

Irish Forest School Association (IFSA)

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Policy Statement

The Irish Forest School Association (IFSA) is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of its work. We value the contribution of every individual and strive to create an environment where all members, employees, volunteers, and participants are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is in line with the **Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015** and the **Equal Status Acts 2000–2018**, which prohibit discrimination on the following nine grounds:

- Gender
- Civil status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality, or ethnic origin
- Membership of the Traveller community

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Recruitment, selection, and appointment of staff, contractors, and volunteers
- Membership and participation in IFSA activities
- Access to training, events, and professional development opportunities
- All services and programmes delivered by IFSA

4. Principles

- **Fairness and Transparency:** All decisions relating to employment, membership, and participation will be based on objective criteria.
- **Accessibility:** IFSA will take reasonable steps to ensure that its activities and services are accessible to all, including those with disabilities.
- **Respect and Inclusion:** We will foster a culture of respect, ensuring that diversity is valued and discrimination, harassment, or victimisation is not tolerated.
- **Monitoring and Accountability:** The ACORN committee will oversee the implementation of this policy and review it regularly to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice.

5. Responsibilities

- **Committee and Leadership:** Ensure that equality principles are embedded in governance and decision-making.
- **Treasurer and Chair:** Ensure that financial and operational procedures support inclusivity and equal access.
- **Members and Volunteers:** Uphold the values of equality and respect in all interactions.

6. Complaints and Resolution

Any member, volunteer, or participant who believes they have experienced discrimination or harassment may raise the issue with the Chair or a designated committee member. Complaints will be handled promptly, fairly, and confidentially.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the ACORN committee to ensure it remains up to date with legislative requirements and reflects best practice in equality and inclusion.

This policy was ratified at Acorn committee meeting 10 November 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miriam Hurley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'M' and a long, sweeping 'H'.

Signed: Chairperson