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Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Commitment Statement

Wycombe Arts Centre (WAC) is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and diverse environment for all employees, volunteers, visitors, and external partners. We aim to ensure equal opportunities and fair treatment for everyone, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances. Our focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) goes beyond compliance with legislation. We actively work to celebrate diversity, eliminate barriers to participation, and promote a culture where all individuals are valued, respected, and included.

Scope

This policy applies to:
(a) WAC team members, including Trustees
(b) Volunteers, interns, and students gaining work experience
(c) External parties, including contractors, stakeholders, and members of the public

1. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Defined

- **Equality** refers to ensuring everyone has equal access to opportunities, resources, and treatment, regardless of individual characteristics or background.
- **Diversity** refers to the recognition, celebration, and respect of the differences between people, including but not limited to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and cultural background.
- **Inclusion** is the practice of actively involving individuals from diverse groups, ensuring they are heard, respected, and valued in all aspects of our operations.

2. What is Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, and Other Unacceptable Behaviour?

2.1 Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly or less favourably due to their individual characteristics or group membership. It is unlawful to discriminate based on the following protected characteristics:
(a) Gender
(b) Marital status
(c) Pregnancy
(d) Parental/family responsibilities
(e) Race

(f) Age
(g) Disability
(h) Sexual orientation
(i) Gender identity or expression
(j) Political/religious beliefs
(k) Trade union activity/inactivity
(l) Physical appearance
Discrimination can be:

- **Direct**: Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect**: Applying a requirement or policy that disproportionately affects a particular group in an unfair way.

2.2 Harassment
Harassment is unwanted behaviour that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for the person subjected to it. This includes:
(a) Verbal abuse, ridicule, or insults
(b) Threatening behaviour or unjustified criticism
(c) Humiliation through gestures, sarcasm, or spreading malicious gossip

2.3 Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment includes any unwanted sexual behaviour that makes a person feel uncomfortable, intimidated, or humiliated. It encompasses:

- Unwanted physical contact, leering, or suggestive comments
- Unsolicited requests for sex or inappropriate sexual advances
- Displaying explicit materials or making sexual jokes
- Behaviour that may also be considered a criminal offence (e.g., sexual assault)

2.4 Bullying
Bullying involves repeated, unreasonable behaviour aimed at intimidating or undermining another person. Examples of bullying include:
(a) Aggressive or threatening behaviour
(b) Humiliating or excluding someone
(c) Cyberbullying or bullying through social media

2.5 Victimisation
Victimisation is punishing someone because they have made a complaint or supported another person who has made a complaint about discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

2.6 Vilification
Vilification is behaviour that encourages others to hate, ridicule, or treat a person or group with contempt due to their characteristics. This is unlawful and unacceptable.

2.7 Stalking

Stalking involves repeated, unwanted attention that causes distress or fear. It can include:

(a) Following or loitering near someone's home or workplace

(b) Making unwanted calls, messages, or publishing personal information

3. Equal Opportunity Employment

WAC is committed to fair employment practices. Employment decisions must be made on merit, without discrimination based on protected characteristics. This includes:

- Recruitment and promotion
- Benefits and remuneration
- Working conditions and training
- Opportunities for advancement and professional development

4. Promoting an Inclusive Workplace

WAC promotes an inclusive environment where all individuals are actively involved in all aspects of the workplace, without discrimination or exclusion. Our goals include:

- Actively celebrating the diversity of our workforce, visitors, and partners
- Providing training to increase awareness of EDI issues
- Encouraging diverse perspectives and contributions in decision-making

5. Positive Action

In alignment with the Equality Act 2010, WAC is committed to taking positive action where needed to support underrepresented or disadvantaged groups. This can include targeted recruitment, training, and mentoring opportunities.

6. Conduct Which Discourages Fairness, Respect, and Diversity

WAC team members must not engage in behaviour that discourages fairness, respect, and diversity. This includes:

- Bullying, harassment, or discrimination
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Victimisation or vilification of any group or individual

Breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, depending on the severity.

7. Responsibilities

WAC Team and Board Members

- Ensure they are familiar with and comply with this policy
- Conduct themselves in a way that upholds fairness, respect, and diversity
- Support individuals who experience breaches of the policy
- Report any conduct that may breach this policy

Managers and Trustees

- Ensure the effective implementation of this policy within their areas of responsibility
- Monitor the working environment to ensure acceptable conduct
- Promote the values of fairness, respect, and diversity
- Address complaints swiftly and appropriately

8. Complaints Procedure

Any individual who believes they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, bullying, or any other unacceptable behaviour should report it in accordance with WAC's Employee Grievance Procedure. Complaints will be handled promptly and confidentially, with the aim of resolving issues fairly and effectively.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. WAC will monitor the impact of this policy and take steps to improve its approach based on feedback from employees and stakeholders.

Appendix: Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

These are indicative examples of behaviours that may constitute harassment:

- **Age**: Jokes or undermining comments about an individual's age.
- **Disability**: Insulting terminology related to a person's disability.
- **Gender Reassignment**: Derogatory remarks or 'outing' someone who has undergone gender reassignment.
- **Race**: Physical attack or verbal abuse based on ethnicity or nationality.
- **Religion**: Exclusion or derogatory remarks about someone's religious beliefs.
- **Sexual Orientation**: Name-calling or deliberate exclusion of someone based on their sexual orientation.
- **Sex**: Derogatory remarks or suggestive comments based on gender.

These examples are not exhaustive but provide guidance on unacceptable conduct.