



Unit 19, Avenue B, Nottingham, NG1 1DU

FAST FORWARD – Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

FAST FORWARD is an DJ & Music Studies provision who caters for up to 70 students aged 11-18 years who attend on a different ratio of days a week. We cover NCC and Nottinghamshire schools/partnerships. The students exhibit a variety of complex educational, social, emotional and mental health difficulties, which have impeded personal developmental and educational success.

Some of the students have stated diagnoses. Some of our learners have visited a variety of Alternative Provisions or Schools prior to attending FAST FORWARD. They can arrive at FAST FORWARD very disengaged with education and home life.

Our Vision and Aims for Equality and Diversity in our work

FAST FORWARD recognises the diversity of its service users and is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities in all its activities for people irrespective of disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religious belief or political opinion, race, colour, cultural or ethnic origin, HIV/Aids status, nationality, age, marital or civil partnership status, geographical location or nomadic lifestyle.

We aim to:

FAST FORWARD is committed to:

1. Maintain and promote a working partnership between the school, parents and community which fosters respect, honesty, truth, cooperation and tolerance. Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
2. Help the students understand the world in which they live, have mutual respect for the values of others and work together as a team. Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons.
3. To ensure that everyone, whatever their needs and capabilities, is included and catered for. Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate.
4. Regarding all breaches of Equality and Diversity opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
5. To value each individual and recognise and respond to the needs of all children.
6. Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect.
7. Working in line with new legislation and links to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.



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Defining Equality and Diversity

Equality

Equality is about fairness and equality of opportunity and advancing equality of opportunity involves treating people differently. People should not be treated the same. Some people may need extra help or adjustments to be part of the school community; this includes teachers, administration, cleaning or catering staff employed at the Schools/FAST FORWARD as well as students, parents and school governors/trustees.

Relating to the Equality Act (2010) there are nine 'protected characteristics' these are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage / civil partnership
- pregnancy / maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

Under the general duty FAST FORWARD must exercise 'due regard' in respect of the protected characteristics to: -

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
2. Advance equality of opportunity
3. Foster good relations between different groups

Diversity

Diversity is about valuing people as individuals and learning from our differences. Our differences can be visible and non-visible. Promoting diversity, we can meet difference needs creatively to ensure opportunities are available to all and potential is fulfilled. Promoting a diversity friendly culture, we are able to meet our provisions aims and objectives more efficiently.

Culture is about the way we behave towards one another – trustees, directors, all employees in FAST FORWARD, parents, students and the whole FAST FORWARD community. It is about how we treat one another and respect our differences. Promoting diversity and a diversity friendly culture helps to create a more productive school community.



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Purpose and Scope of the Policy

This policy sets out FAST FORWARD's commitment to promoting equality and diversity. We believe that it is our responsibility to promote equality and diversity wider than the nine characteristics (areas) covered by legislation. We work to remove barriers and we will not unfairly discriminate on any grounds.

Implementation

- Making appropriate changes to teaching resources. Focussing through our Music/DJ Study Programme (Work Related aspects to Equality and Diversity/through expressive arts/music).
- Accessing Local Authority Services e.g., Ethnic Minority and Travellers Advisory Service, EAL support etc
- Supporting children's emotional needs through building resilience and confidence through play, whether it is within outdoor learning or team building activities.
- Providing a varied curriculum, which promotes positive understanding of different characteristics, recognises the contribution that individuals and groups with protected characteristics make to society, and challenges stereotyping and discrimination.
- We will prioritise to support those sections of the community who are currently under represented in our service delivery, to improve the diversity of the services we offer.
- We will examine new projects and activities to ensure that equal opportunities are fully integrated into each one. In deciding priorities, it will make equal opportunity and understanding of disadvantage central to decisions reached.
- We will ensure that equality of opportunity will relate to all aspects of voluntary-statutory partnership and service delivery.
- We will take every opportunity in establishing and working in partnerships with statutory bodies, and voluntary organisations, to challenge discrimination, to promote diversity, to raise issues of inequality or to seek agreement for change or improvement.
- We will support community organisations seeking improved practice in their own work within their communities, and will provide information, and training if identified to enable those communities and organisations to improve their equality and diversity in the delivery of their services.
- Monitoring and reviewing of this policy will take place annually and will be made accessible through the FAST FORWARD Facebook/website or will be made available in an alternative format as requested.
- We will endeavour to ensure that all our services and documentation are accessible and available to people with a disability and whenever possible to modify our procedures or equipment and adapt our facilities to make full use of individuals ability and to accommodate people with a disability.



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The policy applies to:

- School Governors/Trustees
- Staff
- Parents/Carers
- Students (as appropriate)
- Visitors (those known to them, under GDPR 2018/2022 Updates)
- Multi-agency Professionals
- Contractors

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of FAST FORWARD community, trustees, directors, staff, students, parents and visitors all have a part to play in implementing this policy, promoting diversity and equality, challenging inappropriate behaviour or practice to remove barriers and avoiding discrimination.

To promote the understanding of this responsibility will:

1. Ensure all Stakeholders are made fully aware of our Equality and Diversity Policy and how it affects their work.
2. Ensure students and visitors to our provision are clear about the expectations to our commitment to promoting equality and diversity.
3. Provide training/development and updates as appropriate.
4. Review our equality objectives and actions to ensure all relevant activity remains relevant and meets the identified needs and priorities of FAST FORWARD.

In addition, Directors have responsibility for overseeing, agreeing, monitoring and reviewing of the Provisions equality objectives, and related activity.

Equality and Diversity in employment

FAST FORWARD is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in all of its activities and recognises its ability to reduce the disadvantages that people experience by having a diverse workforce which generally reflects the local community in which it works. FAST FORWARD is committed to valuing diversity in its workforce.

Recruitment of both staff and volunteers for FAST FORWARD must be methodical and fair, and every effort should be made to ensure that it is consistent and objective. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training and any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Accordingly, all staff will ensure that recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion procedures result in no job applicant, employee, volunteer, trainee or placement receiving less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, culture, nationality or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, HIV/Aids status, trade union membership or non-membership, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, having or not having dependants, being a part time worker or fixed term worker, age or nomadic lifestyle.

The object is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and otherwise treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, experience, skills and abilities.

Directors and Trustees have primary responsibility for successfully meeting these objectives by:



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- Not discriminating in the course of recruitment, employment or placement against employees, volunteers, trainees or job applicants.
- Not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination
- Bringing to the attention of all staff and volunteers that they will be subject to the FAST FORWARD Disciplinary Procedure for discrimination of any kind.

The Director has key responsibility for ensuring that recruitment and employment procedures are followed which comply with current employment legislation and good practice. All staff should confer with her on all matters regarding the recruitment of staff and volunteers.

To ensure compliance with legal requirements and to help develop good working practices, the advice of professional employment advisors will be sought.

The successful achievement of these objectives necessitates a contribution from everyone and all employees have an obligation to report any act of discrimination known to them. Training for all staff and volunteers in the principles and practice of Equal Opportunities and Diversity will be made available and is identified within the Staff and Volunteer induction packs.

(Further details of practice in relation to Recruitment can be found in the FAST FORWARD Recruitment and Selection Policy, Disciplinary, Anti-Bullying, Complaints, Whistleblowing and Allegations, KCSiE 2022 Policies.)

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy Statement will be reviewed regularly and at least every year to ensure compliance with legislation and to ensure good practice. FAST FORWARD will work with other organisations and umbrella bodies such as Nottinghamshire/NCC Schools, NCSEP, Framework and other statutory authorities, to ensure continuing good practice.

The Policy will be reviewed by the Directors at FAST FORWARD.

We will review this information annually and ongoing if highlighted incidents occur.



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Bullying and Diversity incidents

Students

FAST FORWARD believes all students should be safe and feel valued for themselves, whatever characteristics they may have. Bullying and harassment of students, staff, parents, visitors by students on the basis of their identity (including a perceived characteristic, and by association with a protected characteristic) is unacceptable. Incidents will be logged, investigated and appropriate actions taken to prevent future incidents and to support the victim as outlined in the FAST FORWARD's Anti-Bullying/GDPR/E-Safety/Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies. Contacts will be made to the Data Protection Officer (DPO)/Safeguarding Officer or the Directors'. Steve C Lee.

Staff and Directors

FAST FORWARD views any form of discrimination undertaken by adults as serious acts of misconduct. Any such breaches could result in disciplinary action being taken and in the case of harassment, might call for police involvement.

Diversity Complaints

FAST FORWARD takes all complaints seriously; where a complaint is related to equality/diversity issues, the provision's procedure for dealing with complaints will apply. Complaints should be made to Steve C Lee.

Complaints

Any person who believes that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation during their encounter with services delivered by FAST FORWARD or FAST FORWARD staff or volunteers is entitled to raise the matter through our Complaints Procedure. A copy of this procedure is available from FAST FORWARD on request. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. This will be informed to the Data Protection Officer/Safeguarding Officer or one of the Directors. See FAST FORWARD Complaints Policy and Managing Allegations/Whistle blowing Policy.

The details of what constitutes Harassment can be found in the FAST FORWARD Harassment Policy and Procedure and includes unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Employees who consider that they are a victim of unlawful discrimination may raise the issue through the FAST FORWARD Grievance Procedure.

Statutory Framework and definitions

The present statutory framework within which we apply this policy includes the following legislation:

- The Sex Discrimination Act 1976 and as amended 2011
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and as amended 2018
- The Race Relations Act 1976 and The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination Regulations) 2005



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- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Employment Rights Act 1996 and as amended 2015/8 (Small businesses)
- The Employment Relations Act 1999 as amended 2015 (Industrial relations)
- The Employment Act 2002 and as amended 2018/9
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 and as amended 2015
- The Equal Pay Act 1970 and Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Equalities Act 2006
- The General Data Protection Regulations Act 2018/UPDATED 2022
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

Contact and information regarding this policy can be obtained from:

info@fastforwardmusic.net

Further information on Equality and Diversity may be obtained from

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission at www.equalityhumanrights.com
- Government Direct at www.direct.gov.uk
- Investors in People- Equality and Diversity in the Workplace at www.investorsinpeople.co.uk

Written by Adele Meek (QA Consultant)
Updated by Scott Ballam

Approved by Director Steve Lee

19th September 2024 / Review 31st August 2025.

Policy reviewed in line with Government Changes and FAST FORWARD will be updated via QA reviews, internal inspections and advisories.