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Inclusivity Statement

At Early Break, we take inclusion, equality and diversity seriously. We know that getting this right is critical for us to live our organisation’s values: **Compassionate, Trustworthy, Fair, Accountable, Innovative and Collaborative.** Inclusion, equality and diversity are not identical, but they are reliant on one other to tackle discrimination. For example, we cannot achieve real inclusion unless we embrace all three. For the purposes of this statement we are using the words ‘inclusive’, inclusion’ and ‘inclusivity’.

We are committed to encouraging a dynamic and inclusive working environment, where we benefit from a variety of perspectives to make smarter decisions and better support young people and families. We have a humanitarian, ethical and legal responsibility to celebrate and champion inclusivity. We will actively work to ensure that our organisation is inclusive and accessible to all.

This means that our organisation and the support we give to our young people and families will be impartial, neutral and universal and is a place where anyone feels welcomed to work, volunteer or seek help.

This statement sets out how we will treat all volunteers, staff, contractors, young people, families and other stakeholders with dignity, fairness and respect. We are firmly committed to meeting all expectations under the 2010 UK Equality Act and other relevant legislation. Therefore, we:

* Commit to avoiding any unjustified discrimination on the grounds of age, gender reassignment, disability, ethnicity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, sex or gender, sexual orientation.
* Aim to go beyond this and create an equitable environment for all our staff, volunteers, young people and families regardless of socioeconomic status, refugee status or any other characteristic.

At Early Break, we respect different people’s lived experiences and the different points of view that arise from them. Each lived experience adds unique perspectives, joys and welcomed challenges to the organisation.

We are a ‘committed and professionally curious learning organisation’ where we will explore the intention in words and actions and in doing this we not only develop our own organisation but that of wider partnerships and stakeholders.

We know that to best support people, we need to reflect the communities we serve. Research into inclusion in Early Break supports this and we carry out regular research into any issues within our organisation. We use any learning to develop our understanding of where we need to improve our approaches to inclusivity. To best support our staff and service users, we also regularly review what diverse questions we ask. Going beyond this, we look at where people fall within and between groups and make sure we meet their needs in the workplace. Any information we collect is managed in line with strict information governance guidelines.

Young people and our families are the centre of all we do, and therefore any young person that falls under any of the protected characteristics will be supported, and catered direct to their needs. Our goal is to celebrate and recognise diversity, ensuring an equitable offer for all. For example, if a family member has a disability that stops them from accessing face to face appointments at the office, we would ensure this service is still provided via an alternative offer such as home visits. Another example would be if a young person identifies as trans, and their worker is aware, and their parent/carer isn’t, the young person’s wishes will be respected and their chosen name and pronoun will be used throughout all contact with the young person. Confidentiality would be utilised in all communications with the family, providing there are no safeguarding issues.

Our staff

Early Break expect all staff to be accountable for inclusion. It is only by working together in unity that we can ensure that everyone can perform at our best and that we can better support the young people and families in our service. Therefore, we make our staff aware of their responsibilities, and know how and where to seek support to actively uphold and champion inclusivity.

We ensure that we attract and retain people from the widest possible diversity of backgrounds and experiences to and at all levels of the organisation. We actively promote our services and opportunities to a wide range of diverse communities from all backgrounds to ensure we are able to reach as many people as we can.

We create a working environment that values difference and is free from prohibited discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment. Our staff are responsible for championing inclusivity and reporting cases such as, but not inclusive to, unwelcome sexual advances, consistently not using a person’s chosen pronoun, demeaning comments about a person’s appearance, questions about a person’s sex life, unwanted nicknames related to a person’s race or disability or consistently using a person’s ‘dead name’ (the birth name of a transgender person who has changed their name as part of their gender transition). Any individual who experiences or witnesses discrimination/harassment is encouraged to report it. All complaints will be taken seriously, promptly and thoroughly investigated, and dealt with in a sensitive and professional manner.

The Board of Trustees are responsible for championing inclusion and ensuring that governance is consistent with the fundamental principles of Early Break and that resources, support and leadership is provided to ensure meaningful implementation.

The Senior Management Team/Line Managers/Team Leaders are responsible for role modelling inclusive behaviour and providing support to staff, service users and volunteers.

Inclusivity in Practice

Our services will take a person-centred approach, and considerations will be incorporated into processes and delivery to ensure that all our services are accessible to all; we prevent discrimination and we protect the dignity of everyone.

We expect all our staff will use appropriately inclusive language and behave in a way that will uphold the dignity of everyone.

We commit to providing and supporting channels for staff, service users and other stakeholders to have their voices heard. Feedback is welcomed in order for us to shape and develop our services to offer the best possible inclusive services now and in the future.

We ensure that our recruitment & selection, and promotion is transparent, merit-based and fair. We commit to providing recruitment and selection training, including training on unconscious bias, to support these objectives.

No premises will be purchased or leased if they don’t meet our accessibility standards or cannot be adapted to do so. Where our existing buildings do not meet these standards, we will have a clear exit plan so as to be able to replace these buildings with more accessible premises within a reasonable time-frame.

All of our written and digital communications will follow communication accessibility standards, and be available in alternative formats on request.

The portrayal of under-represented groups within our campaigns and materials will be balanced and not reinforce stereotypes.

We will maintain clear policies in place to ensure that fundraising practices do not put pressure on, or take advantage of people in vulnerable circumstances.

Early Break’s vision for any staff member who is transitioning gender is that they will be supported by their line manager, or a colleague they feel most comfortable with, to develop a person-centred support plan, that will explore such thing as communication, equipment, personal changes and use of facilities. It is important to note that every transition is different. Please speak to your line manager, or identified colleague, if you would like to discuss this further.

Young people and our families are the centre of all we do, and therefore any young person that falls under any of the protected characteristics will be supported, and catered direct to their needs. Our goal is to celebrate and recognise diversity, ensuring an equitable offer for all. For example, if a family member has a disability that stops them from accessing face to face appointments at the office, we would ensure this service is still provided via an alternative offer such as home visits. Another example would be if a young person identifies as trans, and their worker is aware, and their parent/carer isn’t, the young person’s wishes will be respected and their chosen name and pronoun will be used throughout all contact with the young person. Confidentiality would be utilised in all communications with the family, providing there are no safeguarding issues.

Any new and reviewed policies, programmes, decisions that will affect our staff, service users or other stakeholders will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment. This is to ensure that any negative impact on those with protected characteristics is mitigated wherever possible at all levels of the organisations and in all of our activities.

In summary

At Early Break, we believe each of us contributes to inclusion; we all have a role to play. Our culture is the result of our behaviours, our personal commitment, our curiosity, how we collaborate, and the ways that we courageously share our perspectives and encourage others to do the same.

Our staff, service users and other stakeholders come from all walks of life and so do we. We hire great people from a wide variety of backgrounds, not just because it’s the right thing to do, but because it makes our organisation stronger.

Our mission is to help everyone find their place in the world. Early Break can be anyone’s place and our inclusive culture empowers all of us to connect, belong and grow.