

Learning in Nature CIC & Beccles Forest Schools



Equality and Inclusion Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement:	
3.29 Providers must follow their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 including the fair and equal treatment of practitioners regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.	

This policy was adopted by:	Learning in Nature CIC & Beccles Forest Schools
Date of adoption:	26th June 2026
Date to be reviewed:	26th June 2027
Signed, on behalf of the provider:	
Name of signatory:	Rach Whitwood
Role of signatory:	Co-Director

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Company Number: 11747933

Ofsted URN: 2610910 Setting ref: 2610909



Policy Statement

At Beccles Forest Schools, we take great care to treat each individual as a person in their own right, with equal rights and responsibilities to any other individual, whether they are an adult or a child. We are committed to promoting and providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all learners, families and staff, according to their individual needs. We proactively display a progress pride flag on our advertisements. Discrimination on any grounds, including gender, age, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, ethnic or national origin, or political belief has no place within our setting.

All staff members are expected to implement this policy in everyday practice. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the Co-Directors at the earliest opportunity. Appropriate steps will be taken to investigate the matter and, if concerns are well-founded, disciplinary action will be invoked following current Ofsted, Safeguarding and ACAS guidelines.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- Special Education Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (2015)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Childcare Act (2006)
- Children Act (2004)
- Care Standards Act (2000)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)

Please see Appendices for the legal framework and definitions upon which this policy is written.

Our Commitment

Co-Directors and staff are committed to:

- Recruiting, selecting, training and promoting individuals on the basis of occupational skills requirements. In this respect, the setting will ensure that no job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment because of age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity/paternity.

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- Providing a service, wherever possible, for learners who may have difficulties and/or disabilities or are deemed disadvantaged according to their individual circumstances, and the setting's ability to provide the necessary standard of care.
- Making reasonable adjustments for learners and family members with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Striving to promote equal access to services and projects by taking practical steps (wherever possible and reasonable), such as ensuring access to people with additional needs and by producing materials in relevant languages and media for all children and their families.
- Providing a secure environment in which all learners can flourish and all contributions are valued.
- Including and valuing the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality, inclusion and diversity.
- Providing positive, unbiased information.
- Continually improving our knowledge and understanding of issues of equality, inclusion and diversity.
- Regularly reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices to ensure they promote and value diversity and difference and that the policy is effective and practices are non-discriminatory.
- Making inclusion a thread which runs through the entirety of the setting, for example, by expecting staff to act as positive role models, promoting non-stereotypical images and language, and challenging all discriminatory behaviour (see dealing with discriminatory behaviour policy).

Procedures

Admissions and Service Provision

The setting is accessible to all learners and families in the local community and further afield through a comprehensive and inclusive admissions policy. The setting strives to ensure that all services and projects are accessible and relevant to all groups and individuals in the community within targeted age groups. Where there are barriers to participation in sessions, such as with the physical accessibility of the natural environment, we aim to overcome these wherever possible.

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Recruitment

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises are conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting is done by more than one person if possible. All members of the selection group are committed to the inclusive practice set out in this policy and will have received appropriate training in this regard.

Application forms include an equal opportunities monitoring form. Application forms do not include questions that potentially discriminate on the grounds specified in the statement of intent.

Vacancies are advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

At the interview, no questions are posed which potentially discriminate on the grounds specified in the statement of intent. All candidates are asked the same questions, other than where concerns have arisen from the application form and discussed between management, and members of the selection group do not introduce nor use any personal knowledge of candidates acquired outside the selection process. Candidates are given the opportunity to receive feedback on the reasons why they were not successful.

Following the Equality Act (2010) we only ask questions prior to offering someone employment in the following circumstances:

- We need to establish whether the applicant will be able to comply with a requirement to undergo an assessment (i.e. an interview or selection test)
- We need to establish whether the applicant will be able to carry out a function that is intrinsic to the work concerned
- We want to monitor diversity in the range of people applying for work
- We want to take positive action towards a particular group – for example offering a guaranteed interview scheme
- We require someone with a particular disability because of an occupational requirement for the job.

We also follow this guidance provided by the National College for Teaching and Leadership in regards to staff working directly with children. Providers have a responsibility to ensure that practitioners have the health and physical capacity to lead and will not put children and young people at risk of harm. The activities that a practitioner must be able to perform are set out in the Education (Health Standards England) Regulations (2003). Providers are responsible for ensuring that only practitioners who have the capacity to teach remain on the staff team. People with disabilities or chronic illnesses may have the capacity to lead, just as those without disabilities or medical conditions may be unsuitable to lead. Further information on training to teach with a disability is available from the DfE website.

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Successful applicants offered a position may be asked to complete a health and fitness questionnaire prior to commencing the programme. We do not ask all-encompassing health questions, but ensure that we only ask targeted and relevant health-related questions, which are necessary to ensure that a person is able to lead.

Staff

It is the policy of Beccles Forest Schools not to discriminate in the treatment of individuals. All staff are expected to cooperate with the implementation, monitoring and improvement of this and other policies. All staff are expected to challenge language, actions, behaviours and attitudes which are oppressive or discriminatory on the grounds specified in this policy and recognise and celebrate other cultures and traditions. All staff are expected to participate in discussions around equality and inclusion.

Staff follow procedures for dealing with discriminatory behaviours where applicable to report any discriminatory behaviours observed.

Training

Learning in Nature CIC recognises the importance of training as a key factor in the implementation of an effective inclusion and equality policy. All new staff receive induction training which includes specific reference to the inclusion and equality policy. The setting strives towards the provision of conversations around inclusion, equality and diversity with all staff on a regular basis.

Working with learners of all ages – The Early Learning Framework and beyond

Learning opportunities offered at Learning in Nature CIC encourage all individuals to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from them. Our ethos encourages all individuals to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

We do this in a range of ways, including:

- Making learners feel valued and good about themselves as part of a broad community.
- Creating an environment of mutual respect, empathy and open communication.
- Ensuring that all individuals have equal access to learning and play opportunities.
- Ensuring that all early learning opportunities offered are inclusive of individuals with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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- Sharing observation notes and identifying a key person to work with each child in order to continuously monitor, assess and plan for their learning and development.
- Ensuring the medical, cultural and dietary needs of learners are met.
- Ensuring that individuals whose first language is not English have full access to learning opportunities and are supported in their learning.
- Acknowledging and celebrating a wide range of cultures, beliefs and festivals.
- Helping individuals to learn about a range of cultural approaches to daily routines (eg food), and to respect the differences among them.
- Working in partnership with all families to ensure they understand the policy and challenge any discriminatory comments made.
- Helping learners to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable, and why.

Information-Sharing and Feedback

Information about the setting, its activities and learner development may be given in a variety of ways according to individual needs (written, verbal and translated), to ensure that everyone can access the information they need.

Learners and their families are openly invited to contribute ideas about the running of Learning in Nature CIC during and after sessions throughout a learning programme.

Ongoing Commitment to Equality and Inclusion

We recognise our responsibility in ensuring equal opportunities for all children and adults and regularly review our policies and procedures to ensure these are kept up to date and are as inclusive as possible.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Statutory Guidance and Legal Frameworks

Care Standards Act (2000) Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/14/contents> (Accessed 26th June 2026)

Childcare Act (2006) Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21> (Accessed 26th June 2026)

Children Act (2004) Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents> (Accessed 26th June 2026)

Children and Families Act (2014) Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted> (Accessed 26th June 2026)

Department for Education and Department of Health (2015) *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years*, Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf (Accessed 26th June 2026)

Department for Education (2025) *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework: for group and school based providers*, Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf.pdf (Accessed 26th June 2026)

The Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations (2003) Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/3139/contents/made> (Accessed 26th June 2026)

Equality Act (2010) Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> (Accessed 26th June 2026)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2001/10/contents> (Accessed 26th June 2026)