INCLUSION POLICY

Ver 1.1 – Junior Membership Amendments July 2026

For the purposes of this policy ‘inclusion’ means access for all. It means recognising differences between individuals / groups and providing opportunities for them to participate in athletics and running regardless of those differences, whether this is as a participant, coach, leader, official, volunteer or club member.

Finch Coasters embraces diversity and difference and is committed to providing opportunities that are safe, inclusive, accessible, and equitable. We want our club to be equally accessible to all members of society, whatever their age, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or social/economic status. For Junior Members, inclusion will be provided within an age-appropriate and safeguarded framework, and may be subject to reasonable restrictions relating to age, distance, pace, supervision, route, event rules and safeguarding requirements.

We will develop a focus on inclusion, not exclusion, and ensure that we provide appropriate advice to members and volunteers to ensure that everyone can participate as fully as possible.

The Inclusion Policy is intended to promote a change in attitudes and perceptions and to improve opportunities for everyone to participate at our club.

We will seek to ensure that we comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the characteristics protected by it (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity) and encourage our members to do so. We will seek to include everyone regardless of whether they have a protected characteristic or not.

Our aim is to provide an environment where everyone feels:

- Welcome
- Represented
- Included in decision making
- Able to participate
- Safe and free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and vilification.

For Junior Members, able to participate in suitable Club activities in a way that is safe, age-appropriate and consistent with the Club’s safeguarding responsibilities.

Aims

The aims of the Inclusion Policy are:

- To promote the development of knowledge and understanding of disability, equity and inclusion amongst our participants, leaders/coaches, officials, volunteers and competition/event organisers by the provision of appropriate guidance and training. To guide and support the integration of inclusive practice into our core club/group programmes and activities.
- To contribute towards growing and sustaining numbers of people from under-represented groups participating within our club.
- To promote inclusion within athletics and running wherever possible and in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act. The chair is typically the most senior official role in Finch Coasters and fulfils a range of duties dealing with overall management of club affairs. The chair leads the club to achieve their vision, short term and long-term goals.
- To adopt inclusive practice within our competition and events.
- To promote close working partnerships with relevant groups and organisations to support the development of inclusive practice within our club.
- To support the inclusion of Junior Members aged 12–17 through appropriate opportunities that reflect their age, ability, welfare and safeguarding needs.
- To support Junior Members, where appropriate, in progressing into wider Club participation and Full Membership when they reach the age of 18.

Commitment

We will;

- Not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- Actively identify and reduce barriers to participation for under-represented groups.
- Consult with expert partners and other organisations to facilitate inclusive practices and remove barriers to participation.
- Ensure under-represented groups are given the opportunity to participate in all aspects of our club.

- Ensure that Junior Members are treated fairly and with dignity, while recognising that lawful and proportionate age-related restrictions may be necessary to protect their safety and welfare and to comply with governing-body or event requirements.
- Provide opportunities for all in coaching, officiating and leadership positions.
- There are a number of measures that we will take to ensure that we are working under the guidance of the Policy and within the requirements of the Equality Act (2010).

We will provide a welcoming environment

- We will think positively about how we can include people rather than focusing on potential barriers to participation.
- We will consider how our club/group is promoted. For example, by providing information in formats which are accessible and by using appropriate imagery.
- We will encourage people to contact us to discuss their needs and requirements to facilitate inclusion and we will ensure we consider what reasonable adjustments could be made to enable them to participate.
- For Junior Members, we will involve a parent or legal guardian where appropriate when discussing participation needs, reasonable adjustments, welfare or safeguarding arrangements.
- We will develop the knowledge and understanding of key officials, coaches, leaders and other volunteers, of disability, equity and inclusive practice by providing appropriate guidance and training.

We will talk to people

- We will, so far as is reasonably possible, consult with relevant groups and with prospective individuals about their needs and requirements.
- Where the participant is under 18, we will seek to listen to the Junior Member's views while also consulting their parent or legal guardian where appropriate.
- We will not make assumptions and will try to speak to people about the reasonable adjustments they believe might be made to enable them to participate and to discuss how these could be made.

We will make reasonable adjustments

- We will demonstrate that every effort has been made to enable everyone to participate and that inclusion not exclusion has been the priority.
- If reasonable adjustments are required to make an event/activity accessible, then we will make those reasonable adjustments.
- Any reasonable adjustment for a Junior Member must remain consistent with safeguarding requirements, appropriate supervision, the Club's approved junior participation arrangements and any age limits or rules set by UKA, England Athletics, leagues or event organisers.

Junior participation during the trial period

- During the initial six-month junior trial, participation is intentionally limited while the Club evaluates safety, safeguarding, volunteer capacity and the practical operation of junior membership.

- The initial trial is limited to Junior Members aged 12–17 who meet the participation requirements set by the Committee, including the approved Monday 5k session and the ability standard required to take part safely with the existing group.

- These trial restrictions are operational and safeguarding measures and are not intended to discriminate unlawfully. The Committee will review them at the end of the trial and consider whether junior participation can safely be continued or broadened.