**Gorse Hill Studios Creative Community**

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

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| **Issue** | **Page(s)** | **Issue Date** | **Additions/Alterations** | **Initials** |
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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)

Introduction

We are an equal opportunities organisation We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

The terms equality, inclusion, diversity and equity are at the heart of this policy. ‘Equality’ means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination. ‘Inclusion’ means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution. ‘Diversity’ means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce and service users. ‘Equity’ means recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others, and putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all. We will actively support diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that our workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers, agency workers and service users and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored, and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

All employees, workers, self-employed facilitators/volunteers and service users will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees/volunteers and service users will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of GHS.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals of GHS as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of everyone to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality and equity throughout GHS.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal without notice.

Our commitment as an employer

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or through our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate.

GHS is committed to:

* creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff/volunteers & service users are recognised and valued
* everyone is entitled to anenvironment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
* providing training, development and progression opportunities to all staff
* understanding equality and inclusion in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense
* reviewing all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness and inclusion for all
* taking steps to ensure equity amongst our workforce such as ensuring that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse range of potential candidates and, where relevant, to particular groups that have been identified as disadvantaged or underrepresented in GHS, taking positive action to recruit disabled people and ensuring there are no unlawful barriers to accessing our employment opportunities, training, progression opportunities, benefits and facilities
* diversity in our workforce will be regularly monitored to ensure equal opportunities throughout GHS. Where appropriate, measures will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary obstacles and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups
* monitoring and reviewing this policy annually.

Our commitment as a service provider

GHS is committed to:

* providing services to which all users are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
* making sure our services are delivered equally and meet the diverse needs of our service users
* taking steps to ensure equity amongst our service users such as removing any unlawful obstacles to accessing our services or facilities. Where appropriate, measures will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups
* fully supporting this policy by senior management
* monitoring and reviewing this policy annually

**Equal opportunity policy statements**

**Age**

We will:

* ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity
* ensure that employees and volunteers are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities and
* challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

**Disability**

We will:

* provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment/volunteering opportunities. If we feel that a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will discuss this with you and try to find an alternative solution where possible
* challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people and
* seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring alternative formatting and sign language interpretation where possible
* If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate
* We will keep the physical features of our premises under review to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

**Race**

We will:

* challenge racism wherever it occurs
* respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents and
* actively promote race equality and inclusion in GHS
* take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
* offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

**Gender**

We will:

* challenge discriminatory assumptions about gender
* take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
* offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same and
* provide support to prevent discrimination against transgender people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

**Sexual orientation**

We will:

* ensure that we take account of the needs of everyone, including the LGBTQ+ communities
* promote positive images of the LGBTQ+ communities
* challenge discriminatory assumptions about the LGBTQ+ communities
* take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone and
* offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

**Religion or belief**

We will:

* ensure that employees’ /volunteers and service users’ religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible and
* respect people’s beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

**Pregnancy or maternity**

We will:

* ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity during pregnancy or maternity leave
* challenge discriminatory assumptions about pregnancy or maternity and
* ensure that no individual is disadvantaged during pregnancy or maternity leave and that we take account of the needs of our employees’ during pregnancy or maternity leave.

**Marriage or civil partnership**

We will:

* ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity regardless of marriage or civil partnership status
* challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees/volunteers and service users and
* ensure that no individual is disadvantaged as a result of their marriage or civil partnership status.

**Part time and fixed term work**

Part time and fixed term staff should be treated the same as comparable full time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

**Equal pay**

We will ensure that all employees have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits or carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value

Reporting

* Service users should report any incidents verbally to the session lead as soon as possible, where appropriate action shall be taken immediately, and then recorded on Views. If necessary further information will be sought, and the next steps will be discussed with the reporting individual/group and where necessary, with parent/guardian. We may ask service users to record in writing their complaint so we can gather information and take appropriate steps and actions.
* Employee & volunteers- there is a formal and an informal method of reporting as inline with the Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

Signed 

Date 22/5/2022