

Somerset Nursery School and Children's Centre

Policy for Equality and Cultural Diversity

This Policy was updated in ...March 2010...(new draft Jan 2012)

Reviewed by *Governors* onMarch 2010.....2014 ... Jan 2018.....

Reviewed inJan 2020.....

Due to be reviewed inJan 2024

Legal Requirements and Statutory Guidance

The policy on equality of opportunities should include:

Equality of opportunities

All providers must have and implement an effective policy about ensuring equality of opportunities and for supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

All providers in receipt of Government funding must have regard to the *SEN Code of Practice*.

- information about how the individual needs of all children will be met;
- information about how all children, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, will be included, valued and supported, and how reasonable adjustments will be made for them;
- a commitment to working with parents and other agencies;
- information about how the *SEN Code of Practice* is put into practice in the provision (where appropriate);
- the name of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (in group provision);
- arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices;
- information about how the provision will promote and value diversity and differences;
- information about how inappropriate attitudes and practices will be challenged;
- information about how the provision will encourage children to value and respect others.

From the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (dcsf 2008)

Organisation:

Providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Providers must have effective systems to ensure that the individual needs of all children are met.

Each child must be assigned a key person.

Providers must promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice and must ensure that every child is included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability.

Providers must ensure that there is a balance of adult-led and freely-chosen or child-initiated activities, delivered through indoor and outdoor play.

Providers must undertake sensitive observational assessment in order to plan to meet young children's individual needs.

Providers must plan and provide experiences which are appropriate to each child's stage of development (and take into account any needs) as they progress towards the early learning goals.

Statutory guidance to which providers must have regard

The key person should help the baby or child to become familiar with the provision and to feel confident and safe within it, developing a genuine bond with the child (and the child's parents) and offering a settled, close relationship.

The key person should meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour, talking to parents to make sure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family.

Practitioners should value linguistic diversity and provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning. This is part of the respect for each child's cultural background that is central in all early years provision. Alongside support in the home language, practitioners should provide a range of meaningful contexts in which children have opportunities to develop English. As they move into the Key Stage 1 curriculum, English will be crucial as the language they use to access learning.

Providers must maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the settings and to meet the needs of the children.

(From EYFS Statutory Framework)

Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 This Act brings the variety of legislation about anti-discrimination under one act, and extends the circumstances in which a person is protected against discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of a "**protected characteristic**".

Protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity.

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour: direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation.

Under the new Act we have a **general duty** to show due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In addition we have 2 **specific duties**

- a) to publish equality information which shows our compliance with the duty (annually).
- b) to prepare and publish one or more specific equality objectives (every 4 years).

Equality and Cultural Diversity Policy

At Somerset we are fortunate in being at the heart of a multi-racial community. Children who come here come from a very wide variety of cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. We view this diversity as an asset and a resource, and celebrate it in every aspect of our work. We are committed to creating a culture of inclusion and to constantly raising our awareness of issues of equality and to challenging attitudes which exclude children or their families, or members of staff, from our community. We aim to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and respectfully and we want to make sure that our school is a safe and secure place for everyone. We recognise that people have different needs and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them the same. This commitment must permeate all our policies, our choice of resources, our recruitment of staff and the organisation of our building. We are aware that the range of factors leading to discrimination is wide, and includes race, faith, gender, sexual orientation, economic well-being and disability.

At our School we aim to provide, for all children, equal access to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

We aim to achieve an atmosphere of welcome, appreciation for individuality, and sensitivity to individual need. We aim to ensure our policy and practice for all children from 0 - 5 optimises their life chances and aim to make sure that no-one experiences less favourable treatment or discrimination because of:

- Their age
- A disability
- Their ethnicity, colour or national origin
- Their gender
- Their gender identity (they have reassigned or plan to reassign their gender)
- Their marital or civil partnership status
- Their being pregnant or having recently had a baby
- Their religion or belief
- Their sexual identity and orientation.

We recognise that some pupils need extra support to help them to achieve and be successful

We welcome our duties:

- To promote community cohesion (under the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- To eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations (under the Equality Act 2010)

We will do this through our fully inclusive provision for children with SEND and due diligence to the following:

Curriculum

- We will provide all children who attend the school equal opportunity to participate in all activities irrespective of ethnicity, culture, belief or religion, home language, family background, special education needs, physical disability, gender or ability.
- We will ensure curriculum planning and provision caters for the individual needs of all children, and aim for all children to achieve to their full potential.
- Assessed, acceptable risk is available to each child to ensure both safety and fulfilment.
- We provide a child centred curriculum and ensure opportunities for children to learn about people in the wider community.
- We systematically keep records of the assessment, planning, provision and review for children with special educational needs.
- We will monitor and review our practice and provision and, where necessary, make adjustments.
- We will provide an environment where all children are valued and respected as individuals, and will ensure that their potential is identified, valued and nurtured.
- We will provide children with opportunities to explore, realise, value similarities and celebrate differences.
- The SEND Code of Practice 2014 makes it clear that teachers are responsible for the progress and development of all the pupils in their class - and that high quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupil needs.

Gifted and Talented Children

Through our policy of continuous observation, assessment and review, children may be identified as having special ability. Our aim for these children will be to foster particular talent within our mainstream curriculum, maintaining our emphasis on play and exploration, in collaboration with the child's peers. We

will support children capable of excelling in a particular area of learning through the provision of specially chosen resources, enriching extension work, and support from specialists where appropriate (e.g. visiting musicians, writers, athletes, artists, or visits to places of particular interest).

A child identified as being *Gifted* or *Talented* will have an Individual Learning Plan, prepared by the key worker. All members of staff will be involved in planning and will contribute to the provision. Professional development will be provided for staff if needed.

As with all children, we aim to regularly discuss children's particular needs and development with parents and carers; we will look for information about resources available beyond the Centre, to support families.

Physical Environment

- We will support and facilitate access to all areas, equipment and activities inside and outside for all.
- We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure as far as possible that our physical environment is suitable for all children and adults with disabilities. In order to meet these objectives, we prepare an accessibility plan which enables us to meet the needs of disabled children or adults when necessary.

Families

- We will work in partnership with parents and carers and other agencies in meeting individual children's needs.
- We will ensure that all parents and carers have opportunities to contribute their own skills, knowledge and an interest in their children's learning.
- We aim to create an inclusive culture for all centre users and to support families in challenging inequality and discrimination.
- We aim to respect the fact that diversity exists within groups as much as between them, recognising that individuals make their own choices about which aspects of their culture they will adhere to.
- We will support parents and carers in accessing information, services, education and training.
- All families are encouraged to take part in our programme of outings and activities, and these are planned with the needs and interests of their children in mind.
- We aim to maintain a culture of openness regarding the rights of children and families, and to provide information about their rights under the Equality Act.

Staff

- We will ensure that staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Equality Act
- We will ensure that staff and volunteers receive equality awareness training and receive support to reflect on their practice, through supervision, staff meetings or other means.
- We will work to ensure that staff and volunteers are equipped with skills to challenge inequality and discrimination.
- We will ensure that staff are kept up to date with changes in legislation.
- We will not tolerate any harassment, victimisation or discrimination and will aim for a culture of openness where issues can be discussed openly and frankly. We encourage staff to let the management know if they feel that they are affected.
- Staff will be supported in cases of 3rd party harassment.

Language

- We consider bilingual/multilingual children and adults an asset. They will be valued and their languages recognised and respected in the nursery and children's centre.
- We will have different languages written and displayed in the nursery and children's centre and encourage parents to contribute to this.
- We will support children's learning of English as an additional language so that they can access all of the curriculum, and make sure that they are able to take an active part in the activities we offer.

Discriminatory Behaviour and Remarks

- We will not tolerate any discriminatory behaviour and remarks. They are unacceptable and will be discouraged by all members of staff.
- Children will be supported to recognise the impact on others of their behaviour and supported to communicate appropriately.
- Discriminatory or offensive behaviour from adults will be challenged: a clear explanation of our policy will be given, and our aim will be for the adult to acknowledge that their behaviour is inappropriate and to change their attitude. However continued offensive behaviour will result in exclusion from the premises and referral to Children's Specialist Services. We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors, and display a statement of policy for all parents, carers and visitors to see.
- We will sensitively address the issues if any child is consistently being excluded from other children's play.

Resources

- We will provide toys and equipment that are chosen with the differing needs of the children in mind.
- We will provide books which are chosen to meet all the children's ages and abilities and to reflect the many differing lifestyles in society.
- We will ensure that the environment that we provide, including displays, reflects positive images of different cultures, races and the world around us.

Beliefs and Faiths

- We are respectful of different beliefs, faiths and festivals which we celebrate through stories, dance/theatre and visits to places linked with current themes.
- We try to ensure that our knowledge of different cultural and religious observance is accurate and that the views of our community are respected.

The Wandsworth Guidance for Primary Schools with Muslim Pupils gives guidance on matters of Muslim practice.

Employment

We will not discriminate against any potential or existing employee in respect of:

- recruitment
- benefits facilities and services offered
- training opportunities, promotion or dismissal

Any health-related questions including requests for past sickness records, will be targeted, necessary and relevant to the job applied for.

Our Specific Duties

- We will collate information which will show us how we are complying with the Equality Duty
- We will prepare one or more specific and measurable equality objective

Gender Action

Gender Action is an award programme which promotes and supports a whole-school approach to challenging stereotypes. We have begun the process and are a 'Gender Action Supporter'.

Why tackling gender stereotypes matters?

Children learn from the world around them. Gender stereotypes perpetuate inequality and reinforce difference between men and women, rather than individuals being people first and equals.

This can affect many aspects of life such as jobs, income, self-esteem and self-belief. Gender stereotypes encourage ideas of what it means to be a boy or a girl; man or woman, which limit men and women alike.

What we will be doing?

As a staff we will be working together to review and develop 'non-gendered practice'.

For example:

- Thinking about how we speak to children and using inclusive language
- Talking about gender roles and providing a variety of role models for all children
- Using 'unisex' toys, games and activities
- Using pictures and stories which depict men and women in a variety of traditional and non-traditional roles
- Encouraging all children to use all toys and areas of the nursery
- Having books and other resources which are 'non-sexist' and which challenge some of the unwritten rules
- Using 'persona dolls' to discuss prejudices we observe that children hold
- Sharing stories that depict different family units including Grandparents, extended family members and same-sex relationships

Monitoring

Our Equality policy is reviewed every four years.

Criteria for Monitoring

- Have there been any complaints of discrimination since the policy was last reviewed?
- Does our School lobby area and Children's Centre reception, reflect our Equality Policy in that:
 - The areas are pleasant and welcoming?
 - The displays include a range of languages including those spoken by the families who come here?
 - The displays reflect a variety of ethnic origins, ages, males, females and people with disabilities in non-stereotypical roles?
 - Information about resources and services is available?
 - Staff welcome children and their families on arrival and wish them well when they leave?
- Are our resources suitable in that they reflect our policy:
 - Books
 - Small world equipment
 - Puzzles/games
 - Display material
 - Food
- Is the building user-friendly for people with physical disability? Have we been able to make "reasonable adjustments" when necessary?
- Is the Accessibility Plan up to date?
- Do we have information about progress of groups who could experience discrimination?
- Have we had contact with the local community that could support us in implementing our policy?
- Do we have feedback from members of the School and wider communities about the effectiveness of our Policy?
- Does the SEN Policy operate effectively?
- Have the visits taking place supported this Policy?
- Do any members of staff feel that they have been treated in a discriminatory way?
- Are there any records of discriminatory behaviour (by staff or children) that have required intervention

Statement for display re Equality

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We do not accept any form of discriminatory behaviour, and we hope that parents and children will always tell us if they feel that they have been treated unfairly or with a lack of respect. We promise that we will always treat such complaints fairly.