



## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY (Non-school Alternative Provision)

Policy title	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (Non-school Alternative Provision)
Applies to	All pupils, parents/carers and staff
Policy owner	Directors
Approved on	October 2025
Next Review	October 2026

### PURPOSE

Applewood Learning Ltd is committed to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. This policy aims to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, and ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment. These commitments apply to our workforce **and** to people who access our services (learners, parents/carers and commissioners), with adjustments made where required by the Equality Act 2010.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers and it applies to all areas of employment and to conduct of services. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and Applewood Learning Ltd may amend it at any time.

### DEFINITIONS

Equality	Everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination.
Diversity	Embracing individual differences amongst the workforce.
Inclusion	Everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work, feel included and that contribution is appreciated.
Equity	Recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others. Then putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers, ensuring that various levels of support are offered dependent on the various circumstances.
Direct Discrimination	This type of discrimination is where an individual is treated differently because of the protected characteristic someone possesses. Direct discrimination can be an intentional or unintentional act.  It can additionally manifest itself in two other ways;

	<p>a) Direct discrimination by association.</p> <p>This type of discrimination is where an individual is treated differently because of a protected characteristic possessed by someone they're associated with.</p> <p>b) Direct discrimination by perception.</p> <p>This type of discrimination is where an individual is treated differently because of a protected characteristic other people think they possess, regardless of whether the perception is correct.</p> <p>Direct discrimination is generally unlawful except for occupational requirements (rare) and certain statutory exceptions. Indirect discrimination may be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.</p>
Indirect Discrimination	<p>This type of discrimination in the workplace occurs when a company puts a plan or rule in place, which isn't discriminatory but puts people with specific characteristics at a disadvantage.</p> <p>In law, it is where when all four elements of a Provision, Criterion or Practice (PCP) are present. The company applies a plan or rule to a group of people, only some of whom share the protected characteristic. It has (or will) put those who share the protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared to others who do not have the characteristic.</p> <p>It puts the person wanting to make a claim at that disadvantage. The employer is unable to justify the plan or rule objectively.</p>
Harassment	<p>Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.</p> <p>In addition, harassment also occurs when the unwanted conduct is specifically of a sexual nature or there is less favourable treatment because you have rejected or submitted to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or related to gender reassignment or sex. The victim's account of the misbehaviour is more important than how the harasser sees it.</p> <p>Harassment can present itself in many forms, including verbal communication, physical behaviour, written communication and emails. Suggestions, jokes and the sharing of material relating to a protected characteristic could also be construed as harassment.</p>

Victimisation	Victimisation occurs when an individual is disadvantaged or punished because they have complained or intend to complain about discrimination or harassment in the workplace, or because they have helped an individual who has been discriminated against. It occurs when an employee is disadvantaged because of a 'protected act'.
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## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Directors

- **Strategic oversight & accountability:** Owns this policy and is accountable for its implementation across all Applewood Learning Ltd non-school AP settings. Ensures the policy is reviewed at least annually and updated when legislation, guidance or practice changes.
- **Culture & resourcing:** Sets the tone for an inclusive culture; allocates resources (time, training, tools) to deliver the policy and reasonable adjustments.
- **Governance & assurance:** Receives and reviews termly EDI reports (training completion, incident patterns, recruitment/representation data, reasonable-adjustment activity, equal-pay/inequality actions) and commissions improvement plans where needed.
- **Compliance & risk:** Ensures legal compliance (Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018/UK GDPR) and alignment with related policies (Code of Conduct, Anti-Bullying & Harassment, Disciplinary, Grievance, Safer Recruitment, Online Safety).
- **AP context:** Ensures operations reflect our unregistered AP context: commissioning schools/LAs retain statutory duties for admissions, attendance and exclusions; systems must support **same-day safeguarding/attendance information sharing** with commissioners.
- **Escalation:** Provides senior oversight for complex or high-risk cases (e.g., serious or repeated harassment, discrimination, safeguarding interfaces) and ensures timely escalation to external agencies/commissioners when appropriate.

### Provision Lead

- **Operational leadership:** Translates policy into day-to-day practice; line-manages staff to meet EDI expectations and models inclusive behaviours.
- **Information sharing (AP):** Ensures **same-day** attendance and safeguarding information is shared with commissioning schools/LAs and that agreed communication routes are followed and auditable.
- **Reasonable adjustments:** Proactively identifies, records, implements and reviews reasonable adjustments for staff and service users; explores alternatives where a specific adjustment is not reasonable.



- **Training & induction:** Ensures all staff (including agency/volunteers/contractors) complete induction and refresher training on EDI, anti-bullying/harassment and reporting routes; maintains training records.
- **Incident management:** Receives, records and investigates EDI concerns (harassment, victimisation, prejudice-based incidents), takes timely action, and updates the ELT with patterns and outcomes.
- **Data, monitoring & improvement:** Maintains secure records (incidents, adjustments, training, local recruitment data) in line with UK GDPR; provides scheduled reports to ELT and implements local improvement actions.
- **Coordination:** Works with Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and administrative teams so EDI, safeguarding and online-safety processes are consistent and mutually reinforcing.

### All Staff Members (including volunteers, contractors, agency workers)

- **Standards & conduct:** Uphold the policy, Code of Conduct and anti-bullying/harassment standards; challenge discriminatory behaviour and language; contribute to an inclusive culture.
- **Reporting:** Promptly report concerns, incidents or patterns of behaviour to the Provision Lead/line manager and cooperate with investigations.
- **Participation:** Complete required training; engage in reviews of practice and provide feedback on accessibility and inclusion.
- **Reasonable adjustments & accessibility:** Request and help implement reasonable adjustments for themselves and those they work with; use accessible formats and communication practices.
- **Data protection:** Handle personal data lawfully and securely in line with UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 and local procedures.
- **AP awareness:** Deliver their role with awareness that commissioning schools/LAs hold key statutory duties; support **same-day** attendance/safeguarding notifications through accurate and timely record-keeping.

### POLICY

Applewood Learning Ltd actively supports diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that the workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect. All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that they promote Applewood Learning Ltd aims and objectives regarding equality, diversity and inclusion. People are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting their Line Manager.

Everyone has a responsibility to prevent harassment in the workplace; by ensuring they do not harass themselves and by speaking up when it is witnessed. Bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, sub-contractors, visitors or others is also covered under this policy and employees should report any such concerns to their manager who will take appropriate action. Prejudice-based incidents (e.g., racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, faith-based or disability-related) must be recorded and addressed; patterns are reviewed and acted on.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with following the Disciplinary Policy. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal without notice. If people believe they have suffered discrimination they can raise the matter through the Grievance Policy.



## **OUR COMMITMENTS**

- a) Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued
- b) Creating an environment that promotes dignity and respect for all.
- c) Challenge discriminatory assumptions
- d) Providing training, development, and where possible, progression opportunities to all staff
- e) Understanding equality and inclusion in the workplace is good management practice.
- f) Reviewing employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness for all
- g) Taking steps to ensure equity amongst the workforce
- h) Taking positive action to recruit disabled people and ensuring there are no unlawful barriers to accessing employment opportunities, training, progression opportunities, benefits and facilities
- i) Diversity in our workforce will be regularly monitored to ensure equal opportunities throughout the company. We monitor outcomes to identify disproportionate impacts linked to protected characteristics and take positive action where proportionate (Equality Act 2010). We also review service-user data (where appropriate) to ensure our AP offer is inclusive and accessible
- j) Having clear procedures that enable candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated.
- k) Providing services to which all customers are entitled regardless of any protected characteristic
- l) Making sure our services are delivered equally and meet the diverse needs of our clients. 'Customers' includes learners, parents/carers and commissioning schools/LAs; we will provide reasonable adjustments and accessible formats on request
- m) Monitoring and reviewing this policy annually

## **DISABILITY**

Applewood Learning Ltd encourages people to disclose a disability and tell them about the condition so that support can be given as appropriate. Reasonable adjustments will be considered proactively at recruitment, employment and service delivery stages; decisions and reviews will be documented. This could include any reasonable adjustments to ensure access to our services and employment opportunities. If a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, this will be discussed and an alternative solution offered where possible.

Applewood Learning Ltd will keep the physical features of our premises under review to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, Applewood Learning Ltd will take reasonable steps to improve access.

## **PART-TIME AND FIXED-TERM WORK**

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is objectively justified. We will review pay and progression processes for bias and publish actions from any equal-pay/equalities reviews where appropriate.



## **EQUAL PAY**

Applewood Learning Ltd will ensure that all employees have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

## **JOBs COVERED BY THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT 1974**

Applewood Learning Ltd will not automatically refuse to employ a particular individual just because they have a previous criminal conviction.

During the application process, job applicants will be asked to disclose any unspent convictions, but will not ask job applicants questions about spent convictions, nor expect them to disclose any spent convictions.

If an applicant has a conviction that is not spent and if the nature of the offence is relevant to the job for which they have applied, the Company will review the individual circumstances of the case and may, at its discretion, decline to select the individual for employment. Any decision will consider the nature, seriousness, age of the offence and relevance to the role, alongside safeguarding responsibilities.

## **JOBs THAT ARE EXEMPT FROM THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT 1974**

If the job into which the Company is seeking to recruit is one of the excluded jobs listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 or the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Order 2003, the Company will require the applicant to disclose all convictions, whether spent or unspent (other than where protected cautions and protected convictions do not need to be disclosed, depending on the job concerned). Even in these circumstances, however, the Company will not refuse to employ a particular individual unless the nature of the conviction has some relevance to the job for which the individual has applied.

Furthermore, if the job is exempt, the Company will, once it has selected the person to whom it wishes to offer employment, seek documentary evidence about that person's criminal convictions. The Company will seek the applicant's agreement to make a joint application to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for a standard, enhanced or enhanced with DBS barred lists check (as appropriate). The Company will reimburse the individual the fee for obtaining the appropriate criminal records certificate. Where the individual is member of the DBS update service, the Company will, with their permission, carry out a status check on any current certificate.

The Company is committed to ensuring that all information provided about an individual's criminal convictions, including any information released in disclosures, is used fairly and stored and handled appropriately and in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR; Applewood Learning Ltd does not retain copies of DBS certificates. We record the date, level, and certificate number/unique reference, plus the decision/outcome. If a copy is ever held, it is kept for no longer than 6 months and then securely destroyed (see Data Protection & Safer Recruitment policies). Data held on file about an individual's criminal convictions will be



held only as long as it is required for employment purposes and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised person.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

Applewood Learning Ltd is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. It seeks also to ensure that no person is victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

The terms equality, inclusion, diversity, and equity are at the heart of this policy. 'Equality' means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination. 'Inclusion' means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution. 'Diversity' means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce. 'Equity' means recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others, and putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all. We will actively support diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that our workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles, and circumstances. We are committed to putting diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything that we do and to highlight the commitment that the Company makes to promoting equality and preventing discrimination at work. We want to create an inclusive environment that allows people to reach their full potential

## **THIRD PARTIES**

Applewood Learning Ltd may at any time engage with a third party for support and expertise regarding actions relating to this policy.



## POLICY CONTEXT

AP context (unregistered AP): Applewood Learning Ltd operates as a non-school Alternative Provision (AP). Commissioning schools/LAs retain statutory responsibilities for admissions, attendance and exclusions; Applewood Learning Ltd provides same-day safeguarding/attendance information to enable those duties.

Applewood Learning Ltd is not a public authority; the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) does not generally apply to Applewood Learning Ltd. We nevertheless support commissioners (schools/LAs) in meeting their PSED and **align** our practices accordingly.

This policy relates to the following legislative requirements, standards and internal documents:

<b>Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equality Act 2010</li><li>• Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974</li><li>• Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975</li><li>• Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Order 2003</li></ul>
<b>Related Forms &amp; Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anti-Bullying &amp; Harassment Policy</li><li>• Code of Conduct</li><li>• Disciplinary Policy</li><li>• Grievance Policy</li><li>• Online Safety (Filtering &amp; Monitoring) Policy</li><li>• Managing Allegations Policy</li></ul>

## VERSION CONTROL

We will review our documentation regularly and we reserve the right to amend our policies and procedures at any time.