

# The Ark — Diversity & Inclusion Policy

## Introduction

The Ark is a dedicated cultural centre for children. Founded in 1995, we create opportunities for children, along with their families and friends or with their school, to discover and love art. Through our work with leading Irish and international artists children can attend and enjoy performances in our unique child-sized theatre, view engaging exhibitions or participate in creative workshops. The Ark actively advocates for children's right to art and culture and advocates as rights holders.

The Ark mission, vision and values are inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which was ratified by Ireland in 1992. In particular by article 31:

*“States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”*

Key to The Ark's rights respecting ethos is our focus on the inclusion of *all* children. It is for this reason that in 2019, and in alignment with The Ark's Strategy we have published our Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Fundamentally, we wish to ensure that *all* children have access, by whatever means, to visit, participate and enjoy all the artistic experiences we offer and that a diverse range of artists and staff work at The Ark. This policy has been developed with the input of Ark staff, artists, The Ark Children's Council and The Ark Board.

In line with equality legislation, including the Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015) and Equal Status Acts (2000-2015), The Ark actively seeks to ensure equality in terms of access and engagement regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, orientation, membership of the Traveller Community, socio-economic status, family or civil status, disability, or religion. In particular, The Ark is keen to welcome migrant and refugee children and families as well as vulnerable and disadvantaged children who experience barriers to arts participation and engagement

---

## The Ark's Policy on Diversity and Inclusion - what does it mean to us?

At the heart of our Diversity and Inclusion Policy is our commitment to ensuring that *all* children have access to The Ark - and the artistic experiences we offer. Aligned to the four pillars of The Ark Strategy: 2017-2020, this policy focuses on the following areas, through the lens of Diversity and Inclusion:

1. *Excellence*: Create brilliant art experiences for children;
2. *Engagement*: Ensure that more children experience art through The Ark;

3. *Sustainability*: Build the infrastructure and capabilities that ensure The Ark's future as a cultural centre and resource for children;
4. *Advocacy*: Advance children's right to art and culture.

### *Pillar 1: Excellence*

#### *Objectives*

The Ark's programming, producing and presenting ethos centres on the creation of brilliant art for children. It is with this in mind that will:

- \* Ensure artists working at The Ark are valued by providing pay equivalent to cultural institutions producing work for adults;
- \* Address the areas of diversity and inclusion across all programming at The Ark by actively monitoring representation and reporting on it annually;
- \* Welcome and actively seek out artists of all ethnicities, gender and artists with disabilities.

### *Pillar 2: Engagement:*

#### *Objectives*

Ensuring that more children experience art is at the heart of everything we do. In order to ensure we deliver this commitment, we will:

- \* Actively seek to make our free programming more well-known and accessible to wider audiences, in particular, to address socio-economic disadvantage and exclusion;
- \* Expand our newly formed Ark Access programme to increase free opportunities to engage more children in The Ark;
- \* Ensure diversity within The Ark Children's Council;
- \* Establish a Teachers Advisory Group to seek new ways of expanding our schools reach;
- \* Continue to partner and build relationships with other organisations in order to include and engage audiences and artists with disabilities.

### *Pillar 3: Sustainability:*

#### *Objectives*

Enhancing The Ark's infrastructure and capabilities is key to developing our organisation now and into the future. To best achieve this objective, we will:

- \* Maintain an active focus on improving infrastructure in the area of disability and diversity through feedback from access audits as well as from audiences and/or participants;
- \* Build staff capability and awareness of diverse audience needs and access requirements through relevant training;
- \* Work in partnership with all stakeholders to champion relevant access modifications to the local area.

#### Pillar 4

##### *: Advocacy:*

##### *Objectives*

We are passionate about advancing children's right to art and culture. As a duty bearer, The Ark plays a key advocacy role in building awareness of this right. As such, we will continue to:

- \* Work in partnership with schools, as well as other educational partners to engage the widest diversity of young audiences;
- \* Seek to make diverse role models more visible through programming and all other activities;
- \* Review modes and means of data and research collection, establishing how we might best understand our audiences and their participation.

##### Our People

The Ark is a vibrant, fun and dynamic organisation, lead and managed by a passionate and committed team. We seek to attract staff, Board members and artists from the widest diversity of our society. It is with this in mind that we will:

- \* Continue to advocate for The Ark as an employer of choice for *all* potential employees and artists;
- \* As an Equal Opportunities Employer, effectively communicate our interest in receiving both job and Board applications from a diverse pool of candidates when vacancies arise;
- \* Promote diversity in our materials – including in marketing and advertising materials.

#### **The Ark's Diversity and Inclusion Promise - how will we implement and monitor this policy?**

As with any policy, plan or strategy – ultimately its success will be determined by how effectively it is implemented and monitored. In order to ensure The Ark's Diversity and Inclusion Policy's objectives are measured and progress monitored, we will:

- \* Add our Diversity and Inclusion Policy actions to our team meeting agendas for regular updates and discussion of next steps, where required;
- \* Provide a regular periodic update from the Director to the Board of The Ark, charting progress, learnings and any relevant updates;
- \* Actively solicit feedback and ideas from The Ark's Children's Council on their views.

---

#### **Policy Timeframe**

The Ark's Diversity and Inclusion Policy runs concurrently with The Ark Strategy: 2017-2020, and will be reviewed in 2020, at the conclusion point of the strategy.