



Creative Writing for All

Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2026-2028

Introduction

Fighting Words roots its planning for Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) in a human rights approach, where we set out to make creativity and the arts accessible and affordable for all children.

As set out in Article 15 of the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, we recognise the right of everyone to participate in the cultural life of their community. We also acknowledge, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the participation rights of children and young people. These rights encompass children's freedom to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their own lives. Creativity and expression are both a right in itself, and also an enabler that allows children to claim and enjoy all of their rights.

Fighting Words has a strategic commitment to GEDI principles. We are committed to building a creative environment for our staff, volunteer team and all programme participants where everyone feels seen, heard and valued. We believe that diversity of identity, background and thought is not only right, it's essential to innovation, growth and trust.

Our policy has been developed in line with relevant Irish legislation including the [Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015](#), [Equal Status Acts 2000–2018](#) and the [Safe to Create Framework](#) and also in line with our mission, ethos, values as well as our strategic plan.

GEDI principles are included in all of our policies e.g. our Autism Friendly Charter, Equal Opportunities Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Volunteer Policy as well as our Scaling Education Strategy on addressing educational disadvantage.

This policy has been agreed by the Fighting Words Board of Directors. Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is long-term and evolving. We strive to be intentional, accountable and open to change.

Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to the entire Fighting Words community, including but not limited to: staff, volunteers, interns, participants, artists, partners and contractors.

See appendix for definitions.

Policy Statement

Fighting Words recognises that systemic barriers exist in terms of equity and access to creative opportunities for young people and to employment and volunteer opportunities for adults.

We will strive to to dismantle them by:

- Embedding inclusive practices into all areas of our work
- Providing training and accountability for bias-free decision-making
- Listening to the voices of underrepresented staff, volunteers and communities we serve

To ensure our working environment promotes equality and a sense of belonging, we do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying, as reflected in our relevant policies for staff, volunteers and programme participants.

Roles and Responsibilities

The expectations of the Fighting Words community are set out below:

- **Staff:** To design and implement programmes in an inclusive manner in line with GEDI principles and to ensure that volunteers and participants are aware of our commitment to those principles.
- **Volunteers and Interns:** To assist in the delivery of programmes in an atmosphere that is safe, welcoming and promotes a sense of belonging.
- **Participants and Partner Organisations:** To engage with Fighting Words programmes in a manner that promotes inclusivity and respect for everyone's creativity.

Reporting and Complaints

If you have a query, concern or complaint related to this policy, we encourage you to raise it with us.

In addition, Fighting Words has procedures in place for bullying, harassment and discrimination that can be found in the following documents:

- Harassment is covered in the [Equal Opportunities Policy](#)
- Bullying is covered in the Anti-Bullying Policy included in the [Staff Terms and Conditions](#)

Fighting Words assures all members of our community that they will not face any form of victimisation or retaliation for raising a complaint or concern in good faith related to this policy.

In the case of a complaint, please contact the Operations Director, the Executive Director, or where that is not appropriate, a member of the staff.

Monitoring and Review

Fighting Words is committed to making sure our GEDI policy is meaningful and effective.

To help us do this, we will monitor progress through regular staff and volunteer feedback (such as surveys), reviews of our practices and the collection of relevant diversity data where appropriate and in line with data protection guidelines.

This policy will be formally reviewed every two years - or as required - to reflect new learning, feedback, or changes in legislation or best practice.

The next review of the policy will be no later than early 2028.

Appendix 1

Definitions

Gender:

- Dynamic, socially and culturally constructed identity category that shapes access to power, privilege, opportunity and safety.
- Not as a fixed definition, but as a lived experience that influences and is influenced by social systems.

Equity:

- Measured experience of equal individual, interpersonal and organisational success and well-being across all stakeholders and the absence of discrimination, mistreatment or abuse for all. It is important to acknowledge historically underserved and underrepresented populations.

Diversity:

- The workforce composition that all stakeholders, especially those from underserved and marginalised populations, trust to be representative and accountable on all levels. This is achieved through actions that explicitly counter represent historical inequities and meet the unique needs of all populations.

Inclusion:

- Achievement of a workplace environment that allows trust to be built, and then diversity can happen.

Belonging:

- The extent to which people feel part of a larger whole in a group setting.