

Chewonki Foundation
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement
Approved November 3, 2018

OPENING AND BACKGROUND

For over a century, The Chewonki Foundation has been an educational leader and innovator. Chewonki inspires youth to engage with the natural world with a sense of awe and empathy. Approved in February 2013, the Chewonki mission reflects these deeply rooted principles:

Chewonki inspires transformative growth, teaches appreciation and stewardship of the natural world, and challenges people to build thriving, sustainable communities throughout their lives.

In recent years, the evolving narrative of our work, within the context of like-minded educational organizations, has necessitated that Chewonki's leaders direct their attention to thoughtful, critical consideration of the impact our historical and cultural legacy has on the decisions we make about our future. In spring 2015, Chewonki President Willard Morgan stated the following priority as part of the organization's strategic planning work:

[To] "increase the inclusivity of the Chewonki community," meant to be implemented broadly across dimensions of identity and perspectives (gender, race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, geography [esp. within Maine], political interests, etc.) for both participants and staff.

In May 2015, two listening sessions were conducted with staff, along with some board involvement, as a friendly review of the staff and Chewonki community's cultural competency.

The feedback coming from these sessions was used in the development of recommendations to be taken up by a committee convened by the President and representative Chewonki staff. The committee was charged with:

- Participating in relevant diversity education, as a precursor to leadership of and facilitation within the staff community;
- Development of a proposed course of staff education during FY2017 to increase cultural competency across the organization;
- Development of a process that would lead to a five-year plan for the ongoing development of the organization's cultural competence at both the staff and participant levels.

Since its establishment, the committee has worked both broadly and deeply to develop Chewonki's cultural competence; provide appropriate professional development for faculty and staff; and, in July 2018, with the creation of a task force comprised of faculty, staff, advisors, and trustees, to craft a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement.

The creation of this statement demonstrates Chewonki's recognition of the inextricable connection between its history and its public commitment to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. This statement has been designed to guide Chewonki's work across all programs, as well as with its board of trustees and advisors, and the many constituents (parents, students, colleagues, and

¹ Livermore, David. (2015). *Leading with cultural intelligence: The real secret to success*. New York, NY: American Management Association.

_____ (2016). *Driven by Difference: How great companies fuel innovation through diversity*. New York, NY: AMACOM.

the public) whom it serves. Furthermore, this statement establishes the high standards of ethical behavior that Chewonki pledges to uphold in order to ensure that it is becoming the best educational organization it can be.

OVERVIEW AND STATEMENT

Chewonki understands that diverse communities possess a resiliency that springs from adaptation and transformation. In keeping with our mission, we understand that within a truly sustainable community, it is essential to embrace the infinite ways that individual identities, which include but are not limited to age, ethnicity, family makeup, gender identity and expression, learning ability, physical ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status, inform the breadth and depth of purposeful engagement. While acknowledging the natural limits to the scope of our programming, Chewonki is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and affirming environment for all individuals, one that encourages brave conversations and honors courageous leadership. As stated in the National Association of Independent School's Principles of Good Practice, "We recognize that to do so requires commitment, reflection, deliberate planning and action, and ongoing accountability."² We look to every member of our community to help create the shared trust and determination that supports this work.

The following Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement is crafted to provide a framework that guides Chewonki's trustees, president, and program leaders in the development of policy, resource allocation, programming, communications, and culture-building throughout the organization. This statement is a companion to the mission; it guides how we implement the mission in a way that is equitable and inclusive. It is not by itself an action plan or policy statement, but it identifies the topics and language with which we will work going forward. It is incumbent upon all members of Chewonki to use this statement as a litmus test for assessing their fidelity to the organization's mission and principles.

Chewonki Mission Statement

Chewonki inspires transformative growth, teaches appreciation and stewardship of the natural world, and challenges people to build thriving, sustainable communities throughout their lives.

Chewonki Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

To meet the promise of our mission, Chewonki strives to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. Our legacy of thoughtful self-reflection and purposeful change guides our efforts to create a place where all participants and staff can flourish. We are committed to:

- Promoting the principles of social and environmental justice³;
- Cultivating a leadership culture that fosters the best practices of this work;
- Building our financial strength to ensure the durability of this work;
- Attracting and enrolling students and campers who reflect our nation's diversity;
- Attracting and retaining staff who reflect our nation's diversity;
- Providing relevant, rigorous professional development;
- Designing a campus that is responsive to many needs;
- Evaluating our progress on an ongoing basis; and
- Collaborating whenever possible with peer institutions to share knowledge and resources.

² [Principles of Good Practice - Equity and Justice - NAIS](#)

³ Chewonki's definition of environmental justice is informed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's definition of the term, which is "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies."

(www.epa.gov)