

# WALFORD MILL EDUCATION TRUST LTD

## EQUALITY POLICY



WALFORD MILL

### 1. Our commitment

Walford Mill Education Trust (WMET) is a registered charity which promotes crafts and making through workshops, exhibitions and events, and by providing working space for established and emerging makers. The day to day operation of the trust is currently managed by the trustees with the support of the part time Trust Administrator and Site Coordinator.

We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued and where those with diverse experiences are able to take part and contribute.

We recognise that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experience bring fresh ideas and perceptions and we wish to encourage and harness these differences to make our offer more relevant and approachable. We recognise that this will enhance our effectiveness in carrying out our aims.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to everyone who contributes to WMET:

- Our resident and visiting makers
- Our volunteers
- Our staff
- Our trustees
- Everyone who visits and participates in our workshops, outreach sessions, exhibitions and events
- Other stakeholders
- Those applying to work, volunteer, rent studio or education space, become a trustee

### 3. Policy statement

WMET recognises that we live in a society where discrimination still operates to the disadvantage of many groups in society and we are committed to the principle that no one who falls within the scope of the charity shall receive unfavourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marital status or civil partnership, race, religious beliefs, sex, sexual orientation or for any other reason that can be objectively justified.

In the provision of services and the employment of staff, the charity is committed to promoting equal opportunities for everyone. Throughout its activities, WMET will treat all people equally whether they are:

- Applying for a job or already employed by us
- Trainee workers and students on work experience or placements
- Volunteers
- Renting or seeking to rent studio space
- Hiring or seeking to hire the education space to hold workshops
- Taking part or seeking to take part in workshops or outreach sessions
- Trustees or seeking to become a trustee
- Visitors to exhibitions or to explore the building and grounds

Our aim is that everyone who works or volunteers for the charity, rents studio space within the building or uses the opportunities it offers to get involved in craft will be representative of all sections of society and that each person feels respected and able to give of their best.

The Charity welcomes the statutory requirements laid down in:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Human Rights Act Nov 1998
- The Work and Families Act 2006
- Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended)
- Equality Act 2010

#### **4. Reasons for the policy**

WMET wishes to employ the most suitable and appropriately qualified people for the work to be undertaken. Consequently, sound business reasons support the promotion by the Charity of equal opportunities in employment. As much of the organisation of the studio rental, the workshops and exhibitions is carried out by volunteers (e.g. trustees, resident makers) promotion of equal opportunities also applies to this aspect of WMET's operations. Over time legislation has been introduced to encourage equal opportunities and to render discrimination unlawful. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has been established to work towards the elimination of discriminatory practices and has devised codes of practice which contain practical advice on ways to avoid discrimination and on the management of an equal opportunities policy.

#### **5. Equality of treatment**

The policy aims to ensure that everyone who works or volunteers for WMET adheres to the principle of equality of treatment. It prohibits acts of discrimination whereby one individual is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of any one of the range of protected characteristics listed under the Policy Statement above.

Examples of such discrimination by an employer include:

- Deliberately refusing or omitting to make an offer of employment
- Restricting or denying access to promotion, transfer, training, or other benefits or facilities
- Dismissing an individual
- Subjecting an individual to some other detriment (for example, racial or sexual harassment)
- Discriminating in the arrangements made for deciding who should be offered a job

The Equality Act 2010 identifies a number of different types of discrimination. These are:

Direct discrimination – where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.

Associative discrimination – this is direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by perception – this is direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic, just be perceived to.

Indirect discrimination – this can occur when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.

Harassment – this is behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient. Employees can now complain of the behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

Harassment by a third party – employers are potentially liable for the harassment of their staff or customers by people they don't themselves employ, i.e. a contractor.

Victimisation – this occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under this legislation. A representative or employee who contravenes (or knowingly aids another person to contravene) the Charity's policy may be held personally liable for committing an act of lawful discrimination and may, together with the Charity, be subject to legal proceedings.

## **6. Responsibilities**

The person with overall responsibility for the application of the equal opportunities policy is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees: Terry Wheeler.

Until WMET is in the position to employ a manager, the trustees are responsible for communicating the policy to all employees and resident makers, providing operational procedures and training, and monitoring the application of the policy. The aim is to recruit a new trustee to be the 'Equalities and Diversities Champion', but in the short term this responsibility will be taken on by an existing trustee, Loraine McClean.

Managers and in their absence, trustees, are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they and all staff, makers and volunteers understand the policy and observe the correct procedures.

- Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
- Ensuring proper records are maintained of training given and grievances dealt with.

Everyone who works, volunteers, rents studio space or teaches workshops at Walford Mill has an important part to play in the application of the policy, such that their attitudes and actions are consistent at all times with both the spirit and the letter of the policy.

## **7. Recruitment, selection and promotion**

WMET's intention in respect of recruitment, selection and promotion is to appoint the most able candidate for each job. The charity uses open recruitment methods to assist in our implementation via advertisements online, through social media and the press. In order to ensure that this intention is realised, the requirements of each job are identified and all candidates assessed against the same criteria at each stage of the selection process, to ensure that fairness and consistency are achieved throughout. We offer alternative ways of applying other than traditional CV or application forms and ensure that our recruitment panels reflect diversity.

Similarly, all candidates for promotion possessing appropriate skills, knowledge and experience are given the same degree of consideration. Employee appraisals are concerned only with the assessment of actual performance in the job. The open recruitment methods described above will also be used in the appointment of tenants to the on-site café.

## **8. Rental of long term and short term studio space and the education space**

Our equalities policy is always taken into account when hiring studio space and the education space to prospective new makers and tutors. This ensures we have a diverse range of on-site makers who contribute to making our offer more relevant and approachable.

## **9. Positive action**

WMET recognises that positive action may be necessary if people with a protected characteristic are at a disadvantage. For example underrepresented groups will be encouraged to apply for volunteering and employment opportunities with Walford Mill. Wherever possible, special training will be provided for such groups to prepare them to compete on genuinely equal terms for jobs and promotion. However, actual recruitment to all posts will be strictly on merit.

Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups.

Where possible working arrangements are flexible to meet the needs of, for example, people with domestic responsibilities or people with particular religious or cultural needs.

## **10. Training**

Educational and vocational courses, such as those provided by the Dorset Race Equality Council, giving up to date information about equality and diversity and helping reduce unconscious bias, are available to all employees, makers and trustees. Training in matters relating, directly or indirectly, to equal opportunities is regarded as a vital component in the training programmes for managers and trustees, both as a means to maintaining the level of awareness of the policy and of ensuring that the policy is operating as the Charity intends.

## **11. Conditions of employment and provision of benefits and services**

All conditions of employment, employee benefits and services apply to all employees equally. Accommodation and facilities are provided, as far as it is practicable to do so, having proper regard for the needs of the disabled.

## **12. Observing the policy**

The overall aim of the policy is to promote a harmonious working environment for everyone who works at Walford Mill, be they paid staff, volunteers, trustees, tutors or makers hiring studio space. Therefore, a named trustee (Lorraine McClean) should be informed if an occasion arises, or is suspected to have arisen, where an individual experiences unfavourable treatment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics. Anyone who feels he or she is unable to discuss the matter with Lorraine McClean may contact the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. A member of staff with a grievance concerning the application of this policy should follow the WMET grievance procedure. A volunteer, maker or trustee with a grievance concerning the application of the policy should follow the WMET problem solving procedure. It is a disciplinary offence to discriminate intentionally against a fellow employee, volunteer, or job applicant in contravention of the policy.

## **13. Monitoring**

WMET will monitor and continuously review the operation of the policy and expects all employees, makers and volunteers to co-operate by providing relevant information, where necessary. All such information will be treated as strictly confidential and used solely for this purpose. The monitoring system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained. The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

## **14. Harassment**

Harassment on the basis of a protected characteristic is a form of discrimination. It is unlawful behaviour and in direct contravention of WMET's equal opportunity policy. Harassment is unwanted conduct on the grounds of a protected characteristics, which is either personally offensive or a failure to respect the rights of others. It includes making

gestures, comments or 'jokes', the display of offensive material and physical contact or assault. WMET has a separate anti bullying and harassment procedure which contains further information.

Managers/trustees have a responsibility to eliminate any harassment or intimidation of which they are aware. Anyone who believes that he or she is, or has been the subject of harassment should initially raise the matter with Loraine McClean:

*either*

If an employee believes they have been harassed they should raise a complaint under WMET's anti bullying and harassment procedure

*or*

Formal investigations of complaints will be dealt with in accordance with WMET's grievance or problem solving procedures and disciplinary procedures, and will be handled sensitively and confidentially, with due respect for the rights of those concerned. If the outcome of the investigation reveals that a complaint is justified, appropriate action, including disciplinary action, will be taken. Retaliation or victimisation of an employee who has complained about harassment will also be treated as a disciplinary offence.

*This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.*

Version 1.6, reviewed and approved by WMET Board of Trustees 12 March 2024