



*A voice for families of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities*

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

Reading Families' Forum is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society, and for each employee, volunteer and contractor to feel respected and able to give their best.

The Reading Families' Forum is also committed against unlawful discrimination of members and the public throughout our work, including at events with the public.

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all employees, volunteers and contractors whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in 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 developmental opportunities

Reading Families' Forum commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and fit with our values as a charity working to ensure the voice of disabled children and young people and their families are heard.
- 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 ensuring Trustees, employees, volunteers and contractors know about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include all conducting

**[www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk](http://www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk)**

# Reading Families' Forum

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themselves to help Reading Families' Forum provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

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 and the public

- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, contractors, members, the public and any others in the course of Reading Families' Forum's work.

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

Further, 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.

- 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 Reading Families' Forum.
- Decisions concerning staff being 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

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# Reading Families' Forum

*A voice for families of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the law.*

- Be aware of the make-up of our small workforce and the families we work with 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 this equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

If the families who attend our events cease to reflect the variety of SEND families in Reading, we will address this at Trustee meetings.

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by the Board of Trustees.

Details of Reading Families' Forum's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found at [www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk](http://www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk). This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance.

Use of Reading Families' Forum's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Board of Trustees

June 2020

To be reviewed by June 2023

[www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk](http://www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk)