Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

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1. Purpose

Barnardo's is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); this commitment is integral to our Basis and Values. EDI is a key enabler to our 10-year Corporate Strategy and this policy gives effect to how we ensure EDI is truly central to the organisation.

Our aim is to embed EDI, into everything we do by making our services inclusive and accessible to all children, young people, families and carers so we can fulfil our purpose to transform the lives of the United Kingdom's most vulnerable children.

In promoting equality, we aim to eliminate discrimination or less favourable treatment, harassment, victimisation on the grounds of any protected characteristic and ensure treatment is fair and equitable in all areas of our organisation. We want our workforce and volunteer base to reflect the make-up of the wider communities in which we work. We value the rich diversity and multiple identities our staff and volunteers have and the contributions they make to the organisation and our workplace culture.

We want all of our staff, as and when workers and volunteers to feel valued, respected and for our organisational culture to be one of inclusion for all.

This policy, alongside, our EDI Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers sets out our approach and reinforces the behaviours we expect to see demonstrated within our workforce, volunteer base and in our policies, procedures and practices.

This policy, along with others, demonstrates Barnardo's compliance with the Equality Act 2010, and equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, as and when workers, agency workers, volunteers, and service users. Where Barnardo's services are provided by external contractors or third parties on the basis of a specification set by Barnardo's, these contractors or third parties are responsible for adhering to Barnardo's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- The **Board of Trustees**, our governing body, has overall responsibility for ensuring we comply with this policy and the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant equality legislation in Northern Ireland.

- The **Chief Executive Officer,** has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy, assisted by the Director of People and Culture. As Chair of the Corporate EDI Board, the Chief Executive provides leadership on EDI and drives delivery of the Corporate EDI Action Plan working closely with the Corporate EDI Board members to monitor progress and outcomes.

- The **Corporate Leadership Group** – act as equality champions and role models in the implementation of this policy and integrate EDI into their areas, providing leadership and accountability. Within the Corporate Leadership Group there are named Corporate Champions for Race Equality, Disability, LGBT+ and Women who sit on the Corporate Leadership Team.
  They have a role to ensure EDI actions are cascaded centrally and/or defined locally are built into business/action plans down the management line. **EIA screenings** where identified as relevant are carried out and full EIAs where required are completed.

- **Corporate EDI Board –** The role of the (CEDIB) is to oversee the delivery and scrutinise progress on the delivery of the Corporate EDI Action Plan; to champion EDI as a strategic enabler to our Corporate Strategy so that all staff and volunteers understand its importance to service delivery; and across the organisation. It is the role of the Board to promote, advocate and role-model a culture of inclusion across the organisation.

- **EDI Team -** The role of the EDI team is to work strategically and collaboratively with senior managers across operational functions and across Regions/Nations to effectively deliver the Corporate and local EDI Action Plans to deliver operational impact. The Team will engage staff and volunteers to champion EDI and facilitate increased capability and confidence to embed EDI into service delivery and business as usual. It is the role of the EDI team to strategically advise and support managers with EIA implementation, EDI issues and support the development of our EDI networks.

- **People Team –** are responsible for ensuring that managers and staff are aware of Barnardo's commitment to EDI. They provide support to line managers to investigate and deal promptly with any incidents or individual behaviours that contravene this policy or the Prevention of Harassment Policy. The teams manage take-up of mandatory EDI training for all new entrants and refresher training. Produce timely, accurate and appropriate equality management information on staff and volunteers to the Corporate Leadership Team, Corporate EDI Board and senior managers, to inform decision-making.

- **Line managers -** should be knowledgeable about and committed to EDI, making it integral to everything they do; showing strong leadership, role-modelling and challenging poor behavior. Line managers are responsible for taking an active role in the delivery of the Corporate EDI Action Plan and implementing all policies fairly for all staff, volunteers, and agency workers.

- **Staff –** should be knowledgeable about and committed to EDI and have an active role in delivering the Corporate EDI Action Plan. Members of staff have a responsibility to fulfill the requirements of this policy and act in line with the EDI Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers and treat others with dignity and respect and contribute to creating an inclusive and safe environment that values diversity. In addition, members of staff have a responsibility to report discrimination, bullying and unfair treatment or harassment that they experience or witness to their line manager, Corporate or Local People team, whistleblowing helpline (See Inside Barnardo's) or UNISON representative.

- **Volunteers** – should play an active role in creating an environment where people are valued and respected and by reporting discrimination, bullying and unfair treatment or harassment if they experience or witness it to their line manager or whistleblowing helpline.

- **UNISON UK Joint Forum** – is the formal meeting between Barnardo's management and UNISON. The Forum is made up of representatives from Barnardo's Directorates and UNISON representatives. EDI is a standing item on the agenda.

- **Local EDI Boards or Forums** - Local EDI Boards or Forums are either chaired by a Regional Director or senior leaders. The role of the EDI Boards or Forums is to develop and implement their local EDI action plan and provide a mechanism for EDI issues to be discussed and solutions sought. Their membership comprises EDI regional network chairs, staff and UNISON representatives.

- **Region/Nation EDI Networks -** There are four EDI National networks (Race Equality, Disability, LGBT+ and Women's) - each network has a voluntary National chair who sits on the Corporate EDI Board representing their networks. All National Network Chairs will identify with the protected characteristic of their network. Each network will have a voluntary regional chair for each Region/Nation and will normally identify with the protected characteristic of their network. All of the networks are open to all staff and volunteers who share the protected characteristic and those who do not. The purpose of the networks is to enable staff and volunteers to influence the work of the networks and the delivery plan, share perspectives and support staff and volunteers in the delivery of the EDI Action Plan. All the networks have a closed safe space for members.

- **Our Service Providers, contractors and consultants'** – have a responsibility to operate within the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (and equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland) and the terms of this policy.

4. Policy

This policy sets out our aim to be a diverse, inclusive organisation and comply with the Equality Act 2010 and all relevant equality legislation in Northern Ireland. We are committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace and building an organisational culture that is open and where individuals feel safe, lived experiences are accepted and the contributions of all are valued and respected.

Our Basis and Values underpin our work with children and young people, their families and carers, and how we relate to each other at work. Our first organisational core value is 'Respecting the unique worth of every person'. We believe that every person is different but equal, and that everyone's unique talent should be recognised and encouraged.

In the implementation of this policy, we will:

Ensure employment decisions are made on merit, competence and free from unconscious or conscious bias and all forms of discrimination. This applies to all parts of the employee or volunteer life cycle and our employment policies and practices:

- Recruitment and selection
- Induction
- Terms of conditions of employment
- Working environment
- Employee relations
- Reward and Recognition
- Training and development
- Promotion and career progression
- Redundancy and Re-deployment

We shall collect and monitor diversity data for staff and volunteers and evidence our impact of all our policies, practices and service delivery by conducting EIA screenings and full EIAs where required.

We shall take action where equality evidence shows an adverse impact for individuals from a protected characteristic. In order to comply with our legal obligations we will, where possible, undertake workplace adjustments for disabled individuals.

All members of staff are required to undertake mandatory EDI online training within two weeks of appointment and attend the EDI Classroom training within six months. Existing staff undertake refresher training every three years. EDI training is monitored for completion. All volunteers have to complete induction training and are expected to have read the Volunteer Induction Handbook, which includes a section on EDI.

Our EDI Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers is a practical guide to the behaviours we expect at work. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to challenge any behaviour that offends, intimidates and is hostile, degrading or humiliating to others. If they do not feel confident to do this, they can discuss the matter with their manager or with their Local People team/volunteer coordinator and access our Prevention of Harassment Policy. Alternatively, members of staff can raise concerns via the Whistle-blowing helpline or UNISON representative

Agencies workers and external consultants receive Barnardo's Welcome Pack which includes our EDI Code of Conduct.

We communicate and update our staff and volunteers on EDI through internal communications, EDI Networks, team/directorate employee engagement forums and Workplace.

5. Meadows School Addendum to Barnardo's EDI Policy

Purpose
This addendum sets out how Meadows School puts Barnardo's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy into practice. It should be read alongside the main policy and the school's safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, SEND, accessibility and complaints policies.

Our aim is for every pupil, member of staff and family to feel respected, included and able to participate in school life.

Our Approach
As a school supporting pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, we recognise that pupils may face different and overlapping barriers to learning and belonging.
Fairness does not always mean treating everyone identically. We provide support and adjustments that reflect individual needs while maintaining high expectations for every pupil.

We recognise pupils' strengths, ambitions and identities, and involve them in decisions about their education and support.

Daily School Practice
We will:

- Plan teaching, resources and activities so that pupils with different needs can participate and achieve.
- Make reasonable adjustments and address barriers to learning, communication and access.
- Use curriculum materials that reflect diverse lives, cultures, families and experiences, and challenge stereotypes.
- Promote equitable access to trips, enrichment, leadership opportunities, careers guidance and preparation for adulthood.
- Consider how disability, SEND, trauma, culture and communication needs may affect behaviour and how pupils experience our responses.
- Ensure individual needs are considered when making decisions about support, sanctions and participation.

Challenging Discrimination
Racism, discriminatory language, harassment and prejudice-based bullying will be challenged whenever they occur, including when described as jokes or banter.

Staff will respond promptly, support those affected, record incidents through the school's agreed systems and refer concerns to the appropriate leader. Responses will take account of pupils' understanding and communication needs, while making clear the harm caused and the behaviour expected.

Leaders will review repeated incidents and patterns, including whether further support, staff training or changes to school practice are needed. Safeguarding concerns will be referred through safeguarding procedures.

Pupil and Family Voice
We will provide accessible ways for pupils and families to share their experiences, raise concerns and influence school improvement.

We will seek the views of those who may find it harder to participate and explain how their feedback has informed decisions.

Responsibilities
- The Principal will lead implementation and ensure concerns are addressed.
- Governors will provide oversight, challenge and review progress.
- Senior leaders will embed these commitments in their areas of responsibility.
- All staff will model respectful behaviour, challenge discrimination and adapt their practice to support inclusion.
- Pupils will be supported to understand respect, fairness and their responsibility towards others.

Monitoring and Review
Leaders will review relevant information about attendance, progress, behaviour, suspensions, participation, complaints and discriminatory incidents to identify barriers or unequal experiences.

Findings will inform practical improvement actions and be shared with governors, with appropriate protection of personal information.

This addendum will be reviewed annually alongside the school's EDI policy, or sooner where concerns or changes require it.

6. Definitions

- **Protected characteristics**. The Equality Act 2010 (and equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland) protects people from discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the workplace and in wider society, including access to services, premises and education. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone on the grounds referred to as 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. In Northern Ireland, religion or belief includes political opinion/community background.

  There is other legislation to ensure the fair treatment of part-time workers, trade union representatives, and whistle-blowers. In addition, Barnardo's will not discriminate on the grounds of irrelevant offending background, responsibility for dependents, economic status or political values.

- **Discrimination** can take several forms:
  - **Direct Discrimination** occurs where, because of a protected characteristic, a person is treated less favourably than another person because they belong to one of the protected groups.
  - **Discrimination by association** occurs when; someone discriminates against an individual because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
  - **Discrimination by perception** occurs when; someone discriminates against an individual because they think they possess a particular protected characteristic.

- **Indirect discrimination** occurs when, a seemingly neutral policy, procedure or practice that applies to everyone but disadvantages a group of people who share a particular protected characteristic compared with people who do not share that protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination may be justified if it can be shown that the policy, procedure or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Failure to make a Reasonable adjustment.** This type of discrimination can occur where the employer fails to implement a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person as defined under the Equality Act 2010.
- **Detriment arising from a disability** occurs when you treat a disabled person unfavorably because of something connected with their disability.
- **Harassment** occurs when unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that individual.
- **Victimisation** occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than someone else because they have complained about discrimination or are suspected of doing so or have supported someone else who has.

- **EIAs -** is a practical way of considering what might be the **potential equality outcomes** - positive or negative, from any change to a policy, process or procedure (Equality risk analysis)

  EIA is the **most effective too**l available to organisations, especially in the voluntary sector and public sector, in demonstrating that they have legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

  It is how we show how we meet our **legal duties** of showing **due regard** under the Equality Act 2010 and the **Public Sector Equality Duty**.

7. Appendices

- **Associated guidance and documents:**
  - EDI Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers
  - Prevention of Harassment policy and Frequently Asked Questions
  - Bullying and Harassment Toolkit for managers
  - Respect at Work poster
  - Grievance resolution and policy and procedure and Frequently Asked Questions
  - Disciplinary Policy
  - Whistleblowing Policy
  - EIA guidance and templates
  - EDI Networks on Workplace

- **References:**

  The following Acts and subsequent amendments:

  - Equality Act 2010

- Public Sector Equality Duty (Public authorities are defined as carrying out the functions of Central or Local Government and provide public services funded by Central or Local Government)
- Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations
- Equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland

- **Compliance:**
  - Corporate and Local People Teams monitoring of general adherence to this policy to ensure the policy aims and actions remain relevant
  - Monitoring of grievance complaints and discrimination claims
  - Feedback from UNISON and Barnardo's EDI Networks
  - Audits

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