

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Equal Opportunities

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care, including support for children with special educational needs or disabilities.

9.1 Valuing diversity and promoting equality

Policy statement

We will ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children. We recognise that children and their families come from diverse backgrounds. All families have needs and values that arise from their social and economic, ethnic and cultural or religious backgrounds. Children grow up in diverse family structures that include two parent and one parent families; some children have two parents of the same sex. Some children have close links with extended families of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins; while others may be more removed from close kin, or may live with other relatives or foster carers.

Some children have needs that arise from disability or impairment, or may have parents that are affected by disability or impairment. Some children come from families who experience social exclusion or severe hardship; some have to face discrimination and prejudice because of their ethnicity, the languages they speak, their religious or belief background, their gender or their impairment.

We understand that these factors affect the well-being of children and can impact on their learning and attainment. Our setting is committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children and families. We aim to:

- provide a secure and accessible environment in which all of our children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse family structures, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people;
- improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity;
- challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions;
- make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the setting; and
- foster good relations between all communities.

Procedures

Admissions

Our setting is open to all members of the community.

- We advertise our service widely.
- We reflect the diversity of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We provide information in as many languages as possible.
- We base our Admissions Policy on a fair system.
- We ensure that all parents are made aware of our Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality Policy.
- We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our setting, on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act (2010). These are:
 - disability;
 - race;
 - gender reassignment;
 - religion or belief;
 - sex;
 - sexual orientation;
 - age;
 - pregnancy and maternity; and
 - marriage and civil partnership.
- We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our setting for reasons relating to disability.
- We ensure, wherever possible, that we have a balanced intake of boys and girls in the setting.
- We develop an action plan to ensure that people with impairments can participate successfully in the services offered by the setting and in the curriculum offered.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff or parents whether by:
 - direct discrimination – someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic e.g. preventing families of some racial groups from using the service;
 - indirect discrimination - someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy e.g. children must only speak English in the setting;
 - association – discriminating against someone who is associated with a person with a protected characteristic e.g. behaving unfavourably to someone who is married to a person from a different cultural background; or
 - perception – discrimination on the basis that it is thought someone has a protected characteristic e.g. making assumptions about someone's sexual orientation because of their mannerisms or how they speak.
- Displaying of openly discriminatory and possibly offensive materials, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on, or around, the premises and will be dealt with immediately and discreetly by asking the adult to stop using the unacceptable behaviour and inviting them to read and to act in accordance with the relevant policy statement and procedure. Failure to comply may lead to the adult being excluded from the premises.

Employment

- Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
- Applicants are welcome from all backgrounds and posts are open to all.
- We may use the exemption clauses in relevant legislation to enable the service to best meet the needs of the community.
- The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Disclosure Barring Service. This ensures fairness in the selection process.
- All job descriptions include a commitment to promoting equality and recognising and respecting diversity as part of their specifications.
- We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish.
- We ensure that staff are confident and fully trained in administering relevant medicines and performing invasive care procedures when these are required.
- We review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality.

Curriculum

The curriculum offered in the setting encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

Our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and service users. If access to the settings is found to treat disabled children or adults less favourably, then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults. We do this by:

- making children feel valued and good about themselves and others;
- ensuring that children have equality of access to learning;
- undertaking an access audit to establish if the setting is accessible to all children;
- making adjustments to the environment and resources to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical and sensory impairments;
- making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities, e.g. recognising the different learning styles of girls and boys;
- positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources;
- avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual materials;
- celebrating a wide range of festivals;
- creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;

- differentiating the curriculum to meet children's special educational needs;
- helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;
- ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities;
- ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning; and
- ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages.

Valuing diversity in families

- We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
- We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life to the setting.
- We encourage mothers, fathers and other carers to take part in the life of the setting and to contribute fully.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion.
- We offer a flexible payment system for families of differing means and offer information regarding sources of financial support.
- We take positive action to encourage disadvantaged and under-represented groups to use the setting.

Food

- We work in partnership with parents to ensure that dietary requirements of children that arise from their medical, religious or cultural needs are met.
- We help children to learn about a range of food, and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them.

Meetings

- Meetings are arranged to ensure that all families who wish to may be involved in the running of the setting.
- We positively encourage fathers to be involved in the setting, especially those fathers who do not live with the child.
- Information about meetings is communicated in a variety of ways - written, verbal and in translation – to ensure that all mothers and fathers have information about, and access to, the meetings.

Forest School

- Wherever possible, the Forest School site will be made accessible for all users including those who require extra equipment such as wheelchairs, walking frames, sticks etc.
- A higher adult/child ratio of 1:1 will be provided for any child who needs extra support to access the woods for their own safety and the safety of others.
- Every child will be given the opportunity to access each Forest School activity in whatever form is appropriate to their individual needs and abilities, with support from others.

- We will provide appropriate clothing, if children don't have their own, to enable all the children to access activities.
- Staff, parents and carers will be given the opportunity to learn new skills within Forest School sessions.

Monitoring and reviewing

- So that our policies and procedures remain effective, we monitor and review them annually to ensure our strategies meets the overall aims to promote equality, inclusion and to value diversity.
- We provide a complaints procedure and a complaints summary record for parents to see.

Legal framework

The Equality Act (2010)

Children Act (1989) & (2004)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)

Other useful Early Years Alliance publications

- Guide to the Equality Act and Good Practice (2011)
- All Together Now (2009)
- Where's Dad? (2009)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	_____	<i>(name of provider)</i>
Held on	_____	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	_____	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	_____	
Name of signatory	_____	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	_____	

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Equal opportunities

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care, including support for the children with special educational needs or disabilities.

9.2 Supporting children with special educational needs

Policy statement

We provide an environment in which all children, including those with special educational needs (SEN), are supported to reach their full potential.

- We have regard for the special educational needs code of practice (2014)
- We ensure our provision is inclusive to all children with special educational needs
- We support parents and children with special educational needs
- We identify the specific needs of children with special educational needs and meet those needs through a range of SEN strategies
- We work in partnership with parents and other agencies in meeting individual childrens needs
- We monitor and revue our policy, practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments

Procedures

- We designate a member of staff to be the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and give his/her name to parents. Our SENCo is

Debbie Markwick

- We ensure that the provision for children with special educational needs is the responsibility of all members of the setting
- We ensure that our inclusive admissions practice ensures quality of access and opportunity
- We use the graduated response system for identifying, assessing and responding to childrens special educational needs
- We work closely with the parents of children with special educational needs to create and maintain a positive partnership
- We ensure that parents are informed at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their children's education
- We provide parents with information on sources of independent advice and support.
- We liaise with other professionals involved with children with special educational needs and their families, including in connection with transfer arrangements to other settings and schools
- We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum for all children with special educational needs
- We use a system of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing action plans for children with special educational needs.

- We ensure that children with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the graduated approach, taking into account their levels of ability
- We have systems in place for supporting children based on a continuous cycle of 'assess, plan, do and review' which is applied in increasing detail and frequency to ensure that children progress
- We have systems in place for working with other agencies such as the 'Early Help Assessment'
- We use a system for keeping records of the 'assess, plan, do and review' for children with special educational needs
- We provide resources (human and financial) to implement our supporting children with special educational needs policy
- We ensure that all our staff are aware of our supporting children with special educational needs policy and the procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for children with SEN. We provide in-service training for parents, practitioners and volunteers.
- We raise awareness of any specialism the setting has to offer, eg Makaton trained staff
- We ensure the effectiveness of our special educational needs provision by collecting information from a range of sources eg action plan reviews, staff and management meetings, parental and external agencies reviews, inspections and complaints. This information is collated, evaluated and reviewed annually.
- We provide a complaints procedure

Further guidance

- SEND Code of Practice for the Early Years (Preschool Learning Alliance 2014)
- Issues in Earlier Intervention: Identifying and Supporting Children with Additional Needs (DCSF 2010)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (DFE 2014)
- The Team Around the Family (TAF) and the Lead Professional: A Guide for Managers (CWDC 2009)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DFE 2013)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DFE and DOH 2014)

Other useful Early Years Alliance publications

- The Role of the Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) 2nd Edition 2013)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of _____ *(name of provider)*

Held on _____ *(date)*

Date to be reviewed _____ *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) _____