Croydon Youth Theatre Organisation (CYTO)

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) Policy

Approved by: CYTO Board of Trustees
Effective Date: 20/05/2026
Review Date: 20/05/27

EDIB Lead - Sheril Chase
sherilchase@cyto.org.uk

1. Purpose and Legal Framework

Croydon Youth Theatre Organisation (CYTO) is committed to creating an environment where all young people, staff, volunteers, trustees, audiences, and community partners feel valued, respected, included, and able to belong.

This policy outlines our commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB) across all areas of our work, including participation, programming, recruitment, governance, safeguarding, and community engagement.

This policy is guided by and operates in accordance with relevant UK legislation and guidance, including:

- Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance
- Relevant safeguarding and employment legislation

CYTO is committed to ensuring that no individual or group is treated unfairly on the basis of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Where CYTO receives public funding, we will also work in alignment with the principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2. Our Vision for EDIB

CYTO is a space where young people from all backgrounds feel seen, heard, safe, respected, and celebrated. Through theatre-making, storytelling, and collaborative workshops, we aim to reflect the rich diversity of Croydon and nurture a new generation of creative, empathetic, and confident young people.

We recognise that inclusion is not only about access, but also about belonging — ensuring that every individual feels welcomed, represented, and able to participate meaningfully in our organisation and creative processes.

We actively work to identify and reduce systemic barriers to participation and progression across every part of our organisation, from casting and creative leadership to governance, recruitment, facilitation, and audience engagement.

3. Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to:

- All young people aged 6–19 participating in CYTO programmes
- Staff and freelance facilitators
- Volunteers and trustees
- Parents, carers, and guardians
- Audience members
- Visiting artists and creative partners
- Community organisations and delivery partners

4. Definitions

Diversity

Recognising, respecting, and valuing the visible and invisible differences that make individuals unique, including background, identity, lived experience, culture, language, and protected characteristics.

Equity

Addressing systemic inequalities by removing barriers and providing appropriate support so that all individuals have fair access to opportunities, resources, and participation.

Inclusion

Creating environments where everyone feels welcomed, respected, supported, and able to contribute fully and safely.

Belonging

Fostering a culture where individuals feel accepted, valued, represented, and able to be their authentic selves without fear of exclusion or discrimination.

5. Commitments and Practice

A. Programming and Representation

CYTO will:

- Ensure the stories we present reflect the diversity of our communities and experiences
- Prioritise inclusive and accessible casting practices
- Encourage diversity in our programming and recruitment practices
- Engage thoughtfully with culturally sensitive material and content warnings
- Challenge harmful stereotypes and discriminatory representation in creative work
- Encourage collaborative and respectful creative processes

Inclusive Practice in Theatre

CYTO recognises that inclusive practice is essential in youth theatre settings. We will:

- Promote consent-based approaches in physical and devised work
- Encourage respectful discussion around lived experience and identity
- Support trauma-informed and youth-centred facilitation practices
- Create rehearsal and workshop environments where participants can express concerns safely
- Consider access needs and communication preferences in creative processes

B. Access and Participation

CYTO will:

- Provide low-cost access to programmes.
- Maintain bursary and discounted place schemes for families experiencing financial hardship
- Offer a clear process for requesting reasonable adjustments and access support
- Work with participants and families to identify individual access requirements through access riders or support planning where appropriate
- Continue improving physical, sensory, and neuroinclusive accessibility across our spaces and programmes
- Provide quiet spaces and wellbeing breaks during sessions where needed
- Reduce linguistic and cultural barriers by offering translated materials and accessible communication methods where needed.

Responsibility for coordinating access arrangements sits with the designated Programme Lead, supported by the Artistic Director and Safeguarding team.

C. Recruitment, Staffing and Governance

CYTO is committed to fair, lawful, and inclusive recruitment and governance practices.

We will:

- Ensure recruitment decisions are based on skills, experience, suitability, and organisational need
- Encourage applications from individuals and groups currently underrepresented within the arts sector and governance roles
- Advertise opportunities openly wherever possible
- Use fair and transparent recruitment, interview, and referencing processes
- Make reasonable adjustments during recruitment and volunteering processes
- Provide equal opportunities for training, progression, and leadership development

CYTO will not engage in unlawful discrimination or positive discrimination in recruitment decisions, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The Board of Trustees recognises the importance of ensuring that governance reflects the diversity of CYTO participants and the wider Croydon community. When recruiting trustees, the Board will actively seek to diversify representation in terms of lived experience, background, skills, and perspectives through open and transparent recruitment processes.

D. Safeguarding and Wellbeing

CYTO maintains a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation, or exclusion.

Any behaviour that breaches this policy may result in:

- informal resolution processes
- formal warnings
- removal from activities
- termination of engagement or volunteering arrangements
- safeguarding escalation where appropriate

Where an EDIB concern involves the safety or welfare of a child or vulnerable individual, it will also be managed in accordance with CYTO's safeguarding procedures.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are priorities within our work. CYTO will provide appropriate support, signposting, and referral information where possible.

E. Community Engagement and Youth Voice

CYTO will:

- Build reciprocal relationships with schools, youth services, and community organisations
- Widen participation through outreach and partnership work
- Listen to and respond to feedback from young people and families

- Involve young people in shaping organisational decisions relating to inclusion and participation

CYTO will establish opportunities for youth consultation and participation in EDIB discussions, including feedback forums, creative consultations, or youth advisory input where appropriate.

6. Reporting Concerns and Complaints

CYTO is committed to ensuring that concerns relating to discrimination, exclusion, bullying, harassment, or inequitable treatment can be raised safely and confidentially.

Concerns may be reported:

- in person to a staff member, volunteer, safeguarding lead, or trustee
- via email
- anonymously where possible

Reports should include:

- details of the concern
- date/time/location where relevant
- individuals involved (if known)

Upon receiving a concern, CYTO will:

1. acknowledge receipt within 5 working days where contact details are provided
2. assess whether safeguarding procedures apply
3. investigate appropriately and proportionately
4. communicate outcomes where appropriate
5. identify any actions required

Where individuals are dissatisfied with the outcome, concerns may be escalated to the Board of Trustees.

This process should be read alongside CYTO's Safeguarding Policy.

7. Data Collection and Privacy

CYTO may collect anonymised demographic and participation data to help evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and improve access and inclusion.

Any data collected will:

- comply with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 requirements
- be voluntary
- be anonymised where appropriate
- be securely stored
- only be used for monitoring, evaluation, and organisational improvement purposes

8. Accountability and Evaluation

CYTO will monitor and evaluate EDIB outcomes annually, including:

- participant and workforce demographic information
- access and bursary uptake
- participant and family feedback
- representation within programming and creative teams
- community partnerships and outreach activity

EDIB Lead, Sheril Chase, will oversee implementation of this policy.

The EDIB Lead will:

- support policy implementation
- monitor concerns and trends
- Contribute to the annual review process
- support staff and volunteers with inclusive practice

CYTO will publish a summary EDIB progress update annually via its website or annual reporting processes.

9. Review and Updating

This policy is a living document and will be reviewed annually in consultation with staff, young people, trustees, and community stakeholders.

Feedback may be submitted at any time via email or in person.

10. Contact Information

For general enquiries regarding this policy:

Andrew McPherson
andrewmcpherson@cyto.org.uk

For safeguarding or EDIB concerns:

Sheril Chase
sherilchase@cyto.org.uk

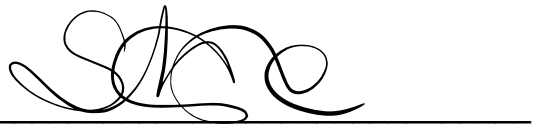
Conclusion

Equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging are not abstract ideals — they are ongoing practices embedded within the culture, governance, and creative life of CYTO.

We believe every young person deserves a space to imagine, express, create, and grow in safety and dignity. Theatre should reflect the richness of all communities and open pathways for empathy, understanding, and opportunity.

This policy represents CYTO's ongoing commitment to building a creative environment where everyone can participate fully and feel that they belong.

Signed:

Sheril Chase: 

CYTO- EDIB Lead