

Modern Slavery Statement

Introduction

This Modern Slavery Statement applies to Ambitious about Autism (**AaA**), Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust (**AaAST**) and all its members, which for the purposes of the Statement will be referred to collectively as “**we/our**”.

Statutory Guidance

We are committed to following the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (**Act**) and the abolition of modern slavery and human trafficking. This statement is made on behalf of AaA/AaAST in line with Section 54 of the Act.

About us

AaA is a national autism charity that stands with autistic children and young people to champion rights, campaign for change and create opportunities. We started as one school and have become a movement for change. Our services include providing information and practical support and delivering specialist education and employment programmes. Our vision is a future where every autistic child and young person can be themselves and realise their ambitions.

Our supply chains and due diligence processes

We are committed to ensuring that AaA and AaAST and their supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking, and that the necessary due diligence is undertaken to provide assurance of this. The Director of Finance & Planning has overall responsibility for this area of compliance.

We recognise that due to the vulnerabilities of some of the people we support they may be at risk of exploitation. We train our staff to be aware of this risk and follow Child Protection and Adult Safeguarding Procedures to ensure that we manage this risk.

We undertake appropriate due diligence with regard to procurement of staff through agencies and other service providers to mitigate the risk of slavery and human trafficking occurring.

Our risk analysis for modern slavery and human trafficking affecting AaA and AaAST has concluded that this remains a low risk. The areas most likely to be affected by modern slavery are recruitment and procurement practices.

We set out below the due diligence processes we have put in place to prevent AaA and AaAST from being involved with modern slavery in any way.

Suppliers

We seek to establish long-term relationships with suppliers who understand our values. Our Finance team secures statements from all suppliers of new goods, guaranteeing their compliance through the Act in line with our Code of Conduct. This is renewed annually to ensure continued compliance.

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Procurement

Our procurement practices incorporate processes to ensure that our major suppliers of goods comply with the requirements of the Act. If there is any evidence of failure to comply with the Act, we maintain the right to terminate any relationship with the supplier, which will be explicit in any contract.

Invitations to tender and awarded contracts, require suppliers to confirm their compliance with the Act and to provide a formal statement to this effect. If it is considered necessary, they will be asked to provide further assurances.

Depending on the type of goods being provided and the origin of the supply chains involved, further due diligence may be undertaken if necessary.

In view of the various checks and balances, the robust procurement mechanism, the whistleblowing process, and also the nature of the work undertaken and staff training, we believe that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place within AaA or AaAST or their supply chains.

Effectiveness and Assurance

We would not tolerate slavery and human trafficking in our supply chains and will terminate our relationship with any suppliers where there is evidence of their failure to comply with the Act.

We are satisfied that, over the year to 2022/23, there has been no evidence of any connection with modern slavery or human trafficking, either within AaA or AaAST or through any of our suppliers or sub-contractors.

Although it is important to undertake due diligence with our suppliers, we do not consider that it is necessary to set any performance indicators for this area. We have not so far needed to take any action against a supplier. We will however continue to keep this under review.

Other Key policies

This Modern Slavery Statement is one element within our overall arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults in line with our statutory duties set out at s175 of the Education Act 2002, Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance 2023 and Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This statement should be read alongside the following policies:

- AaA(ST) Purchasing Policy
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Policy and Procedures
- Anti-bribery and corruption
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Children Looked After Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure
- Pay and Benefits Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

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- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Training staff about slavery and human trafficking

Staff who work in the areas likely to be affected by modern slavery are trained in our procedures for ensuring that AaA and AaAST and their supply chains remain free of slavery and human trafficking.

We have incorporated awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking into our online safeguarding awareness training course for all staff, which looks at the issues in more detail.

Monitoring

This statement will be reviewed by the Nomination and Remuneration Committee on an annual basis to recommend to the Joint Group Board Committee for approval.

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