**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY & DIVERSITY POLICY**

Music 4 U (M4U) provides true integration to enable children, young people and vulnerable adults with and without additional support to understand, learn, help & support each other through song, dance and stagecraft.

**Workers:** All staff, self-employed / freelancers, volunteers and trustees.

**Students / Young Person:** All children and young adults attending M4U activities.

**Parent:** Anyone with guardianship or caring and parental responsibility for the student.

**Policy Statement:**

Music 4 U is committed to promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity for everyone who works for and with us and participates in our activities & events.  We recognise that we must have a team that is as diverse as the community we live in so that we can provide the most effective services. Music 4 U will actively encourage diversity to maximize achievement, creativity, and good practice and to bring benefit to individuals and the community we serve.

**Overview of Achieving Equality and Valuing Diversity:**

M4U will actively encourage diversity to maximize achievement, creativity, and good practice and benefit individuals and communities. Diversity involves recognizing and valuing people’s differences to allow everyone to feel valued so they can work to their full potential.

**What this means for Staff, Contractors & Volunteers:**

All should work for and contribute to an environment where people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and their contribution will be valued.   All will be consulted and involved in promoting equality & diversity.

**What this means for Trustees:**

Trustees must make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and, where appropriate, offer additional support to workers to ensure that they can take a full and active part in the work of M4U.

**What this means for Music 4 U:**

Music 4 U will endeavor to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities, not barriers, to individuals.

**Successfully managing diversity will:**

* demonstrate clear direction and commitment.
* means more people benefit from our services.
* encourage trust and respect for people’s differences.
* reveal, develop, keep and attract talented people.
* highlight new opportunities in funding and recruitment.
* create a network for support and advice.
* build and maintain better relationships.
* establish an inclusive and positive image.
* minimize discrimination and inequality, involving & including all our people.

1. **INTRODUCING DIVERSITY**

We aim to create a workplace culture that respects and values each other’s differences, not merely tolerating them. This policy will inform employment practices and make our services more accessible to everyone who uses them. Equality for M4U workers, job/volunteer applicants and the services we provide for people is an integral part of our policy.

A diverse workforce adds value to any organisation, making it more responsive, flexible, and a place where people want to work. By encouraging applicants from diverse backgrounds and looking more closely at the people we employ and their level of skills and understanding, we hope to improve our ability to meet the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

Discrimination or mistreating others based on difference is damaging to the individual, their community and M4U and such behaviour will not be tolerated. Allegations of unfair treatment will be dealt with seriously and confidentially, and staff making a complaint will be protected against victimisation from making or being involved in a complaint if it is made in good faith.

1. **OUR COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVING EQUALITY AND VALUING DIVERSITY**

We are committed to achieving equality for all by removing direct, indirect, associative, and perceptive discrimination on the grounds of:

* disability, including those with progressive conditions
* age
* employment status
* ethnic or national origin, race or colour
* marital status
* religious belief or non-belief
* responsibilities for children or dependents
* gender and gender identity: gender re-alignment
* sexuality
* trade union activities
* unrelated criminal convictions, where this is possible
* any other unjustified grounds.

This commitment applies to all workers, students, parents, and our services.

**We will do this by:**

* Meeting all our responsibilities for equal opportunities as a service provider and employer by adhering to relevant legislation and codes of practice and ensuring that M4U policies and strategies comply.
* Making equality a mainstream part of our work.
* Making this policy available to all and providing support to the people we support to understand why equality and diversity are essential.
* Making our services as accessible as possible, including the information that we provide about our services.
* Working with other organisations to promote equality and diversity.

**We shall encourage equality of practice about the following:**

* Age
* Disability, including progressive conditions
* Ethnic minority
* Sexuality
* Religious beliefs
* Gender, including trans-gender

1. **OUR COMMITMENT IN PROVIDING SERVICES**

**We shall:**

* Provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to the communities we serve without prejudice or bias.
* Include as many community sections as possible when we consult about services.
* Support workers to build positive connections and develop meaningful relationships with representatives of local black and minority ethnic communities, disability groups, etc.
* Encourage and support people to participate in community life.
* Identify and meet the individual requirements of the people we support.
* Encourage the people we support to shape the support they need.
* Respect the social, cultural and religious beliefs or faith of people we support and support them to observe special occasions.
* Accept people’s sexuality and their legitimate sexual needs and preferences.
* Do all we can to review and monitor our services to ensure they do not discriminate unfairly and identify where we can improve.
* Work with others to provide an environment free from harassment and violence.
* Act promptly if we receive any complaints about how we provide services.

1. **OUR COMMITMENT TO JOB APPLICANTS AND STAFF**

We are committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and demonstrating that we value the diversity of our workforce. To this end, we shall not discriminate against any job applicant or employee and, when recruiting, will only consider factors relevant to someone’s ability to perform the job well.

We shall do our best to treat all staff and job applicants fairly in relation to all our employment policies and procedures and to meet any reasonable and appropriate needs they may have. All efforts will be made to provide a work environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

We shall make the workplace information about work and training and promotion opportunities as accessible as possible for all workers.

We shall continue to develop good practice employment policies and procedures.

1. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY**

The primary responsibility for achieving change lies with the Trustees.

The Operations & Creative Manager is responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy, but all workers are responsible for working on it in all areas of their work.

**All staff & volunteers must make sure that they do not:**

* discriminate against anyone.
* persuade or pressure another employee to discriminate.
* harass, bully or abuse people we support, their carers, other staff, volunteers or the public for any reason.
* condone harassment.

If a worker does not follow these and other Equality and Diversity Policy requirements, we shall usually deal with such a matter under disciplinary procedures.

**We shall do our best to make our Equality and Diversity Policy fully effective by:**

* Actively promoting it.
* Regularly monitor and review all our job selection procedures and criteria and change them if they result in unfair discrimination.
* Making sure that all workers and job applicants know about this policy.
* Taking appropriate action, using agreed procedures, if any worker breaches this policy.
* Providing training and guidance (where necessary), particularly for staff and volunteers, to ensure they understand this policy and their legal responsibilities.
* Monitoring recruitment and employment statistics to identify under-representation.
* All applicants will complete a confidential Equality Monitoring Form.
* Providing positive action and training programs, when we can legally do so, for under-represented groups to redress current imbalances, such as through recruitment, career development and training.
* Examining the profiles of people we support to ensure that diversity is embraced and represented throughout the organisation.

**Monitoring the policy**

**In terms of employment, monitoring of the effectiveness of this policy will be done by:**

* Examining statistics on recruitment and promotions.
* Reviewing the accessibility of information provided to job applicants.
* Review recruitment activities to ensure that they follow good practice.
* Reviewing the provision of training to ensure that access is equal.
* Monitoring complaints, disciplinary and grievance actions raised to ensure they are dealt with consistently and fairly.

In terms of service delivery, the object of monitoring is to check that individuals are offered equal access to services and to ensure that there are no incidences of discrimination, either direct or indirect. This will be done by self-assessment involving people we support, their families and workers, using internal audit processes and supervision and appraisal systems.

1. **VICTIMISATION AND HARASSMENT**

M4U will deal with complaints of victimisation or harassment seriously and sensitively under the appropriate procedure. An informal complaint can be made confidently to the appropriate staff member or the Trustees.

However, suppose an informal complaint is not appropriate or possible. In that case, the procedure allows anyone suffering from harassment to write their case to the Operations & Creative Manager or a Trustee/s. The Chair will arrange an investigation in line with M4U’s procedures.

1. **CONTACT DETAILS**

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| **This Policy was written in line with NSPCC Guidelines.**   |
|  **Implemented on**  |   28 February 2024 |
|  **Reviewed no later than**   |   27 January 2025 |

**This policy forms part of Music 4 U’s Core Values and should be read collectively with the following:**

* Anti Bullying Policy
* Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy
* Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Reporting Procedure
* Code of Behavior Adults
* Code of Behavior Students
* Comments, Compliments & Complaints Procedure
* Equality & Diversity Policy
* GDPR Policy
* Health & Safety Policy
* Online Safety & Social Media Policy
* Photography & Film Policy
* Whistleblowing Policy

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