

05 Equality procedures

05.1 Promoting inclusion, equality and valuing diversity

We actively promote inclusion, equality of opportunity and value diversity. All early years setting have legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Those in receipt of public funding also have public equality duties to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, foster good relations with individuals and groups with protected characteristics namely disability, race (ethnicity), religion and belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership. Settings also have obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015) which highlights the need to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

Equalities Named Co-ordinator (ENCo): Rachel Johnson

Promoting identity, positive self-concept and self-esteem for all children through treating each child as an individual and with equal concern, ensuring each child's developmental and emotional needs are recognised and met.

- Promoting inclusive practice to ensure every child is welcomed and valued.
- Maintaining a positive non-judgemental attitude and use of language with children to talk about topics such as family composition/background, eye and skin colour, hair texture, sex, gender, physical attributes and languages spoken (including signing).
- Becoming knowledgeable about different cultures, and individual subjective perceptions of these and being able to reflect them imaginatively and creatively in the setting to create pride, interest and positive self-identity.
- Discussing similarities and differences positively without bias and judgement.
- Celebrating festivals, holy days and special days authentically through involving parents, staff or the wider community to provide a positive experience for all.
- Providing books with positive images of children and families from all backgrounds and abilities. Avoiding caricatures or cartoon-like depictions, and ensuring individual differences are portrayed with sensitive accuracy. The central characters in individual stories should provide a positive, broad representation of diversity e.g. disability, ethnicity, sex and gender, age and social backgrounds. Individual storylines should contain a range of situations which are easily identifiable by children such as those that include disabled children/adults, different ethnic groups, mixed heritage families, gender diversity, single sex/same and different sex families, multi-generational households and cultural diversity.
- Providing visual materials, such as posters and pictures that provide non-stereotypical images of people, places and cultures and roles that are within children's range of experience. This includes photographs taken by staff of the local and wider community, of parents and families and local events.
- Using textiles, prints, sculptures or carvings from diverse cultures in displays.

- Providing artefacts from a range of cultures, particularly for use in all areas of the setting, not just in the home corner.
- Ensuring toys, learning materials and resources reflect diversity and provide relevant materials for exploring aspects of difference, such as skin tone paints and pens.
- Developing a range of activities through which children can explore aspects of their identity, explore similarities, differences and develop empathy including:
 - self-portraits, photograph albums and displays showing a range of families
 - books about 'me' or my family
 - persona doll stories which sympathetically and authentically represent diversity
 - food activities, such as tasting and cooking, creating real menu additions
 - activities about real celebrations such as new babies, weddings, cultural and religious events
 - use of textiles and secular artefacts in the room, and to handle and explore, that demonstrate valuing of the cultures from which they come
 - provide mirrors at different heights for babies and other non-ambulant children
 - developing a music area with a variety of musical instruments for babies and children to use to create a range of music.
 - creating an art and mark making area with a variety of materials from other countries such as wood blocks for printing, Chinese calligraphy brushes etc.
 - home corner play which encourages all children to equally participate and provides domestic articles from diverse cultures
 - 'dressing up' materials which promote non-gendered roles and enable children to explore different gender identities/gender neutrality
 - providing dolls that sensitively and accurately portray difference such as disability and ethnicity
 - use of a variety of music to play to children of different genres and cultural styles with a variety of musical instruments for children to access
 - a language and literacy area with a variety of books, some with dual language texts and signs, involving parents in the translation where possible
 - examples of writing in other scripts from everyday sources such as papers and magazines, packaging etc. children's names written on cards in English as well as in their home language script where appropriate
 - labels for children's paintings or other work are made with their name in English and home language script (parents can help with this)
 - conversations with young children which explore unfamiliar objects and subjects to help foster an understanding of diversity and identity such as spectacles or hearing aids, religious and cultural practices

Curriculum

The curriculum offered in the setting encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves, as well as about people who are different from themselves. It encourages development of confidence and self-esteem, empathy, critical thinking and reflection.

We ensure that our practice is fully inclusive by:

- creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance
- modelling desirable behaviour to children and helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable
- positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities within resources
- avoiding use of stereotypes or derogatory images within our books or any other visual materials
- ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning
- ensuring that disabled children with and without special educational needs are fully supported
- ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages

Environment, resources and activities

We ensure our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and service users. Embedded in our everyday practice is the focus on children's personal, social and emotional development. Throughout our practice we ensure that children learn right from wrong, mix and share with other children, value other's views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes. We do this by:

- making children feel valued and good about themselves and others
- establishing and maintaining an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are actively listened to
- ensuring children know that there are adults in the setting whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- ensuring that children have equality of access to learning, resources and activities
- making reasonable adjustments to ensure our planning reflects equality of access to resources and activities for all children
- ensuring that the range of activities reflects children's interests, experiences and lifestyles
- encouraging children who speak English as an additional language to use and develop their home language
- ensuring a wide range of resources to support children with English as an additional language
- making reasonable adjustments to include and accommodate children with SEN/D, whilst ensuring specialist resources for children with SEN/D are differentiated and broken down into manageable steps

- undertaking an access audit to establish if the setting is accessible to all children and adults. If access to the setting is found to treat disabled children or adults less favourably, then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults
 - fully differentiating the environment, resources and curriculum to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical and sensory needs
 - working in partnership with parents to ensure that dietary requirements of children that arise from their medical, religious or cultural needs are met, wherever possible
 - helping children to learn about a range of food and cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them
 - We are aware and ensure that in our practice our staff, parent helpers and volunteers do not particularly favour any of our children or give excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibility (e.g. purchasing gifts for them, visiting them at their homes or attending parties)
- Record keeping that refers to children's emerging bilingual skills or their use of sign language as achievements in positive terms.
 - Record keeping that refers to children's differing abilities and identities in positive terms.
 - Records that show the relevant involvement of all children, especially children with special educational needs and disabilities, those using English as an additional language and those who are 'more abled' in the planning of their care and education.

Fostering positive attitudes and challenging discrimination.

- Young children are learning how to grow up in a diverse world and develop appropriate attitudes. This can be difficult, and they may make mistakes and pick up inappropriate attitudes or just get the 'wrong idea' that may underlie attitudes of 'pre-prejudice' towards specific individuals/groups. Where children make remarks or behave in a discriminatory or prejudice way or make inappropriate comments that arise from not knowing facts, staff should explain why these actions are not acceptable and provide appropriate information and intervention to reinforce children's understanding and learning.
- Where children make overtly prejudice or discriminatory remarks they are dealt with as above, and the issue is raised with the parents.
- When children wish to explore aspects of their identity such as ethnicity or gender, they should be listened to in an understanding and non-judgemental way.
- Parents are expected to abide by the policy for inclusion, diversity and equality and to support their child in the aims of the setting.

Implementing an equality strategy to foster a 'can do' approach

- Every setting should have an equality strategy in place outlining their vision on equality alongside a timetabled list of actions summarising how they build equality into the provision and how this is monitored and evaluated.
- An equality check and access audit are completed to ensure that there are no barriers to inclusion of any child, families and visitors to the setting.
- Early years settings in receipt of nursery education funding are covered by the public sector equality duty. These bodies must have regard of the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled persons, and publish information to show their compliance with the duty.

Promoting dynamic and balanced mixed gender, culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse staff teams who work constructively together in providing for diverse communities.

- It is recognised that members of staff in diverse teams bring a range of views and opinions to the setting regarding a range of issues to do with the job. It is important that a range of views and perspectives are shared and respected in staff meetings and that decisions are made on which way of looking at the situation will result in the best outcomes for the child.
- Staff views are sought where these offer individuals, social and/or cultural insight, although staff should not be put in an uncomfortable position of being an 'expert' or 'ambassador'.
- Staff respect similarities and differences between each other and users such as ability, disability, religious and personal beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment etc. Staff do not discriminate or harass individuals on the grounds of these or encourage any other member of staff to do so; evidence of such will be dealt with by management immediately.
- Members of staff make the best use of different perspectives in the team to find solutions to difficult problems that arise in socially/culturally complex situations.
- Members of staff support each other to highlight similarities and respect differences.
- Members of staff of both sexes carry out all tasks according to their job description; there are no jobs that are designated men's or women's jobs.
- Staff are sensitive to the fact that male workers are under-represented in the early years workforce so may be more likely to experience inequality and discrimination.
- Staff should be aware that male workers may be more vulnerable to allegations. Therefore, work practices should be developed to minimise this. These practices are valuable for all staff.
- Where staff may feel threatened, or under attack, from discriminatory behaviour, staff and managers follow procedure 01.12 Threats and abuse towards staff and volunteers.

- There is an ethos wherein staff, parents and children are free to express themselves and speak their own languages in ways that enhance the culture of the setting.

Ensuring that barriers to equality and inclusion are identified and removed or minimised wherever possible.

- Barriers may include:
 - lack of understanding - where the language spoken at the setting is not that which is spoken at a child's home
 - perceived barriers – affordability where parents are not aware of financial support available or assume that a service is not available to them. Perceived barriers may also be physical barriers for those children or parents with a disability or additional needs where they assume, they will not be able to access the service
 - physical barriers – where there are environmental features which stop a disabled child or disabled parent accessing the setting such as stairs
 - negative attitudes – stereotypes and prejudices or commitment by staff and managers to the time and energy required to identify and remove barriers to accessibility
 - unconscious and conscious bias of staff towards some families such as those from other backgrounds, disabled parents, same sex parents and families with specific religious beliefs
 - gendered views of staff which limit children's aspirations and choices
 - misconceptions such as disabled children should not attend settings during a pandemic due to heightened risk
 - lack of effective Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the homes of families who are vulnerable or at risk and therefore unable to keep in close contact with the childcare provider
- Staff are aware of the different barriers to inclusion and equality and consider the wider implications for children and their families.

Admissions and transitions

- Our setting is open and accessible to all members of the community
 - We advertise our service widely to encourage participation of all community groups
 - We discuss aspects of family/child identity with parents when settling in a new child.
 - We reflect the diversity of our community and wider society in our publicity and promotional materials
 - We strive to make information accessible to families in a range of formats, including verbal and visual information, in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form and using translated materials where appropriate

- We base our Admissions Policy on a fair system
- Our policies, procedures and activities will promote positive interaction, good relationships and partnerships and respect between individuals, groups and our communities
- We ensure that all parents are made aware of our Valuing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion and Equality Policy
- We do not discriminate against a child or their family in our provision, including or preventing their entry to our setting, on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act (2010)
- Meetings are arranged to ensure that all families who wish to may be involved in the running of the setting
- We positively encourage both mothers and fathers to be involved in the setting, especially those parents 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 parents have information about, and access to the meetings
- We make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled children can participate successfully in the services and in the curriculum offered by the setting.
- We try where possible to have a balanced intake of boys and girls in the setting.
- We provide information on offer at our provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- We aim to fully support all transitional phases, and recognise and understand that adaptations may need to be made to our practice to ensure that all children and their families receive the appropriate level of support that they need to achieve smooth transitions
- Our setting is opposed to all forms of prejudice and will take action against any discriminatory, harassing prejudicial or victimising behaviour by staff, volunteers, parents/carers, children and visitors to our setting, whether by:
 - direct discrimination – someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic e.g. preventing families of a specific ethnic group from using the service
 - indirect discrimination – someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy e.g. children must only speak English in the setting
 - discrimination arising from a disability – someone is treated less favourably because of something connected with their disability e.g. a child with a visual impairment is excluded from an activity
 - 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
- We will not tolerate behaviour from an adult who demonstrates dislike or prejudice towards individuals who are perceived to be from another country (xenophobia).

- Displaying of openly xenophobic discriminatory and possibly offensive or threatening materials, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on, or around the premises. These will be dealt with immediately and discreetly by asking the adult to stop 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.
- We aim to foster a culture where prejudice related incidents are proactively dealt with and reported. We will follow the guidance in the ENCo handbook regarding prejudice-related incidents.
- We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents and feed back anonymous data to the local authority.

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 aim for staffing to represent the diversity of our community
- 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 and 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
- All interviews include at least one equality and one SEN/D question

Staff development and training

- We seek out training opportunities for staff, committee members 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 on children when these are required
- We review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality
- We have staff designated for the following roles:
 - Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo): The SENCo co-ordinates the provision for children with SEND/D within our setting, works in partnerships with parents, staff, external agencies, local schools and settings, outside professionals and ensures appropriate and accurate record keeping procedures are in place.
 - Equalities Named Coordinator (ENCo): The ENCo co-ordinates the development of equalities provision throughout our setting.

Narrowing the gap

- We aim to quickly identify the vulnerable and underachieving groups within our setting. We regularly observe, assess and review our planning and the learning and development of all our children to ensure they are achieving their full potential
- We include strategies to close the gap in achievement between underachieving groups of children and others
- SEN/D is a recognised vulnerable group – we understand the need for early identification and assessment, and work closely with parents, to offer a differentiated curriculum, targeted learning and development to improve outcomes for children with SEND
- We adhere to the 0-25 SEND code of Practice (2014) and will seek further support from external agencies via the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) if necessary

Monitoring and reviewing

- To ensure our policies and procedures remain effective, we monitor and review them annually to ensure they are being met, and to also ensure our strategies meet the overall aims for promotion of equality, inclusion and valuing diversity.
- We review our Equalities Policy on an annual basis in consultation with staff and parents/carers.
- We provide a complaints procedure and a complaints summary record for parents to see.

Supporting children to become considerate adults

- Children's social and emotional development is shaped by early experiences and relationships and incorporates elements of equality and British and Universal values. The EYFS supports children's earliest skills in an age appropriate way to become social citizens, namely listen and attend to instructions; know the difference between right and wrong; recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others; make and maintain friendships; develop empathy and consideration of other people; take turns in play and conversation; risk taking behaviours, rules and boundaries; not to hurt/upset other people with words and actions; consequences of hurtful/discriminatory behaviour and regulating behaviour.

British values

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are further clarified here based on *Fundamental British values in the Early Years*

(<https://foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Fundamental-British-Values-in-the-Early-Years-2017.pdf>)

Democracy: making decisions together

- For self-confidence and self-awareness (PSED), practitioners encourage children to see the bigger picture, children know their views count, value each other's views and values and talk about feelings e.g. when they do or do not need help.
- Supporting the decisions children make and providing activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration. Children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds, where questions are valued and prejudice attitudes less likely.

Rule of law: understanding rules matter (PSED)

- Practitioners ensure children understand their and others' behaviour and consequence.
- Practitioners collaborate with children to create rules and codes of behaviour, e.g. rules about tidying up and ensure all children understand that rules apply to everyone.

Individual liberty: freedom for all (PSED & UW)

- Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, exploring facets of their own identity, talking about their experiences and learning. Practitioners encourage a range of experiences, allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example in a small group discuss what they feel about transferring into Reception Class.

Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated (PSED & UW)

- Staff create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community.
- Children should acquire tolerance, appreciation and respect for their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between themselves, others and among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions.
- Staff encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other's opinions.
- Staff promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural/racial stereotyping.

It is not acceptable to:

- actively promote intolerance of other faiths, cultures and races
- fail to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregate girls and boys
- isolate children from their wider community

- fail to challenge behaviours (whether of staff, children, or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs