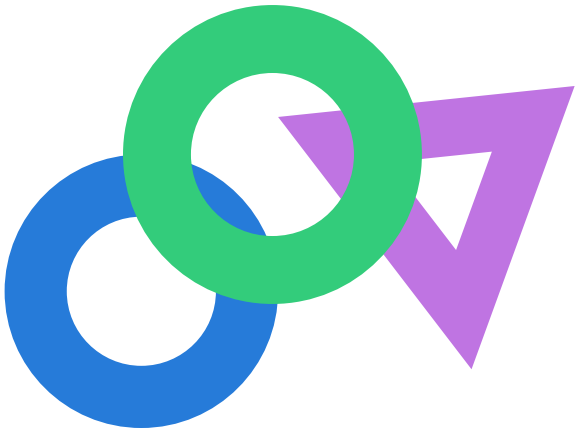
SIDEMISSION
SOCIAL



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

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Organisation: Side Mission Social (SMS)

Policy lead: David Robinette, Creative & Project Lead, & Ellie, Youth & Programme Lead

Applies to: Directors, staff, volunteers, participants, contractors and visitors

Review: Annually, or sooner if legislation or organisational practice changes

Purpose

Side Mission Social (SMS) is committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming and respectful environment where young people can take part, develop skills, express themselves and feel valued.

We aim to remove unnecessary barriers to participation and ensure everyone is treated fairly, regardless of their background, identity, circumstances or support needs.

Scope

This policy applies to all SMS activities, including youth sessions, workshops, events, trips, digital activities, recruitment, volunteering and partnerships.

Everyone representing or participating in SMS is expected to support these principles.

Legal Framework

SMS will work in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018
- Relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance

The Equality Act 2010 protects people against discrimination relating to protected characteristics. These include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

SMS will consider its legal responsibilities when designing and delivering activities, recruiting staff and volunteers, and making decisions about access and participation.

Our Commitments

SMS will:

- Treat people with dignity, fairness and respect.
- Promote equal opportunities and meaningful participation.
- Challenge discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- Recognise and respect different backgrounds, identities, experiences and abilities.
- Consider reasonable adjustments for disabled participants and others who may face barriers to access.
- Avoid assumptions about people's interests, abilities, behaviour or circumstances.
- Create opportunities for young people to contribute ideas and influence activities.
- Review our practices to identify and reduce barriers to participation.

Inclusive Activities and Access

SMS will make reasonable efforts to ensure that activities are accessible and appropriate for the people taking part.

This may include considering physical access, sensory needs, communication preferences, learning differences, financial barriers, cultural needs and confidence or anxiety around group participation.

Where possible, we will adapt activities, equipment, instructions or the environment to support participation.

We will explain any genuine safety or practical limitations clearly and explore suitable alternatives where possible.

Disability and Additional Support Needs

SMS recognises that people may need different types of support to participate fully.

We will seek relevant information sensitively, involve participants in discussions about their needs, and consider reasonable adjustments where required.

Personal information about disability, health or support needs will be handled confidentially and shared only where necessary and appropriate.

We will not assume that a person's diagnosis, disability or support need determines what they can achieve.

Respectful Behaviour

Everyone involved with SMS is expected to communicate respectfully and consider how their words and actions affect others.

Discriminatory language, harassment, bullying, degrading comments, exclusion or targeted abuse will not be accepted.

This includes behaviour in person, online, through messaging, during gaming or creative activities, and at SMS events.

Concerns will be addressed fairly and proportionately. Where behaviour raises safeguarding concerns, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will take priority.

Religion, Belief and Culture

SMS will respect different religions, beliefs, cultural backgrounds and personal values.

We will consider relevant needs when planning activities, including dietary requirements, prayer, clothing, celebrations and cultural sensitivities, where reasonably practicable.

No participant should be pressured to disclose personal beliefs or take part in religious or political activity as a condition of participation.

Gender and Identity

SMS will treat people respectfully and avoid discriminatory assumptions based on sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.

We will consider privacy, dignity and safety when organising activities and facilities, responding to concerns individually and in accordance with applicable law and safeguarding responsibilities.

Personal information will not be disclosed unnecessarily.

Recruitment and Volunteering

SMS will aim to make recruitment and volunteering opportunities fair, accessible and based on relevant skills, experience, suitability and the needs of the role.

Selection decisions will not be based on unlawful discrimination.

We will consider reasonable adjustments during recruitment and when supporting staff and volunteers in their roles.

All appointments remain subject to relevant safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures.

Fair Participation

SMS aims to make opportunities available fairly and transparently.

Where activities have limited places, age restrictions, referral criteria or specific safety requirements, these will be explained clearly.

We may take practical steps to support people who experience disadvantage or barriers to participation, while ensuring decisions are lawful, proportionate and consistent with the purpose of the activity.

Raising Concerns

Anyone who experiences or witnesses discrimination, harassment, exclusion or other behaviour that conflicts with this policy should raise the concern with a session leader, director or another trusted member of the SMS team.

Concerns will be taken seriously and handled sensitively.

Complaints will be managed under the Complaints Procedure. Safeguarding concerns will be managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

No one should be treated unfairly for raising a concern in good faith.

Responsibilities

Directors are responsible for promoting equality and inclusion, ensuring policies are followed and reviewing concerns or patterns of behaviour.

Staff and volunteers must model respectful behaviour, challenge inappropriate conduct where safe to do so, and report concerns.

Participants are expected to respect others, follow agreed behaviour standards and contribute to a safe and inclusive environment.

Partners and contractors working with SMS are expected to respect these principles while involved in SMS activities.

Confidentiality and Personal Information

SMS will handle personal information sensitively and in accordance with its data protection responsibilities.

Information about someone's identity, disability, health, religion or personal circumstances will only be collected where there is a legitimate reason and handled appropriately.

Information will only be shared when necessary, lawful and appropriate, including where safeguarding duties require action.

Monitoring and Review

SMS will review this policy at least annually and following any significant incident, change in legislation or identified need.

Feedback from participants, staff, volunteers and partners may be used to improve accessibility and inclusion.

Approved By: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Review Date: _____