particular will ensure that:

a) staff receive sufficient information and training to enable them to implement this policy in their everyday work
b) line managers are aware of their responsibilities to their staff in relation to equal opportunities, inclusion and diversity
c) managing inclusion and diversity is internally driven, from a sense of commitment by the organisation and its employees
d) those responsible for equality, inclusion and diversity issues have the resources to carry out their work effectively

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

Employment

Recruitment and selection for posts will be carried out on the basis of our Recruitment Policy, and the equal opportunities principles outlined therein.

Training and development opportunities will be made available to staff without unlawful discrimination and with regard to individual circumstances.

We will ensure all HR policies including probationary review, appraisal and promotion, disciplinary policy, are applied equally to all staff, without unfair discrimination.

Governance

Opportunities for election or co-option to local branch committees, the Board of Trustees and national committees, and appointment as officers, will be open to all members, in accordance with Early Education's Articles of Association and bye-laws. Efforts will be made to encourage individuals from under-represented groups to put themselves forward, to achieve a balanced representation of our membership and the wider profession in our governance structures.

Training will be available to all trustees without unlawful discrimination and with regard to individual circumstances.

Engagement of consultants and contractors

We will follow equal opportunities principles in engaging consultants or contractors, including our Associates.

We will draw our equal opportunities statement to the attention of all consultants and contractors we engage, who will each be expected to work within the spirit and practice of this policy, and will be asked to confirm that they have read and understood the policy.

Religious & cultural needs

We will endeavour to ensure that our work requirements are consistent with both the needs of the organisation and the religious and cultural needs of staff.

Where staff have particular religious or cultural needs which conflict with work requirements, managers will consider whether it is reasonably practicable to vary or adapt these requirements to enable such needs to be met.

Disability

We will not directly discriminate against a person because of their actual or perceived disability.

We will make reasonable adjustments in the recruitment and employment of disabled people. For example, adjustments to recruitment and selection procedures, to terms and conditions of employment, to working arrangements and physical changes to the premises or equipment.

Personal conduct

Staff, volunteers and trustees must conduct themselves in accordance with our Code of Conduct, noting in particular the section on harassment. Our equal opportunities policy requires that all staff, volunteers and trustees treat any individuals they encounter in Early Education with respect, and that they recognise that diversity brings differences in behaviour and opinion, which must be respected unless these are in conflict with the core values of the organisation.

Access to membership and services

We will endeavour to ensure that our membership and services are accessible to all members and potential service users, and reflect the needs of the various

communities of people who may need them, including the use of accessible venues for training and events.

Communication

We will ensure that our services are well publicised to ensure equality of access. Where appropriate our publicity will include statements about our commitment to diversity and equal opportunities.

We will endeavour to ensure all our communications and publications use non-discriminatory language and images, and are inclusive of all relevant audiences.

We will endeavour to provide publications and training materials in alternative formats (eg electronic copies, large print, etc) when requested.

Working practices

We will seek to respect cultural differences and expectations with regard to catering, times and dates of meetings, modes of dress and conduct, language.

Last updated August 2025