



Equal Opportunities Policy **September 2022**

Signed General Manager – LEAH BOWERS – *l.bowers*

Signed Club Chairperson – Scarlett Anstee-Parry - 

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1. Purpose and Scope:

The Policy's purpose is to provide equality, fairness and respect for all attending our sessions including members, their families and all in our employment, including full time, cover positions and all volunteer positions such as trustees, committee and volunteer supporters.

We believe all children and young people should be included by society and recognised as having a valuable and positive contribution to make.

2. **Our aim:**

We aim to ensure fair treatment for all, including but not limited to the provisions within the Equality Act 2010 for those with protected characteristics; - Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage or Civil partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.

We believe that everyone has the right to be treated as an individual and to be valued as an equal.

We aim to offer a safe environment, where people feel able to say what is important to them, encourage young people to become confident within themselves and in the knowledge that any discussions, issues or difficulties that may arise will be treated with confidentiality and sensitivity.

(Please read our confidentiality policy for more information)

We believe all team members including trustees, committee, staff and volunteers should be recognised for their valuable and positive contribution to our charity.

Stowmarket ASD Saturday Clubs oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. Including Pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working and selection for employment, promotion, training or other development opportunities.

(Please read our Disciplinary procedure for more information)

3. **Our commitment:**

Stowmarket ASD Saturday Clubs commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

All staff should:

- understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others during the sessions.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Furthermore, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

We will:

- make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- make decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

4. Our offer:

Stowmarket ASD Saturday clubs will :

- Offer an informal, relaxed, imaginative and fun service for all involved in the charity. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure we are inclusive to each young person interested in attending the sessions and to the team members we employ.
- Seek the thoughts and ideas of the young people and their families during their time with us. We do this by offering consultation with the young people, giving everyone the chance to participate fully in the sessions, providing young people with choice, experience and opportunity.
- Ensure activities can be accessed by all, allowing enough time, resources and freedom to change the activity to their individual interests. Our sessions are free flow allowing the young people to make up their own minds and try an array of activities. The activities are chosen with the differing needs of the members in mind and can easily be adapted to suit all.
- Includes all art work for parents & carers to see on a display, including a range of photo's displaying reflective positive self-images and values helping everyone to feel included.
- Aim to provide fun activities, games and support during a session that will allow the young people the best possible opportunities to achieve their potential, allowing them to make friends and communicate with their peers. We value and are extremely proud with each small step and accomplishment made by every member within the club.
- Hold a waiting list - this is logged from the date the young person is added - we do not allow members to skip or change positions due to diagnosis, professional referral or personal links to the club.
- Ensure that individuals are recruited, selected, trained and promoted on the basis of occupational skill requirements. The charity will ensure that no job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics which cannot be justified as being necessary for the safe & effective performance of the work or training for the work. All team members within the charity will be entitled to and have access to all facilities at every stage of employment.
- Support Team members in situations that may occur during their time with us, we will do our best to facilitate any changes needed and ensure to give time off or adjust their work within line to the running of the charity.

- Provide support and leadership to the team members and to encourage the development of new ideas and approaches formulated by the team. We will challenge both internal and external systems with a view to challenging discriminatory practices and attitudes.
- Ensure each member of the club's needs are taken into consideration, we understand each situation can affect the young people differently. We work closely with members' parents & Carers to ensure we have gathered enough information to support transitions and ensure they have the best opportunities within the Club.
- Aim to support our families who might find themselves in a financially difficult situation. The club has a bursary to assist in short time solutions with the aim to sign post families to additional services for long time solutions. The charity is always looking for ways to reduce the cost of the sessions to ensure we can be more accessible.
- If an invoice is created due to missed payments or a buildup of sessions attended this will be given to the parent/carer with information of how to communicate if support is needed. We will be flexible and accommodate a system with the family in the best way needed for them to pay the outstanding balance, over a period of time needed to help them, we will not stop their young person attending and will communicate with them in their preferred way.

5. The Committee

Stowmarket ASD Saturday Club is a charity run and overseen by a committee team, this is an inclusive team with open invitation to all involved within the charity, subject to the same strong induction process as team members. Positions are varied and adaptable to work around individual working schedules. A Yearly AGM is held inviting all to see the previous year's progress and the following years aims encouraging everyone to attend. The team ask for outside ideas and support during the year using a fair voting system and valuing all ideas and support given.

Please see our charity constitution for more information.

6. Managing disagreements:

Stowmarket ASD Saturday Clubs will always try its best, but we understand there may be occasions where people are unhappy, we will ensure to work through any differences professionally and politely we value our team members, parents & carers and want to ensure we have everyone's trust while their young person is in our care or while they are employed by us.

We will ensure that the person who has made a criticism or a complaint will not receive any hostility, and everyone involved will be treated with the same level of respect and care prior to the situation. If this situation involves more than one person i.e. 2 staff or 2 families become upset with each other we will do our best to ensure that we accommodate each individual involved putting everyone's best interest at heart.

Please read our complaints policy for more information

Team members and families can remove themselves from the club at any time there will be no further cost or commitment to the charity. We ask team members to give us as much notice as possible to fill their position but there are no legal ties to this request. Team members who need time of due to being pregnant/ maternity leave will be able to choice when they start and how they handle their return including hours and sessions, we will work with them and be as adaptive as we are able to be, offering shared roles if needed and suitable but there is also no obligation to return.

Our disciplinary and grievance procedures and other policies mentioned can be found at the entrance to the sessions or to request contact;- 07920714611 leah@stowmarketsaturdayclub.co.uk

This includes with whom and how an employee should raise a grievance - Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within 3 months of the alleged discrimination.