

## 05 Equality procedures

### Promoting inclusion, equality and valuing diversity

We actively promote inclusion, equality of opportunity and value diversity. We meet our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010, 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. We also meet obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015) to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

**We promote 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. We ensure this is possible, through:**

- Promoting inclusive practice to ensure every child is welcomed and valued.
- Discussing aspects of family/child identity with parents when settling in a new child.
- 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 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.
- 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:
  - food activities, such as tasting and cooking,
  - activities about real celebrations such as new babies, weddings, cultural and religious events
  - developing a music area with a variety of musical instruments for babies and children to use to create a range of music.
  - 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
  - Staff actively using their mother tongue to talk to children to support settling, enhance understanding and to make them feel supported, celebrated and at home.
  - Spanish lessons are taught and Sign Language encouraged to demonstrate the importance and celebration of difference and different languages used.
  - Using multicultural dress up for the children and various fabrics from different cultures.
  - Providing multicultural dress up days
  - a language and literacy area with a variety of books, some with dual language texts and signs,
- 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 are 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.

**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 and work hard to ensure these barriers are broken down and all children and families feel welcomed and celebrated.

**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), educators 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)*

- Educators ensure children understand their and others' behaviour and consequence.
- Educators 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. Educators 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