

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy: Neurodiversity & Undiagnosed Needs

This document establishes the formal framework for ensuring equality, diversity, and inclusion within 📍 Place, specifically tailored to protect and empower neurodivergent individuals and those with undiagnosed or unassessed needs.

Policy Version	Effective Date	Review Date	Lead Authority
1.0	📅 Date	📅 Date	👤 Person

1. Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this policy is to fulfill our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015 by creating a fully inclusive, neurodiversity-affirming environment. We recognize that individuals who fall "between" systems—those with significant needs but no formal diagnosis—are disproportionately vulnerable to disadvantage and exclusion.

Our core objectives include:

- **Centering Neurodiversity:** Ensuring neurodivergent needs are prioritized in every decision, practice, and policy.
- **Early Intervention:** Identifying and addressing unmet needs before difficulties escalate, regardless of whether a formal label exists.
- **Affirming Natural Variation:** Validating neurodivergence as a natural variation of the human brain rather than a deficit to be fixed.
- **Reducing Masking Pressure:** Creating environments where individuals do not feel forced to hide their traits to survive or succeed.

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is rooted in UK legislation and statutory guidance, ensuring full compliance and protection for all members of our community:

- **Equality Act 2010:** Protecting against discrimination based on disability, including conditions that have a substantial, long-term adverse effect on daily life, even without a formal diagnosis.
- **SEND Code of Practice 0–25 (2015):** Outlining duties to identify, assess, and meet special educational needs through a graduated approach.
- **Children and Families Act 2014:** Mandating the identification and support of special needs.
- **National Inclusion Standards (NIS) 2026:** Adhering to the principles of ambitious leadership and accessible provision.

3. Core Principles of Neuro-Inclusion

We adhere to the following principles to ensure our environment is truly inclusive:

3.1 Neurodiversity as Natural Variation

We reject deficit-based language (such as "suffers from" or "high/low functioning") and instead focus on "strengths," "needs," and "support requirements". We affirm that different ways of thinking and perceiving the world are meaningful and valuable.

3.2 No Diagnosis = No Barrier to Support

The law does not require a medical diagnosis or formal label before a duty arises to provide support or make reasonable adjustments. We provide help based on observed needs and lived experience.

3.3 Behaviour as Communication

We recognize that all behavior—including withdrawal, anxiety, or distress—is a sign of an unmet need or sensory overload. We investigate underlying causes rather than treating behavior in isolation.

4. Reasonable Adjustments and Inclusive Design

Following our anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010, we build accessibility into our systems from the start.

Adjustment Area	Examples of Implementation
Physical Environment	Lighting control, noise reduction, quiet zones, and sensory areas.
Communication	Explicit instructions, visual supports, and avoiding idioms or sarcasm.
Routine & Structure	Advanced warnings for changes, visual timetables, and predictable schedules.
Assessment & Task	Breaking tasks into chunks, flexible deadlines, and alternative ways to show work.

5. Identification and the Graduated Approach

We use a cyclical process to ensure support is dynamic and effective:

1. **Assess:** Identifying underlying needs (sensory, emotional, communication) through observation and lived experience input.
2. **Plan:** Creating individual support plans that focus on removing barriers.
3. **Do:** Implementing agreed-upon adjustments consistently.
4. **Review:** Regularly evaluating the impact of support and adjusting as necessary.

6. Transitions and the "In-Between"

We recognize that transitions—whether moving between stages of education, service providers, or into adulthood—are high-risk periods for neurodivergent individuals. We explicitly plan for these gaps to ensure no one "falls through the cracks".

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Leadership:** Accountable for implementing the policy and ensuring clear evidence of support is maintained.
- **Staff:** Responsible for identifying early signs of need, implementing adjustments, and recording progress without waiting for a diagnosis.
- **Governors/Trustees:** Monitor inclusion data and ensure statutory compliance.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and the Neurodiversity Lead. Success will be measured by:

- Reductions in exclusion and disadvantage for neurodivergent members.
- Evidence of consistently implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Feedback from neurodivergent individuals and their families.

Signed: _____ ( Person)

Date:  Date