



Putting young people first

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# WHEELS VOCATIONAL & LIFE SKILLS CENTRE

## Equality and Diversity Policy

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**Date of Last Review: September 2024**

**Next Review: September 2025**

Company Registration No. 06608327

Registered Charity No. 1157795

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## **Introduction**

The Equality Act 2010 protects all people and establishes that discrimination is unlawful. The protected characteristics (section 4) under the Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation and including language in education.

This Policy is our commitment that Wheels Vocational and Life Skills Centre will ensure that no employee, job applicant, student or other member of the Centre community is treated less favourably on any of the above grounds. Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. For Students we aim to provide equal access to educational and vocational opportunities and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the Centre community. We seek to provide a safe and happy environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

We aim to empower our students to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the Centre community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the Centre's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the Policy.

All members of the Centre community are responsible for, and protected by, the Policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the Policy.

## **Students and the Curriculum**

The Centre's Admissions Policy does not permit sex, race, colour, or disability to be used as criteria for admission. The Centre's aim is to provide for all students according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin.

## **Staff**

Monitoring with respect to employment will be undertaken in the following areas on at least an annual basis by sex, race, disability, etc:

- Composition of the Centre staff relative to function.
- Recruitment trends.
- Take up of training opportunities.
- Promotion patterns where opportunities exist.
- Use of complaints procedure.
- Use of grievance or disciplinary Policies etc.
- Use of sanctions.
- Take-up of family-friendly policies. E.g. Flexible working arrangements or job share.

## **Objectives**

Wheels Vocational and Life Skills Centre will ensure that, whilst carrying out its activities, it will have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity across all activities undertaken between different groups of staff and students.
- Fostering good relationships between people of a diverse background.

The implementation of this Policy ensures that Wheels Vocational and Life Skills Centre will aim to:

- Develop and promote a culture of equality and diversity throughout the Centre.
- Develop and promote a culture of dignity and respect.

- Support all Students and Staff in relation to the characteristics of the Act.
- Work to prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination.
- Deal with all forms of discrimination consistently and effectively.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is incumbent on all members of the Centre community to act with dignity, courtesy, and respect at all times.

Staff should:

- Actively encourage non-discriminatory practices and report any incidents of behaviour that fail to comply with this Policy.
- Support the Aims of this Policy.
- Undertake appropriate training as necessary.

Students should:

- Actively encourage non-discriminatory practices and report any incidents of behaviour that fail to comply with this Policy.
- Be aware of equality and diversity issues and recognise appropriate responses.

Senior Leadership should:

- Monitor the Policy and practice of the Centre community.
- Provide appropriate guidance for Students and training for Staff.
- Investigate all matters of alleged discrimination in line with Centre protocols.
- Ensure that selection and appointment procedures, performance management processes, staff development opportunities and disciplinary and grievance procedures are fairly and consistently applied to all staff.
- Ensure that Students benefit from:
  - Clear, consistent and transparent assessment criteria to promote fair access.
  - An Accessibility Plan to enable students who have SEND equal opportunities to engage in the curriculum offer. (See Appendix 1.)
  - Career planning support appropriate to their long - term aims. (See Careers Education, Information and Guidance Policy.)
  - A fair discipline procedure (detailed in the Behaviour for Learning Policy) that is consistently applied.

This Policy is subject to all other Policies of Wheels Vocational and Life Skills Centre.

## **Appendix 1.**

### **Accessibility Planning for SEND Students**

Wheels Vocational and Life Skills Centre predominantly caters for the physically able student but we are proud of our ability to admit any student who may benefit from our curriculum offer. There may be some aspects of the Vocational Curriculum that, for Health and Safety reasons, the student may find inaccessible; however, alternative methods, strategies or modules can be offered and discussed at interview, and later, during ILP Reviews with all stakeholders.

Our Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy outlines many aspects of our practical considerations for students in our care and should be consulted alongside the Care, Support and Guidance Policy and Curriculum Policy when reading this document.

### **A Unique Learning Environment**

The environment and physical constraints of our building determine many aspects of our curriculum provision. Specialising in Light Vehicle Maintenance and Vocational Life Skills. The Centre is separated into workshops, learning centres and administration suites on the ground floor of a factory unit, approximately 500M<sup>2</sup> in size.

Within the vocational areas specialist equipment is securely fitted and maintained to the highest industry standards. All students experience a Health and Safety Induction period before being allowed to use any equipment located within the vocational areas.

Staff monitor movement around these areas at all times. Students with SEND may require an additional risk assessment depending upon their particular disability. The Centre endeavours to provide all its students with equal access to learning and has identified the following areas that may require consideration to promote accessibility for all:

- Car Parking Areas
- Main Entrance for Visitors
- Reception Area
- Ramped Accesses into Workshop
- Student Entrances
- Safety Walkways
- Learning Areas and Classrooms
- Toilet and Changing Areas

The following Accessibility Plan is subject to all other protocols of Wheels Vocational and Life Skills Centre and reflects our ethos of Child Centred Education.

## Wheels Vocational and Life Skills Centre Accessibility Plan 2024 – 2027

The Accessibility Plan will contain relevant actions to:

- Improve access to the **physical environment** of the Centre, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the Centre and physical aids to access education.
- Increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils; (If a Centre fails to do this they are in breach of the DDA). This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the Centre such as participation in leisure and cultural activities or Centre visits. It also covers the provision of specialist **aids and equipment**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.
- Improve the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include hand-outs, timetables, and information about the Centre and Centre events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.

### Physical Environment

Target Area	Action	Timescale	Success Criteria	Evaluations
Car Park External Surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide disabled car parking bay.</li> <li>• Ensure kerbs, pathways, hard areas, etc. are level and smooth to avoid trip hazards</li> </ul>	<p>1 year from September 2022</p> <p>Continuous cycle</p>	<p>Bay marked.</p> <p>Ongoing Health and Safety checks ensure this is complied with.</p>	<p>Marked area is used subject to need at this time.</p> <p>Current practice.</p>
Entrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access for wheelchair users</li> <li>• Improve signage for VI visitors.</li> </ul>	<p>1 year from September 2022.</p>	<p>Ramps in use.</p> <p>Signage in place.</p>	<p>Access available via workshop and/or ICT classroom.</p> <p>Larger type signs printed and displayed.</p>
Visitor Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide removeable ramped access for wheelchair users.</li> <li>• Improve signage for VI visitors.</li> </ul>	<p>1 year from September 2022</p>	<p>Ramp available.</p> <p>Signage in place.</p>	<p>Larger type signs printed and displayed.</p>
Ease of Access Toilet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish one toilet area to accommodate all facilities required.</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous cycle.</p>	<p>All facilities provided. Area operational.</p>	<p>Operational.</p>
Safety Walkways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repaint colour contrasted walkways.</li> <li>• Safety handrails to have colour contrasted top bar for extra visibility.</li> </ul>	<p>September 2022</p> <p>September 2021 if VI student is enrolled.</p>	<p>Continual</p>	<p>Yearly cycle for contrasted Walkways is in operation.</p> <p>Not applicable 2022</p>
Student Entrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide removable ramped access where necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>Yearly Review September 2022</p>	<p>Ramp available.</p>	<p>Currently not required (Sept 2022).</p>
Learning Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide height adjustable work surface/table. (Workbenches, multiple sizes in the workshops).</li> </ul>	<p>Yearly Review September 2022</p>	<p>Available for use.</p>	<p>Currently not required (Sept 2022).</p>

### The Curriculum

<b>Target Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>	<b>Review / Date</b>
Curriculum differentiation.  Tutors are aware of the relevant issues and can ensure that students have equality of access to life - preparation learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the specific needs for pupils living with a disability, in terms of basic daily living skills, relationships and future aspirations.</li> </ul>	Current.	Students meet or exceed their expected targets.	Student Outcome Data shows positive results. (Sept 2022)  Regular review of the needs required.
Out of Centre Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities are planned to ensure that all students have accessibility to a range, if not all, of the curriculum offer. Personal choice of activities will be supported in line with Health and Safety rules.</li> </ul>	Current.	Students engage in activities and work co-operatively with their able-bodied peers.	Regular review of the needs required and acted on to suit .
Specialist Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with other professional bodies the Centre will, to the best of its ability, ensure that equipment required to access learning is provided as necessary. (This is subject to sufficient funding and support from all stakeholders.)</li> </ul>	As Required.	Equipment available for use as required.	Not applicable at this time.

### Written Communication

<b>Target Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>	<b>Review / Date</b>
Provide Alternative Communication channels for information on printed materials.  These may be Centre letters, parent/student handbooks or specific information relating to policies and protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of the Centre website and emails where viewing size may be enlarged for VI stakeholders.</li> <li>Log telephone contact details as a preferred method of communication.</li> <li>Liaise with other agencies relating to tactile/braille transcripts for information and signage.</li> </ul>	Current.  Current.  As Required.	Parent/Student/home school feedback is positive and supportive. Stakeholder suggestions and comments on how to improve communication have been implemented wherever possible.	Protocols in place and operational.  Review September 2022.

This Accessibility Plan is subject to modification as situations arise but will be reviewed each September and updated at that time.