

Out East Fencing Club

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Document status: Club policy

Approved by: Board of Directors

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1. Purpose

1.1. Out East Fencing Club (the **Club**) is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive and respectful environment in which people can participate in fencing and Club activities.

1.2. The Club believes that fencing should be accessible to people from different backgrounds and circumstances and that no one should be excluded from participation because of who they are.

1.3. This policy sets out the Club's approach to:

- equality of opportunity;
- diversity and inclusion;
- preventing discrimination and harassment;
- accessibility and reasonable adjustments;
- LGBTQ+ inclusion;
- inclusive youth participation;
- responding to concerns; and
- promoting an inclusive Club culture.

1.4. The policy supports the commitments made in the Club's Articles of Association and Code of Conduct.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to everyone involved in the Club, including:

- members;
- youth members;
- parents and guardians;
- Directors;
- coaches and instructors;
- employees;
- volunteers;
- contractors; and
- visitors.

2.2. The policy applies to Club activities, communications and events and, where relevant, conduct outside Club activities that has a sufficient connection with the Club.

3. Equality and Non-Discrimination

3.1. The Club will seek to provide equal opportunity to participate in its activities.

3.2. The Club does not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

3.3. This includes discrimination or harassment relating to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage or civil partnership;
- pregnancy or maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

3.4. The Club also seeks to avoid unfair exclusion or disadvantage arising from other personal circumstances, including where a person's socioeconomic circumstances, caring

responsibilities, language, family circumstances or other relevant factors affect their ability to participate.

3.5. Equality does not mean treating everyone identically. The Club may make reasonable adjustments or provide additional support where this enables fairer access to participation.

4. LGBTQ+ Inclusion

4.1. Out East Fencing Club is committed to being a **queer-friendly and LGBTQ+ inclusive** club.

4.2. LGBTQ+ participants should be able to participate without having to conceal or justify their sexual orientation or gender identity.

4.3. The Club does not tolerate:

- homophobic or biphobic behaviour;
- transphobic behaviour;
- slurs or derogatory comments;
- harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity;
- deliberate misgendering;
- deliberately refusing to use a person's stated name or pronouns as a means of hostility or exclusion; or
- unwanted questioning or disclosure of another person's LGBTQ+ identity.

4.4. The Club recognises that people may use different terms to describe their identities and that language and terminology can change.

4.5. Participants should respect the names and pronouns that others ask them to use.

4.6. No person should be required to disclose information about their sexual orientation, gender identity, transition, medical history or other sensitive personal circumstances in order to participate.

5. Gender Identity and Participation

5.1. The Club aims to provide an environment in which people of all gender identities can participate comfortably and safely.

5.2. For recreational and club-based fencing, Out East follows British Fencing's guidance that **transgender and non-binary participants should generally be able to participate in accordance with their gender identity**. Where participation in a British Fencing-licensed competition is subject to specific eligibility rules, those rules will apply to that competition.

5.3. The Club will avoid imposing additional requirements on participants that are not necessary for safety, safeguarding, legal compliance or legitimate sporting requirements.

5.5. Where questions arise about participation, the Club should seek to resolve them sensitively and privately rather than placing an individual in the position of having to justify their identity publicly.

6. Disability and Accessibility

6.1. The Club recognises that people with disabilities may require adjustments to participate fully.

6.2. The Club will consider reasonable adjustments where practicable, taking account of:

- the nature of the adjustment;
- the needs of the individual;
- safety;
- the suitability of the venue;
- available resources;
- the nature of the activity; and
- applicable legal and governing-body requirements.

6.3. Possible adjustments may include:

- changes to coaching or instruction;
- additional explanation or demonstrations;
- changes to session arrangements;
- communication adjustments;
- additional time where appropriate;
- changes to equipment or its use;
- assistance with accessing facilities; or
- other reasonable measures.

6.4. Not every adjustment will be possible in every venue or activity. Where a requested adjustment cannot reasonably be provided, the Club should seek to explain why and consider whether an alternative can be offered.

6.5. Participants should be encouraged to discuss accessibility needs with the Club in advance where this would help the Club make appropriate arrangements.

7. Accessibility of Communications

7.1. The Club will seek to make important information reasonably accessible.

7.2. Where practicable, the Club will consider:

- clear and straightforward language;
- accessible digital content;
- appropriate alternatives where a person cannot access a particular format; and
- reasonable communication adjustments.

7.3. The Club recognises that accessibility requirements vary between individuals.

8. Religion and Belief

8.1. The Club respects participants' right to hold their own religious and philosophical beliefs.

8.2. Participants are expected to respect the rights and dignity of others regardless of their beliefs or characteristics.

8.3. Holding a particular religious or philosophical belief does not exempt a person from the Club's Code of Conduct or from requirements concerning respectful, non-discriminatory behaviour.

9. Race, Ethnicity and Nationality

9.1. The Club welcomes participants of all racial, ethnic and national backgrounds.

9.2. Racist language, stereotyping, harassment, exclusion or intimidation is not acceptable.

9.3. The Club recognises that discriminatory behaviour can be explicit or indirect and will consider concerns about both where appropriate.

10. Age and Youth Participation

10.1. The Club welcomes participation by both adults and young people.

10.2. The Club recognises that children and young people have different needs from adults and may require age-appropriate communication, coaching and support.

10.3. Youth participants should be treated with respect and should have appropriate opportunities to express their views and raise concerns.

10.4. The Club will not tolerate bullying, discrimination or harassment involving youth participants.

10.5. Safeguarding concerns involving children shall be dealt with under the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

11. Socioeconomic Inclusion

11.1. The Club recognises that the cost of participation can create barriers to accessing sport.

11.2. The Club will seek, within its financial capacity, to consider reasonable ways of reducing unnecessary barriers to participation.

11.3. Depending on the circumstances, this may include consideration of:

- equipment access;
- introductory opportunities;
- payment arrangements;
- membership options;
- equipment loan arrangements; or
- other practical measures.

11.4. The Club cannot guarantee financial assistance or subsidised participation and any such arrangements will depend on available resources.

12. Inclusive Coaching

12.1. Coaches should seek to provide instruction that is respectful and appropriate to participants with different abilities, backgrounds and levels of experience.

12.2. Coaches should avoid assumptions about a participant's:

- physical ability;
- gender;
- sexuality;
- background;
- family circumstances;
- prior experience; or
- learning needs.

12.3. Feedback should be constructive and should focus on fencing performance and development rather than personal characteristics.

12.4. Coaches should consider reasonable adjustments where these can be made safely and appropriately.

12.5. Coaches should raise significant accessibility, welfare or inclusion concerns through the appropriate Club procedure.

13. Inclusive Youth Environment

13.1. The Club aims to ensure that youth activities are welcoming to children and young people from different backgrounds and family circumstances.

13.2. Coaches and volunteers should:

- use age-appropriate and respectful language;
- avoid unnecessary assumptions about family structures;
- respect appropriate names and pronouns;
- challenge discriminatory behaviour;
- provide reasonable opportunities for children to ask questions or raise concerns; and
- follow safeguarding requirements.

13.3. Parents and guardians should also support an inclusive environment and should not use youth activities as a setting for discriminatory or hostile behaviour towards another participant.

14. Facilities and Venues

14.1. The Club will consider accessibility and inclusion when selecting and using venues where it has reasonable control over those arrangements.

14.2. The Club recognises that many facilities are controlled by venue operators and that the Club cannot guarantee that every venue will meet every participant's needs.

14.3. Where a venue creates a significant accessibility or inclusion barrier, the Club should consider whether reasonable alternatives or adjustments are available.

14.4. Participants should be encouraged to raise relevant needs with the Club rather than being expected to resolve venue-related accessibility issues themselves.

15. Discrimination and Harassment

15.1. Discrimination or harassment may take place in person, online or through other forms of communication.

15.2. Examples include:

- derogatory comments or jokes;
- slurs;
- unwanted sexual attention;
- discriminatory social media content;
- deliberate exclusion;
- intimidation;
- stereotyping;
- persistent unwanted comments about someone's identity; or
- deliberately creating an environment in which another person feels unwelcome because of a personal characteristic.

15.3. This list is not exhaustive.

15.4. A person does not need to intend to cause offence for behaviour to have an inappropriate or discriminatory effect. The Club will consider the circumstances as a whole.

15.5. At the same time, the Club recognises that genuine mistakes can occur and will seek to distinguish between an accidental mistake and deliberate or repeated behaviour.

16. Raising an Inclusion Concern

16.1. Anyone who experiences or witnesses discrimination, harassment or another inclusion concern is encouraged to raise it.

16.2. Depending on the circumstances, a concern may be raised with:

- a coach;
- the Welfare Officer;
- a Director; or
- another appropriate Club representative.

16.3. The Club will consider whether the concern should be handled under:

- this policy;
- the Welfare Policy & Procedure;
- the Complaints Policy & Procedure;
- the Disciplinary Procedure;
- the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy; or
- another appropriate process.

16.4. A person raising a concern does not need to determine which procedure applies.

17. Confidentiality

17.1. Inclusion concerns will be handled sensitively and confidentially wherever reasonably possible.

17.2. Information should only be shared with people who have a legitimate reason to receive it.

17.3. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information needs to be shared:

- to protect someone from serious harm;
- to comply with a legal obligation;
- to enable an appropriate investigation; or
- for another legitimate and necessary purpose.

17.4. The Club should avoid unnecessarily disclosing sensitive information about a person's identity, health or personal circumstances.

18. Retaliation and Victimisation

18.1. The Club does not tolerate retaliation against a person who raises a genuine equality or inclusion concern.

18.2. A person should not be disadvantaged because they:

- raise a concern;
- support another person;
- participate in an investigation; or
- provide relevant information.

18.3. Retaliation or victimisation may itself constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct and may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

19. Responsibilities

19.1. Board of Directors

The Board is responsible for:

- approving and maintaining this policy;
- ensuring that the Club's practices are consistent with its commitments;
- providing appropriate resources where reasonably practicable;
- responding to significant concerns; and
- reviewing equality and inclusion issues as part of governance.

19.2. Coaches and Instructors

Coaches are responsible for:

- treating participants fairly and respectfully;
- providing inclusive instruction;
- considering reasonable adjustments;
- challenging inappropriate discriminatory behaviour; and
- reporting relevant concerns.

19.3. Volunteers

Volunteers should:

- treat participants respectfully;
- follow this policy and the Code of Conduct;
- support inclusive Club activities; and
- report relevant concerns.

19.4. Members and Participants

Members and participants are expected to:

- treat others respectfully;
- avoid discriminatory or harassing behaviour;
- respect reasonable requests relating to names, pronouns and personal boundaries;
- follow relevant Club rules; and
- raise concerns appropriately.

20. Training and Awareness

20.1. The Club will seek to ensure that Directors, coaches and relevant volunteers understand their responsibilities under this policy.

20.2. Training may include:

- equality and discrimination;
- LGBTQ+ inclusion;
- disability awareness;
- safeguarding;
- inclusive coaching; and
- responding appropriately to concerns.

20.3. Training requirements should be proportionate to a person's role and responsibilities.

21. Positive Inclusion

21.1. Inclusion is not limited to preventing discrimination.

21.2. The Club will seek to create a culture in which people feel welcome and able to participate without needing to conform to a particular background, identity or way of life.

21.3. The Club may use inclusive language, communications and activities that reflect the diversity of its membership.

21.4. The Club may take reasonable positive steps to identify and reduce barriers to participation.

21.5. Such measures should remain consistent with applicable law, governing-body requirements and the Club's sporting objectives.

22. Relationship with Other Policies

22.1. This policy should be read alongside the Club's:

- Code of Conduct;
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy;
- Welfare Policy & Procedure;
- Complaints Policy & Procedure;
- Disciplinary Procedure;
- Health & Safety Policy;
- Data Protection Policy; and
- Photography & Social Media Policy.

22.2. Where conduct may constitute both discrimination and another form of misconduct or safeguarding concern, the relevant procedures may operate together.

23. Review

23.1. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually and sooner where appropriate.

23.2. The Board shall review the policy following significant inclusion concerns, material changes to the Club's activities or relevant changes in law or governing-body requirements.

23.3. The Club should consider feedback from members and participants when reviewing its approach to inclusion.

24. Approval

This Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy was approved by the Board of Directors of Out East Fencing Club on:

Date: 12/08/2026

Chair / Director: Pel Houlihan

Next review date: 12/08/2027