

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

9.1 Valuing diversity and promoting equality

75

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 secure and accessible environments in which all 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 ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people;
- Challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions;
- foster good relations between all communities;
- Improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity; and
- Make inclusion a thread that runs through all the activities of the setting.

Procedures

Admissions

Our setting is open to all members of the community:

- We have a waiting list register and take into account siblings who have already, or are already attending.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We base our admissions policy on a fair system.
- We ensure that all parents are aware of our valuing diversity and promoting equality policy.
- We keep a place vacant to accommodate an emergency admission.
- The group welcomes fathers, mothers, other relations, carers, guardians, and childminders.

- 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 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 in the strongest manner.
- We are flexible about attendance patterns to accommodate the needs of the individual children and families.

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 services 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.

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 practice to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for promoting equality, valuing diversity and inclusion.
- Our ENCO (Equality Named Co-ordinator) is Wendy Ratcliff. She has relevant training and has created a 3 year action plan to improve our service regarding 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 services users. We do this by;

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves;
- Ensure that children have equality of access learning;
- 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; and
- Ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning.

- 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 parents/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 the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met.
- We help children to learn about a range of food, and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the difference 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 parents have information about and access to meetings.

Monitoring and reviewing

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

Legal framework

- The Equality Act (2010)
- Children Act (1989), (2004)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of **Stepping Stones play and learn group**

Held on **10th September 2013**

Signed on behalf of management committee: **CNice**

Name of signatory: **Carol Nice**

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner): **Chair**

Date checked and updated when required.	Date to be reviewed.	Checked by	Date checked and updated when required.	Date to be reviewed.	Checked by
September 2014	September 2015				
September 2015	September 2016				
October 2016	October 2017				
March 2020	March2021	S Townsend			

9.2 Supporting children with special educational needs.

80

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 DFE 0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (2015).
- We ensure our provision is inclusive to all children with special educational needs.
- We support parents and children with special education needs (SEN).
- 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 children's needs.
- We monitor and review our policy, practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments.

Procedures

- All members of staff are Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO) with coordinator (Sue Townsend) and deputy coordinator (Donna McWilliams) having overall responsibility.
- 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 equality of access and opportunity.
- We use the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' system for identifying, assessing and responding to children's special educational needs.
- We work closely with 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 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 one plans (formally IEPs) and care plans for children with special educational needs.
- We ensure that children with special educational needs are appropriately involved at all stages of the graduated response, taking into account their level of ability.
- We use the graduated approach to support children with SEN.

- We have systems in place for working with other agencies through each stage of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.
- We use a system for keeping records of the assessment, planning, provision and review for children with special educational needs.
- We provide resources (human and financial) to implement our Special Educational Needs Policy.
- We provide in-service training for parents, practitioners and volunteers.
- We raise awareness of any specialism the setting has to offer, e.g. Makaton trained staff.
- We ensure the effectiveness of our special educational needs provision by collecting information from a range of sources e.g. One Plan reviews, staff and management meetings, parental and external agency's views, inspections and complaints. This information is collated, evaluated and reviewed annually.
- We provide complaints procedure.
- We monitor and review our policy annually.

Further guidance

- Issues in Earlier Intervention: Identifying and Supporting Children with additional needs (DCSF 2010)
- The Team Around the Child (TAC) and the Lead professional: A guide for managers (CWDC 2009)
- The Common Assessment Framework for children and young people: A guide for managers (CWDC 2009)
- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES 2015)

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