**Gorse Hill Studios Creative Community**

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

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**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Gorse Hill Studios is a charity youth organisation who set out to engage with young people and offer a place where they can express themselves freely within creative arts, these include:

* Music
* Drama
* Dance
* Art
* Digital Arts

GHS are aware that every young person has unique needs, but also accepts that everyone has the right to express themselves in a friendly, safe environment. Everyone involved in the organisation is required to read this policy carefully and read any future updates;

**Statement of policy**

**The organisations seek to work within all relevant legislation and good practice including:**

[Equality Act 2010](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equality_Act_2010)

[Protection from Harassment Act 1997](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protection_from_Harassment_Act_1997)

[*Sex Discrimination Act 1975*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_Discrimination_Act_1975) *and* [*Equal Pay Act 1970*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equal_Pay_Act_1970)

[*Disability Discrimination Act 1995*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability_Discrimination_Act_1995)

[*Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment_Equality_(Sexual_Orientation)_Regulations_2003)

We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and although equality of opportunity has been a long standing feature of our employment practices and procedure, we have made the decision to adopt a formal equality and diversity policy across the organisation to develop our procedures and working practices.

The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant, employee or worker, volunteer, Board member or service user is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability. Furthermore we will work towards the widest range of service to meet local needs and involve all sections of the community and service users.

We are committed to ensuring our recruitment methods are open and accessible to disabled applicants. We make every effort to supply all necessary building adaptations and employment equipment to enable disabled employees to carry out the full duties of their jobs.

If a certain aspect of a job would prove unachievable by a disabled applicant or employee due to the nature of their impairment, we will give full consideration to the possibility of redesigning the job to remove that particular barrier.

We will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees, volunteers and that the statement of policy is displayed for service users and made known to all applicants for employment.

The policy will be communicated to all freelancers and private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice.

We will maintain a neutral working environment in which no employee or volunteer feels under threat or intimidated.

**Code of conduct**

This is intended to outline the expected personal and professional standards that all employees and volunteers must strive to achieve. By maintaining the standards, employees will work in an environment that is productive, positive, enjoyable and safe from harassment and discrimination.

This framework includes the values that are fundamental to the organisations corporate ethics and include: integrity, honesty, conscientiousness, compassion, courtesy, fairness, equality, and respect. It is the responsibility of all the organisations stakeholders to ensure they are adhered to.

**Employees’ responsibilities**

1. Employees and volunteers are responsible for their own performance, behaviour, and attendance in the workplace.
2. Ensuring that their own communication and behaviour is in accordance with the principles, practice and ethos of this policy, ensuring that other individuals whether they are; clients, other employees, volunteers, contractors, or other third parties are not offended, or insulted by such comments or behaviour.

**Managers’ responsibilities**

1. It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that all staff adhere to the code of conduct.
2. Exemplify the company’s code of conduct themselves.
3. Report any departure from the code by other individuals.
4. Provide education and / or training as and when required.
5. Where there is a breach or suspected breach of this code, an investigation against the individual or individuals involved will be conducted in a prompt, consistent, fair, and timely manner. The principles of natural justice will always be maintained whilst dealing with an investigation.

**Service Provision**

It is central to our work that we take action to address the social disadvantage faced by the communities and young people we work with. We are aware that positive action may be needed in areas such as working younger people and people with.

Within this framework the organisations will not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, disability, race, class, religion, sexuality, marital status, caring responsibility, HIV status or unrelated criminal conviction. The project will also actively seek to ensure that no volunteer is subject to such discrimination with any host agency to which he/she may be referred.

**To make this policy effective, the management committee will:**

* Work towards and maintain appropriate quality mark standards
* ensure that gaps in provision / access by under represented groups are built into our service plans;
* monitor, through verbal and written reports, and statistics where appropriate, the delivery, accessibility and availability of our services;
* continually review our service provision and provide where necessary training for management and staff members and volunteers;
* operate and publicise procedures for informal feedback and formal complaints.
* Room Hire / Partner Agencies
* The organisation has an expectation that room users / partner agencies who utilise space within our premises and who work in partnership with us will work to the same statement, code of conduct and ethos. To communicate and share this information we will;
* Display a copy of the full Equality and Diversity Policy in each centre

### Employment & Volunteering

We are committed to being an equal opportunity employer. We will ensure that no job applicant, employee, volunteer or placement student:

* receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, gender, marital status, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, disability, unrelated criminal conviction, HIV status or membership of a trade union is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified.

The programme of action to make this policy effective involves:

* internal procedures for resolving staff grievances [and problems arising for volunteers]
* fair and effective selection and appraisal procedures (to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities).

### Governance

We will seek to ensure that our Boards are made up of a diverse group of people, including a range of age groups.

The programme of action to make this policy effective involves:

* regular self-appraisal by the Boards;
* clear and transparent polices for membership of the organisation and Board membership;
* member and trustee recruitment plans;
* induction, training and guidance for Board members.