

Equality, diversity and inclusion code of conduct for staff and volunteers

There is no such thing as a definitive list of correct behaviour or language that can be applied to people who are a diversity identity. Treat all people as individuals and with respect.



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Introduction

1. Our Promoting Equality, Valuing Diversity Policy draws on our Basis and Values and sets out our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
2. The purpose of this code is to make our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion clear to staff and volunteers. It is not intended to give examples of behaviour for every circumstance.
3. The diversity of our staff and volunteers is a source of richness that benefits us all, including the children, young people and families with whom we work.
4. Society is made up of people of different backgrounds, needs and perceptions. It includes women and men, people of different races and from different ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, trans people, people of different religions, faiths and philosophies including those who do not adhere to a faith, people of all ages, people from different economic backgrounds, those with caring responsibilities, etc.
5. Equality diversity and inclusion applies to us all, both in terms of our obligations and our individual needs. Our identities come from belonging to one or more of the above diversity identities. People who share a diversity identity are not the same. Even where we belong to the same diversity identity as another we are still individuals shaped by different life experiences. For example, each disability, impairment, mental or physical health condition is different, and even the way the same condition is experienced by two individuals is different.
6. The purpose of this code is not to give additional rights to certain groups – particularly if this reduces the rights of others. Like other equality & diversity initiatives (and the Equality Act¹) it is to protect everyone from discrimination and harassment. For example there is no unconditional right to show religious belief in a particular way when this would be discriminatory to others, such as refusing to deliver a service to a same sex couple on religious grounds.
7. All staff and volunteers should read this code. You should treat it as a guide to your own behaviour and as an outline of the standards of behaviour you should expect from colleagues.
8. The following sections highlight the responsibilities of staff and volunteers and those of managers and explain the implications of not following this code.

Employees and volunteers obligations

1. You should not behave in a way that offends, intimidates and is hostile, degrading or humiliating to others.
2. You have a personal responsibility to follow our Basis and Values while at work or volunteering and the principles within our Promoting Equality, Valuing Diversity Policy which is based on good practice and the law.
3. You are required to support and co-operate with policies and initiatives designed to support Barnardo's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, for example, participate in diversity training.
4. You should treat people as individuals – respecting their identity – even when it is different from your own.

5. You should understand and act upon the fact that what may be acceptable to one person may not be to another. Everyone is an individual. For example, religious conviction is very personal; and, two members of the same religion may not react to potentially offensive remarks in the same way.
6. You should not make offensive or insulting remarks about colleagues based on their age, disability, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, trans status, or sectarian/political opinion (or what you think their identity may be). This includes 'jokes', 'banter', ridicule or taunts. Where this sort of banter takes place, consider: – Do you start it? Do you join in? Do you keep quiet? Do you remind your colleagues that this is wrong? 'Banter' and 'jokes' like this could breach our Basis and Values as well as the Equality Act 2010 and may make colleagues uncomfortable even if they don't show it.
7. You should challenge this sort of attitude and behaviour if you feel someone is behaving inappropriately. Use the steps on the Respect at Work poster to guide you (set out in para. 12 below).
8. Do not avoid people because you are unfamiliar with their diversity identity (or what you think their identity is). Being worried about how to behave or what to say is no excuse. This will just make them feel excluded and isolated. Be respectful and use your common sense, for example, when trying to get to know colleagues at work, don't press them to give details of their personal circumstances. Wait for them to offer this information otherwise you could, for example, make it difficult for lesbian, gay or bisexual colleagues who may not be 'out' at work, or who may be waiting until they feel they can trust their colleagues before they share this information.
9. If you are anxious about whether something you have said or done (or were planning to say or do) is acceptable to a colleague, it is okay to ask them, as long as you do so in a sensitive and respectful manner.
10. You should accept that a colleague may give offence when that is the last thing they intended. Where you feel this is the case, use the steps on the Respect at Work poster to guide you (see Para. 12 below).
11. If you are challenged about your behaviour or language – take care to receive this in a constructive way.
12. If you witness or experience any behaviour or language from a colleague that is disrespectful or causes offence you have permission to speak to the person in a quiet place, to do one or all of the following:
 - Describe the behaviour or language in question;
 - Explain the effect the behaviour or language is having on you. E.g. made you upset/uncomfortable/embarrassed/offended;
 - Say what you would like to happen in the future;
 - Politely suggest how things could have been handled differently.
13. For more information on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and what support and action is available, refer to Frequently Asked Questions attached to the Prevention of Harassment Policy which give specific examples of unacceptable behaviour in an equality, diversity and inclusion context.

Managers obligations

1. You have a responsibility to champion our values, challenge prejudice and role model appropriate behaviour. This will impact upon the culture within your team. See the Bullying and Harassment Toolkit for Managers for advice on setting a positive culture within teams.
2. You should follow employment and volunteering policies which have been put in place to ensure lawful practice. For example, the Recruitment and Selection Procedure.
3. You should be knowledgeable about and committed to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Identify your own learning and development needs on this topic at least annually. Undertake relevant learning and development to maintain and improve your knowledge and to contribute to the learning of others

4. Ensure staff and volunteers attend appropriate learning and development.

Make sure all those you manage who recruit others have had some basic learning and development on this topic.

Use the Annual Performance Appraisal process to review and set objectives aligned with demonstrating our values.

Ensure supervision is an open and two way process that allows staff and volunteers to highlight any negative discriminatory treatment they may have experienced. Don't stereotype and assume that this advice only applies when meeting with, for example, black and minority ethnic staff and volunteers. All staff could be affected by this.

5. You should try to make equality, diversity and inclusion part of everything you do. This is often referred to as 'mainstreaming' and does not mean expecting all groups of staff or volunteers to comply with the norms and values of the majority. For example, limiting the access of female part-time workers to development and promotion opportunities unless they are prepared to extend their hours, or, implementing unnecessary dress codes that may have a greater impact on younger workers.
6. You should show strong leadership and take personal responsibility for progressing equality, diversity and inclusion and achieving results.
7. You should challenge poor practice in others, helping to promote good practice and create change e.g. don't ignore inappropriate banter, jokes etc.
8. You should encourage and enable workers to take an active role in our diversity networks.

Implications

1. It is part of your contract of employment or volunteer arrangement to follow the principles and standards within our Basis and Values and Promoting Equality, Valuing Diversity Policy, while at work. This applies even if your views or behaviour outside work would be different.
2. Barnardo's acknowledges that where staff and volunteers are unfamiliar with the principles or practices of equality, diversity and inclusion, the first step is to help them to understand the issues better and to work within our policy and procedures with support and help.
3. Where support and help does not make any difference, or where staff or volunteers knowingly do not follow the principles and practice of our commitment, further action will follow. This could include action under the Disciplinary Procedure for Staff or Volunteer Policy for volunteers.
4. The Disciplinary Procedure sets out discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex, and sexual orientation as examples of gross misconduct. Gross misconduct may result in dismissal at the first offence and without notice. Similarly the Volunteer Policy refers to the standard of behaviour expected of volunteers.
5. Individual employees may be found liable (in addition to Barnardo's as the employer) if an Employment Tribunal finds that discrimination did occur.

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