

Kith & Kids – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure**10th January 2025*****Equal Opportunities Statement***

Kith & Kids declare their intention in keeping with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, to pursue an equal opportunities policy, not only as employers, but also regarding our service users, and the volunteers who support our services & activities.

We are opposed to victimisation, discrimination and harassment on any grounds, directly, indirectly, by perception or by association. We oppose victimisation, discrimination and harassment on the grounds of disability, age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation by other employees, service users, volunteers or by third parties.

We intend to monitor regularly the effectiveness of our policy. The Kith & Kids Management Committee (The Board of Trustees) will be responsible for a regular review of the policy, objectives and practice.

Definition of Discrimination

Discrimination means treating someone 'less favourably' than someone else, because of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'. Less favourable treatment can be anything that puts someone with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared to someone who does not have that characteristic.

In addition Kith & Kids believes that someone should not be treated less favourably because of the following additional factors:

- political affiliations
- economic status

There is no legal definition of 'putting someone at a disadvantage'. But it might include:

- excluding someone from opportunities or benefits
- making it harder for someone to do their job
- causing someone emotional distress
- causing someone financial loss

It can still be discrimination even if the less favourable treatment was not intended.

Types of discrimination

- direct discrimination – less favourable treatment directly because of a protected characteristic
- indirect discrimination – when everyone's treated the same but where people with a protected characteristic are put at a disadvantage
- harassment – unwanted or offensive behaviour related to a protected characteristic
- victimisation – negative treatment because of being involved with a discrimination or harassment complaint.

How and when discrimination can happen

Discrimination – including harassment and victimisation – can happen in any area of work or within our projects or social events. It can result from decisions made or from how people behave towards each other. Discrimination might not always be obvious or noticed by others.

Decisions made at work, projects or events

Discrimination can happen when employers make decisions around things such as:

- accessibility of the workplace, project or event and systems people need to use
- dress codes
- performance management
- recruitment and promotion
- redundancy and dismissals
- sickness and absence
- terms and conditions of employment
- training
- ways of working
- working hours or rest breaks
- facilities
- events

How people behave at work, projects or events

The way people behave at work, projects or events can discriminate in different ways.

For example, discrimination might:

- be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident
- happen in the workplace, at projects or events or when people are working remotely
- happen face to face, on social media, in emails or phone calls
- be spoken or written words, wearing of badges or clothing, imagery, graffiti, gestures, jokes, pranks or unwanted physical behaviour

It might not always be someone's intention to discriminate or cause offence.

Who someone can experience discrimination from

Someone could experience discrimination from anyone they encounter because of their job, or attendance at our projects or events. Discrimination is often directed at an individual. But that's not always the case. Sometimes there can be a culture that's not specifically aimed at one person. Discrimination can come from someone who shares the same protected characteristic.

When discrimination might not be obvious

This can include:

- unconscious bias – when someone's thoughts or decisions are influenced by beliefs or assumptions that they might not be aware of
- stereotyping people – having a fixed view of what someone's like or what they can do based on a protected characteristic
- microaggressions – small comments, questions or behaviours that are inappropriate or can cause offence, sometimes without the person who's doing it realising

Types of direct discrimination

There are 3 types of direct discrimination. These are when it happens to a person who:

- has a protected characteristic – sometimes called 'ordinary' direct discrimination
- has a connection with someone with a protected characteristic – called 'discrimination by association'
- is thought to have a protected characteristic when they do not – called 'discrimination by perception'

Kith & Kids Policy

Kith & Kids is a self-support group for any family who has a member with a disability, living in London or the Home Counties, and other interested individuals, on the condition that they keep to the rules laid out below.

It is the responsibility of all Kith & Kids Users, Volunteers, Staff and the Management Committee (Board of Trustees) to follow this policy and the responsibility of the Management Committee to ensure that this policy is followed by others.

Kith & Kids value diversity amongst staff, volunteers and members and actively seeks to promote such an environment.

Kith & Kids Management Committee (The Board of Trustees) is committed to the elimination of harassment, discrimination and prejudice, experienced by individuals and groups who participate in Kith & Kids activities. The Trustees will implement this Policy by:

1. Making and publishing a clear statement of intent as contained in this policy document and ensuring that it is understood by all who participate in Kith & Kids services. This would include at recruitment, training and invitations to work and attend projects and events.
2. Ensuring that it is a condition of membership, employment by Kith & Kids and involvement in Kith & Kids activities that all concerned subscribe to this Policy and will actively participate in implementing it.

3. Monitoring programmes, events publicity and activities to ensure that they are not in contravention of this Policy.
4. Making sure that all new job vacancies are advertised in a range of relevant press and that there is not discrimination against any applicant on any of the above grounds.

We will not allow the following sorts of behaviour within any Kith & Kids activity:

- Prejudicial attitudes to individuals or groups in relation to any of the above.
- Discriminatory name-calling, insulting remarks, jokes or threats.
- Writing other such remarks on walls or other places.
- Encouraging other people to harass or discriminate against another individual or groups.
- Provocative behaviour.
- Expressing political opinions or engaging in political activity during the course of their work for Kith & Kids. This includes, but is not limited to, displaying political symbols, racist or potential offensive political badges, or slogans, and engaging in political debates or discussions while performing duties or when interacting with service users, other employees, or members of the public.
- Bringing into Kith & Kids premises, or premises in use by Kith & Kids, materials such as leaflets and magazines which in any way support discrimination.

Wearing of badges or slogans on clothing that are not offensive and would not be considered contrary to our policy, might (but not exhaustively) include: Music Bands, Social Clubs, Holiday events, Christmas or other celebratory jumpers, Kith & Kids or KLASP paraphernalia, non-offensive humour, other charities.

In the event of any alleged or actual victimisation, discrimination and harassment to an individual or group taking part in Kith & Kids activities, the Management Committee (The Board of Trustees) or their designated representatives shall:

1. Investigate fully, by talking with all people who were involved or may have witnessed the incident and recording the statements.
2. Discuss the incident with the alleged perpetrator, re-stating Kith & Kids' Policy.
3. Aid and support the abused party by providing any necessary help from within the organisation or outside.
4. If the incident is proven, the Management Committee (The Board of Trustees) will discuss with the perpetrator the possibility of their continuing, or not continuing, involvement with Kith & Kids.
5. In the case of violence, assault or sexual mis-conduct, if it is established, suspension will be immediate.

This procedure does not in any way prejudice the right of an individual to involve the police, and Kith & Kids would cooperate fully in such a case. This policy is under constant review and in no way affects people's statutory rights.

Users of Kith & Kids Services

Kith & Kids shall inform potential users and their families of this Policy.

All users and their families should be involved in a positive manner about the approach and development of Kith & Kids services.

Records of Kith & Kids users, their families and volunteers are confidential to Kith & Kids Board of Trustees, Projects Manager and Family Support Co-ordinator and the relative family or individual.

We will seek to promote a positive public image of people with learning disabilities and autism. Kith & Kids focuses on the person's abilities, not their disability.

All Kith & Kids publicity should reflect this.

Action

1. Review and assess means of disseminating information about Kith & Kids.
2. Make every effort to regularly involve as many families as possible on Users Groups and the Management Committee (The Board of Trustees) over a period of time.
3. Review publicity materials.

Whether you are staff or a volunteer, you will be required to sign up to a contract with the following provision and if there is no contract, the following provisions shall be binding on you as is this Policy:

In accordance with Kith & Kids' commitment to maintain political neutrality, employees and volunteers are required to refrain from expressing political opinions or engaging in political activity during the course of their work for the charity. This includes but is not limited to displaying political symbols, badges or slogans and engaging in political debates or discussions while performing duties or when interacting with service users, other employees, volunteers or members of the public. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

While individuals are of course free to hold personal political beliefs, they should not express them in ways that could be seen as representing Kith & Kids or causing conflict within the workplace. In summary, to protect the integrity and reputation of Kith & Kids, the Management Committee (Board of Trustees) have decided to adopt this Policy that prohibit both verbal and non-verbal political expressions by employees and volunteers when engaging in activities for and on behalf of Kith & Kids.

Recruitment & Development of Staff and Volunteers

The recruitment process set out below is designed to ensure that all applicants receive fair and equal treatment, and that none is placed at a disadvantage by discriminatory or irrelevant requirements:

1. Vacancies will be advertised as widely as possible to encourage applicants from all sections of the community. Advertisements will include the statement "Kith & Kids is an equal opportunities employer."
2. For each vacancy a job description and person specification will be drawn up.
3. Each applicant will receive:
 - Application Form

- Job Description and Person Specification
 - Information about Kith & Kids in general and the post in particular.
 - The Equality, diversity & inclusion policy of Kith & Kids.
4. All requests and applications will be dealt with promptly and courteously.
 5. All applications will be assessed in terms of the person specification. The short-list will be drawn up on these criteria alone.
 6. Interviews will be designed to:
 - Assess candidate's ability/suitability for the specific job.
 - Gain an insight into the applicant's personality.
 - Provide an opportunity for the candidate to gain further information about the job and working conditions.
 - The panel will ask the same questions of each candidate. It will not ask irrelevant or discriminatory questions.
 7. All papers relating to the interview will be kept for the probationary period of three months.

Staff development

An appropriate induction programme is provided for each new employee. This includes the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Kith & Kids Objects and Values. Opportunities will be provided for staff, parents and volunteers to share their skills and experiences. Each new member of staff will have a work review within three months, then six monthly to identify development needs. Kith & Kids will attempt to fill those needs by the most appropriate means

Volunteer Recruitment

We aim to recruit from all sections of the community and in so doing will not discriminate on the grounds of disability, age (above a minimum requirement), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Volunteer records are confidential. A volunteer is entitled to inspect their own file.

Action

1. Review methods of keeping records on volunteers.
2. Review and Monitor the composition of Kith & Kids Volunteers, with a view to extending the participation of under represented groups.
3. Ensure that all volunteers are aware of Kith & Kids Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and ensure that in their contract they have read the paragraph set out in this Policy.

Volunteer Development

Volunteers will be made aware of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Kith & Kids Objects and values. Volunteers must contribute in a positive manner to discussions about the approach and development of the members of Kith & Kids.

Management Structures and Decision Making Procedures

Action

1. Broaden membership of management committee (Board of Trustees), actively encourage parental involvement in project sub-committees, particularly seeking to involve all the families of Kith & Kids over a period of time.
2. Re-establish parent support groups.

Responsibility for the Implementation of this Policy

All employees, volunteers and trustees of Kith & Kids are required to act in a way that does not subject any other employees, volunteers, trustees or members to direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation

The co-operation of all employees, volunteers and trustees is essential for the success of this Policy.

Employees will be held responsible for not complying with this Policy and be independently and individually liable for their acts that contravene the Kith & Kids Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Kith & Kids takes overall responsibility for achieving the objectives of this Policy, and ensuring that this Policy is complied with and will endeavour as an organisation to ensure compliance with relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice.

Acting on Discriminatory Behaviour

If an employee is the subject or perpetrator of, or witness to, discriminatory behaviour, please refer to our grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures. All complaints of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with swiftly, sensitively and confidentially to cause minimum distress to the complainant and the accused.

Complaints should be made as soon as possible so that the incident is still clearly remembered by those directly involved or any witnesses. Whenever an allegation of discrimination is made, an incident report should be written up outlining those involved, the date/time the incident occurred and treated as a complaint once the complainant has confirmed the details of the report.

Designated Officer

Name: Nicole Francis

Position: Chief Executive

Contact nicole@kithandkids.org.uk

Number: 07899 535369

Get more advice and support

If you have any questions about discrimination, you can contact the:

- [Acas helpline](#)
- [Equality Advisory and Support Service \(EASS\)](#)

You can find more detailed legal guidance on the Equality Act 2010 in the [Employment: Statutory Code of Practice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission](#).

Policy update and review

Kith & Kids reserves the right to amend and update this Policy at any time.

The next formal review date will be December 2025.