



Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Policy Statement

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its work. We believe that every individual should be treated with dignity, respect and fairness regardless of their background, identity, circumstances or personal characteristics.

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where all children, young people, adult learners, families, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors feel valued, respected and able to participate fully in Forest School activities.

We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any form of unfair treatment and will take all reasonable steps to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate barriers to participation.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation.
- Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Promote positive relationships and mutual respect.
- Ensure all individuals have fair access to opportunities and services.
- Establish clear procedures for addressing concerns and complaints relating to equality and diversity.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by and complies with:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (where applicable)
- Prevent Duty Guidance

Under the Equality Act 2010, organisations have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.

- Foster good relations between different groups.

4. British Values

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd actively promotes British Values through its activities and interactions with learners.

These values include:

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual Respect
- Tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs and lifestyles

Through Forest School experiences, learners are encouraged to make choices, respect others, work collaboratively, appreciate diversity and develop positive relationships within a safe and inclusive environment.

5. Protected Characteristics

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person because of any of the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership
5. Pregnancy and Maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or Belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual Orientation

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd will ensure that individuals are not disadvantaged because of any protected characteristic.

6. Forms of Discrimination

The organisation recognises the following forms of unlawful discrimination:

Direct Discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by Association

Treating someone less favourably because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by Perception

Treating someone less favourably because it is believed they possess a protected characteristic, whether or not this is correct.

Indirect Discrimination

Applying a policy, practice or requirement that disadvantages people with a protected characteristic without objective justification.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation

Treating someone unfairly because they have made, supported or participated in a complaint relating to discrimination.

7. Commitment to Equality and Inclusion

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd is committed to:

- Providing equal access to all activities and opportunities.
- Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Challenging discrimination and prejudice.
- Promoting respect, understanding and acceptance.
- Valuing diversity and individual differences.
- Removing barriers that may prevent participation.

8. Recruitment and Employment

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd is committed to fair and inclusive recruitment practices.

Recruitment decisions will be based solely on:

- Skills
- Qualifications
- Experience
- Suitability for the role

We will ensure:

- Job advertisements are inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- Selection processes are fair and transparent.
- Interview arrangements are accessible.
- Reasonable adjustments are made where required.
- Recruitment decisions are documented and objective.

No applicant will be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

9. Reasonable Adjustments

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd will make reasonable adjustments to support disabled children, young people, adult learners, staff, volunteers and visitors.

Examples may include:

- Adapted activities.
- Additional support.
- Alternative communication methods.
- Flexible arrangements.
- Accessibility modifications where reasonably practicable.

Each request will be considered individually and in consultation with the person concerned and, where appropriate, their parent, carer or representative.

10. Positive Action

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd may take positive action where lawful and appropriate to address disadvantage or under-representation experienced by individuals sharing a protected characteristic.

Any positive action measures will be proportionate, evidence-based and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Directors and Management

Will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented effectively.
- Promote an inclusive culture.
- Investigate complaints appropriately.
- Monitor equality practices.
- Ensure staff receive relevant training.

Staff and Volunteers

Will:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- Promote equality and inclusion.
- Follow this policy and related procedures.
- Report concerns appropriately.

Learners, Parents and Visitors

Are expected to:

- Treat others respectfully.
- Support the principles of equality and inclusion.
- Raise concerns appropriately where necessary.

12. Disclosure Procedure

Any individual who experiences or witnesses discrimination, harassment, victimisation or inappropriate behaviour is encouraged to report the matter promptly.

Concerns may be raised with:

- The Forest School Leader.
- The Director.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (where safeguarding concerns exist).

All disclosures will be taken seriously and handled sensitively, fairly and confidentially where possible.

13. Recording and Responding to Concerns

All equality-related concerns, incidents or complaints will:

- Be recorded accurately.
- Be investigated proportionately.
- Be responded to promptly.
- Include actions taken and outcomes achieved.
- Be reviewed to identify patterns or recurring concerns.

Appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed where required.

14. Information Gathering and Data Collection

The organisation may collect and monitor equality-related information where lawful and appropriate to:

- Identify barriers to participation.

- Improve accessibility.
- Monitor inclusion.
- Review organisational practices.
- Meet legal obligations.

Information will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

15. Staff Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Staff and volunteers will (where needed) receive appropriate training and guidance relating to:

- Equality and diversity.
- Inclusion.
- Unconscious bias.
- Protected characteristics.
- Safeguarding and discrimination.
- Inclusive outdoor learning practices.

Additional training will be provided where specific needs are identified.

16. Confidentiality

All equality-related concerns, disclosures and complaints will be managed sensitively and confidentially.

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities, legal requirements and data protection legislation.

17. Communication

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd will communicate its commitment to equality and diversity through:

- Policies and procedures.
- Staff induction and training.
- Information provided to families and learners.
- Everyday practice and interactions.

Information will be made available in alternative formats where reasonably required.

18. Breaches of this Policy

Any breach of this policy by staff, volunteers, contractors, learners or visitors will be taken seriously.

Examples include:

- Discriminatory language.
- Harassment.
- Bullying.
- Victimisation.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments.
- Deliberate exclusion or unfair treatment.

Appropriate action will be taken depending on the nature and seriousness of the breach.

19. Disciplinary Action

Where a member of staff or volunteer breaches this policy, action may be taken under the organisation's disciplinary procedures.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- Informal management action.
- Additional training.
- Formal warnings.
- Suspension.
- Termination of employment or volunteer arrangements.

Serious breaches may also result in referral to external agencies where appropriate.

20. Complaints and Grievances

Any person who believes they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment may make a complaint.

Complaints should normally be raised with the Forest School Leader in the first instance.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it will be managed through the Little Acorn's Forest Schools Ltd Complaints Procedure as appropriate.

No individual will suffer detriment for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

21. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, guidance or organisational requirements change.

The organisation will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and take appropriate action to ensure continual improvement in equality, diversity and inclusion practices.

Policy reviewed August 2026- no alterations made- Kate Morison (Lead Practitioner)