



# Auntie's Cookery Academy

## Equality and Diversity (EDI) Policy

### 1. Why this matters

Auntie's Cookery Academy exists to empower people through food, learning, and community. That only works if everyone—regardless of background, identity, ability, or experience—feels safe, respected, and valued.

This policy sets out our commitment to building a diverse and inclusive environment where everyone has fair access to opportunity, support, and a sense of belonging.

It applies to every part of who we are: from who we recruit, to how we teach, how we resolve conflict, and how we make decisions.

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### 2. Who this covers

This policy applies to:

- Learners
- Staff (paid or unpaid)
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Contractors and partners

We also extend these principles to everyone we work with externally—whether in placements, events, or partnerships.

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### 3. Our commitments

We are committed to:

- Treating everyone fairly and with dignity, regardless of race, disability, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, background or belief
- Challenging discrimination, bias, and systemic barriers
- Making our spaces accessible and welcoming for people with physical disabilities, mental health conditions, learning difficulties, and neurodiversity

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- Recognising and valuing lived experience, especially from underrepresented communities
- Embedding EDI into every aspect of our work—not as an add-on, but as part of how we lead, plan, recruit, communicate, and support one another

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## 4. Protected characteristics

We follow the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination based on:

- Age
- Disability (including physical, sensory, learning disabilities, chronic illness, mental health, neurodivergence)
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also recognise that people may face barriers due to other aspects of identity—such as socio-economic background, care experience, or immigration status—and these deserve equal attention.

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## 5. Inclusion in practice

We aim to:

- Provide reasonable adjustments and personalised support where needed
- Avoid assumptions about people's abilities, needs, or identities
- Use inclusive, accessible language and materials in communication and teaching
- Foster environments where people feel able to speak up without fear
- Create options for feedback and complaints that are accessible to people with varying communication styles or support needs



## 6. Recruitment and representation

Equity in hiring, governance, and advancement is a key part of inclusion. We are committed to:

- Advertising roles and volunteering opportunities widely and accessibly
- Including salary or rate details in job adverts to promote transparency and fairness
- Welcoming non-traditional pathways into roles—valuing lived experience alongside formal qualifications
- Diversifying leadership and decision-making structures by proactively seeking underrepresented voices
- Offering flexible working and learning arrangements to accommodate individual needs
- Providing accessibility information and adjustments throughout the recruitment process

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## 7. Training and development

All staff, volunteers and trustees will be offered training on:

- Unconscious bias and inclusive practice
- Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment approaches
- Neurodiversity and disability inclusion
- Creating psychologically safe environments

We will also support ongoing reflection and dialogue as part of our team culture.

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## 8. Interactions and expectations

We expect everyone at ACA to:

- Show respect in how they communicate and collaborate
- Be open to feedback, reflection, and learning
- Challenge exclusionary behaviour when they see it
- Consider access and inclusion when planning events, activities or resources

We understand that people will get things wrong sometimes. We approach those moments with kindness, curiosity, and accountability.

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## 9. Complaints and resolution

We take all concerns relating to discrimination or unfair treatment seriously.

See our **Complaints Policy** for how to raise concerns, what to expect, and how we'll support people through the process.

We will always investigate complaints fairly, listen carefully to the experiences of those involved, and take appropriate action.

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## 10. Monitoring and improvement

We will:

- Collect anonymised data (where appropriate) to monitor representation and outcomes
- Use feedback and learning from complaints or incidents to improve
- Set and review specific, measurable EDI objectives every year

EDI should inform every other policy—health and safety, safeguarding, complaints, recruitment, curriculum planning, marketing. It's not a standalone issue, but a lens through which we do everything.

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## 11. Support and resources

We will:

- Provide clear signposting to support and advocacy services
  - Offer adaptations and resources to help people take part fully
  - Stay open to new ways of working that support inclusion
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## 14. Final word

Inclusion is not about ticking boxes—it's about relationships, listening, and doing the work.

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At Auntie's Cookery Academy, we know that diversity makes us stronger, and that equity means more than treating everyone the same.

We're committed to building a place where everyone can contribute, grow, and feel like they belong.

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## 15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **at least once every 12 months**, or sooner if:

- Relevant laws, regulations, or guidance change;
- A serious incident, complaint, or near miss occurs;
- Feedback from learners, staff, or partners suggests improvements; or
- Operational changes make an update necessary.

This includes review when relevant legislation or best practice guidance is updated.

Signed: 

**Printed Name:**Emily-Jane Dale

**Job Title:** CEO and Chair

**Date:** 29th October 2025

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