Dyslexia Ireland

POLICY COVERSHEET

This policy does not form part of the employment contract. Dyslexia Ireland may amend this policy from time to time at our sole discretion. Dyslexia Ireland may also vary the policy, as appropriate in any case.

Name of Policy and Version:	**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy v3.0**
Policy Status:	New Policy Revision of Existing Policy [X] Note: This policy replaced and expanded on the previous Equal Opportunities Policy.
Approval for this policy given by:	Dyslexia Ireland Board
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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy

Introduction
At Dyslexia Ireland, we are committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. We believe that embracing people from all backgrounds, identities, and experiences strengthens our organisation and enhances our ability to serve the community effectively. This DEI policy outlines our commitment to ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral parts of our work, culture, and mission. Dyslexia Ireland is committed to ensuring compliance with relevant legislation. In addition, Dyslexia Ireland as a non-profit organisation working in the disability and neurodiversity field, has a responsibility to demonstrate leadership on DEI issues.

Scope
This policy applies to all personnel within the organisation (including staff, volunteers, and board members). We aim to ensure that all people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, nationality, gender (including gender identity), sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, civil status, family status, membership of the Traveller Community or any other characteristic protected by law, are welcomed, respected, and valued. Although not protected by law, we will also ensure that all people regardless of their socioeconomic status are welcomed, respected and valued.

All personnel are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives at all times. Any questions in relation to this policy should be directed to the CEO.

1. Commitment to Diversity
We recognise the value of a diverse workforce and volunteer base. We value and actively pursue diversity across all levels of our organisation, including staff, volunteers, leadership, and participants. Diversity includes but is not limited to differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, neurodiversity, socioeconomic background, civil status, family status and membership of the Traveller Community. Insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

- We will actively seek to engage people from diverse backgrounds in all areas of our work.
- We will encourage representation of minority and underrepresented groups in all roles.
- We will ensure our services and activities are designed to be inclusive and reflective of the communities we serve.

Procedures:
As part of our procedures we will seek to, insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

Recruitment:
- Develop recruitment strategies that reach diverse candidates.
- Implement inclusive job descriptions and review job requirements to ensure they do not unintentionally exclude certain groups.

- Ensure interview panels are diverse and trained on unconscious bias to promote fair and objective evaluations.
- Create opportunities for individuals to disclose any additional needs and/or request reasonable accommodations.

Partnerships:
- Collaborate with organisations and groups that represent diverse communities to expand our reach and impact.
- Seek out and engage suppliers, vendors, and partners from diverse backgrounds.

Representation:
- Track relevant diversity data (in compliance with privacy laws) to monitor the representation of different groups within our organisation.
- Set annual goals for increasing the representation of underrepresented groups across all roles.

2. Commitment to Equity

We aim to create an equitable environment where everyone has fair access to resources and opportunities. Equity means creating fair access to opportunities and resources for all individuals, particularly for those who may have historically faced, or currently face, barriers to inclusion. Insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

- We are committed to identifying and addressing systemic barriers to participation and advancement within our organisation.
- We will strive to provide equal access to opportunities for professional development, leadership roles, and decision-making within our organisation.
- We will actively work to remove any discrimination or bias that may impact individuals based on the characteristics set out above.

Procedures:

As part of our procedures we will seek to, insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

Fair Compensation and Opportunities:
- Conduct periodic pay equity audits to ensure fair compensation practices across all roles and groups.
- Ensure that opportunities for training and career advancement are equally accessible to all, with proactive outreach to underrepresented staff and volunteers.

Inclusive Service Design:
- Design activities and services that are relevant and responsive to the diverse needs of the communities we serve.
- Engage with underrepresented groups to co-create solutions that address their specific challenges and ensure equity of outcomes.

Resource Allocation:

- Allocate reasonable resources to provide accessibility accommodations (such as assistive technology, language translation, physical access adjustments).
- Provide financial assistance to participants from disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure they have equal access to our activities and services.

Reasonable Accommodations Procedure:

- We encourage individuals to disclose any additional needs they may have at any time. Individuals also have the right not to disclose – it is their personal choice. However, the earlier we are aware of needs, the sooner support can be provided to the individual.
- A disclosure of need can be made verbally or in written form to the line manager, or person in charge of recruitment in the case of job candidates.
- Supporting evidence may be requested, where necessary.
- A discussion between the individual and the line manager will then aim to identify appropriate supports and or accommodations. Medical advice may also be sought.
- Any supports and or accommodations sought will be considered and implemented save where this would give rise to a disproportionate burden for the organisation.
- Supports and or accommodations will be reviewed periodically, to see if any changes are needed, and especially if the individual's role changes in a way which may require different support.
- Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process to the extent possible, with no data shared without the consent of the individual.

3. Commitment to Inclusion

We are dedicated to fostering a culture of inclusion where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered to contribute. Insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

- We will foster a culture where all voices are listened to, heard and valued, and where diversity of thought is encouraged.
- We will ensure that all activities and services are as accessible as possible to individuals with different abilities and needs.
- We will provide ongoing education and training on DEI principles for our personnel to promote awareness, understanding, and cultural competency.

Procedures:

As part of our procedures we will seek to, insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

Inclusion in Decision-Making:

- Ensure that the Board has a diverse makeup and appropriate training to ensure that DEI is considered in decision-making processes. Representation of those directly affected by dyslexia and dyscalculia is a priority for the Board of Dyslexia Ireland.
- Hold periodic forums or evaluations to gather feedback and input on how we can create a more inclusive environment.

Training and Awareness:

- Provide DEI training for personnel on topics such as unconscious bias, cultural competency, and inclusive leadership.
- Include DEI-related performance objectives in the evaluations of staff and leadership to ensure accountability for fostering an inclusive environment.

Safe Spaces:

- Create and maintain safe spaces for open dialogue, where individuals from marginalised communities can share their experiences and concerns without fear of judgment or retaliation.
- Establish affinity groups or networks to provide additional support and community for underrepresented groups within the organisation.

4. Anti-Discrimination and Harassment

We are committed to maintaining a workplace environment free from discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), and bullying. Insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

- Discrimination or harassment based on any legally protected characteristic/ground (race, gender, disability, age, religion, family status, civil status, sexual orientation and membership of the Traveller Community) will not be tolerated.
- We will provide a clear process for reporting and addressing complaints of discrimination or harassment (see the Dignity and Respect at Work Policy).
- We will take immediate and appropriate action in response to any violation of this policy.

Procedures:

As part of our procedures we will seek to, insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

Reporting and Response:

- Create a clear and confidential reporting mechanism for complaints of discrimination, harassment, or bullying, accessible to all staff, volunteers, and participants.
- Ensure timely and thorough investigation of all complaints by trained personnel and take appropriate disciplinary action when necessary in line with the organisation's Disciplinary Policy.
- Provide support services (for example counselling) to individuals who report or are affected by discrimination, harassment or bullying (through our Employee Assistance Programme).

Zero-Tolerance Policy:

- Communicate our zero-tolerance stance on discrimination, harassment and bullying at all organisational levels.
- Include anti-harassment and anti-discrimination clauses in all staff and volunteer codes of conduct, with clear consequences for violations.

5. Implementation and Accountability

We are committed to ensuring that DEI is embedded in every aspect of our work. The successful implementation of this policy requires collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement. Dyslexia Ireland has committed to implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. Insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

- The CEO will oversee the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- We will regularly assess and review our practices to ensure that we are meeting our DEI goals and objectives.
- We will hold ourselves accountable to our stakeholders by sharing progress updates and being transparent about challenges and successes.

Procedures:

As part of our procedures we will seek to, insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

DEI Officer:

- Appoint a dedicated DEI Officer responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of this policy. The CEO will be the DEI Officer although this may be subject to change.
- The DEI Officer will report directly to the Board and provide updates on progress, challenges, and next steps.

Regular Monitoring:

- Conduct annual DEI audits, including surveys and/or focus groups, to assess our progress toward meeting DEI goals.
- Use data from these audits to develop action plans for addressing gaps and improving our DEI practices.
- Make annual DEI reports publicly available to demonstrate transparency and accountability to stakeholders.

Policy Review and Revision:

- Review this policy periodically to ensure that it reflects best practices and responds to the changing needs of our organisation and community.
- Solicit feedback from staff, volunteers, and participants as part of the policy review process.

6. Continuous Improvement

We acknowledge that fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organisation is an ongoing journey. We are committed to learning, adapting, and improving our DEI practices as we grow and improve over time. Insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

- We will listen to the voices of those we serve to shape our approach to DEI.
- We will stay informed on best practices and research in the field of DEI and adapt our policies as needed.
- We will celebrate our successes and acknowledge where we can do better, committing to continuous learning and development.

Procedures:
As part of our procedures we will seek to, insofar as is practicable and in line with legal requirements:

Learning and Development:

- Stay informed about emerging DEI research, best practices, and legal requirements through continuous professional development.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to participate in DEI-related training opportunities.

Community Engagement:

- Regularly seek input from the communities we serve to ensure our activities and practices remain relevant and inclusive.
- Use community feedback to shape our ongoing DEI efforts and make adjustments as necessary.

Conclusion
At Dyslexia Ireland, diversity, equity, and inclusion are fundamental to who we are and how we operate. We are dedicated to creating an organisation where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to our mission. Dyslexia Ireland commits to creating a space where all individuals feel valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

If any personnel believe they may have been disadvantaged on any of the grounds set out in this policy, they are encouraged to raise the matter through the organisation's Grievance Procedure or Dignity and Respect at Work Policy as appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work.