

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.

Equality of opportunity

9.1 Valuing diversity and promoting equality

Policy statement

Witchford Rackham Pre-School believe that no child, individual or family should be excluded from Pre-school's activities on grounds of age, gender, sexuality, class, family status, means, disability, colour, ethnic origin, culture, religion or belief. We also aim to ensure that all who wish to work in, or volunteer to help within our Pre-school have an equal opportunity to do so.

We will ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children and families particularly those that arise from their ethnic heritage, social and economic background, gender, ability or disability. Our setting is committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children and families and work within the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and aim to fulfil the public duty. We aim to:

- provide a secure and accessible environment in which all 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 and 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; and
- make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the setting.
- challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions;
- To have a consistent approach to tackle racism.

Staff responsibilities

These include to:

- Ensure that racist remarks or attitude will not be tolerated.
- Be vigilant with regard to racial incidents in the setting and aware of attitudes in the wider community.
- Deal with racist incidents quickly, sensitively, fairly and appropriately. This may involve speaking to those involved in the incident in order to ensure that everyone understands the importance of removing racism and promoting positive attitudes, recording and monitoring.
- foster good relations between all communities.
- Promoting children's rights and enabling them to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Procedures

Our Equalities named co-ordinator (ENCO) within the setting is: **Jayne Buchan**. The ENCO's role within the setting is to:

- To raise awareness of equality issues with all setting staff and users including managers, owners, committees, volunteers, parents and children.
- To foster positive relationships with the local community, and develop opportunities for community involvement.
- To help promote, plan, coordinate and implement anti-discriminatory provision for all.
- To support the development, implementation and monitoring of an Equality policy.
- Alongside others in the setting, to identify equality and diversity actions to be included in the setting's action plan.
- To raise awareness of the needs of groups vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination and ensure anti-discriminatory policy and procedures are effective and ensure that strategies are developed to counter the learning of any negative attitudes and behaviour and to unlearn any negative attitudes and behaviour that may already have been learnt.
- To consider whether negative stereotypes, assumptions and judgements might influence attitudes and behaviour.
- To foster a culture where prejudice-related incidents are reported and recorded, taking care to ensure that anyone who witnessed the incident is also involved.
- To continually review the appropriateness of language and terminology related to equalities and ensure dissemination to all staff.
- To develop current knowledge of equalities legislation and what this means in practice, and to disseminate to colleagues, e.g. by sharing information at staff meetings.
- To ensure that equality and diversity issues are included in staff recruitment and induction procedures.
- To ensure that equality and diversity are embedded and reflected in provision and planning for all children and staff.
- To ensure that positive use is made of the links and support that arise from the key person, the child and family carer.
- To encourage staff to be confident, honest and open-minded and to seek advice from the ENCO when they are unsure about an issue.
- To ensure information is accessible for parents who are experiencing either literacy or language difficulties – this may involve form filling, explaining policies, or letters home, etc
- To review current resources and the range of activities and ensure their relevance to the needs of all children.

Admissions

Our setting is open to all members of the community. Families joining the pre-school are made aware of its equal opportunity policy and Ethos. Which are reviewed annually.

- 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 will provide information where/when needed 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 equal opportunities 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 and always aim to make reasonable adjustments where possible.
 - We develop an action plan to ensure that people with disabilities 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.
 - 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 eg preventing families of some racial groups from using the service;
 - indirect discrimination - someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy eg children must only speak English in the setting;
 - association – discriminating against someone who is associated with a person with a protected characteristic eg behaving unfavourably to someone who is married to a person from a different cultural background;
 - perception – discrimination on the basis that it is thought someone has a protected characteristic eg assuming someone is gay because of their mannerism 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.

Employment

The preschool will appoint the best person for each job and will treat fairly all applicants for jobs and all those appointed.

Commitment to implementing the group's Equal Opportunities Policy will form part of the job description for all workers.

- 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. No applicant will be rejected on the grounds of age, gender, sexuality, class, means, family status, disability, colour, ethnic origin, culture or belief.
- We may use the exemption clauses in relevant legislation to enable the service to best meet the needs of the community.
- All applicants are treated fairly and 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.
- Induction packs for new staff contain equalities policies and guidance.

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 promoting equality, valuing diversity and inclusion.

Curriculum

All children including SEND children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured. Activities and the use of play equipment offer children opportunities to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination. Appropriate opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.

We value all the children within our setting and our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and service users. All children are encouraged to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves. It encourage children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

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.

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;

- actively incorporating visuals into our setting which portray positive inclusive images,
- signing and multilingual script. Makaton is consistently modelled, supported and encouraged by all staff and volunteers enabling all children to be inclusive, feel included and learn to communicate in meaningful content.
- making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the
- widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities, eg 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

- The Pre-school recognises that many types of family successfully love and care for children. The pre-school aims to offer support to all the families by:
- Welcome and respect all families and visitors and aim to be sensitive to the feelings and needs of all individuals.
- 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 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 have a rota of voluntary helpers should parents/carers wish to join us for a session.
- Discriminatory behaviour and remarks will not be accepted at Pre-school Our response will aim to be sensitive to the feelings of the victim(s) and to help those responsible to understand stereotypes and overcome their prejudices.

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.

- All dietary requirements are recorded and are made aware to all staff/volunteers
- preparing and supervising snack or cooking activities.
- 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.
- We have a snack system that enables children to make choices of when, where and what food to choose.

Meetings

Meetings are arranged to ensure that all families who wish to may be involved in the running of the setting. Information about meetings is communicated in a variety of ways - written, verbal and in translation where possible - to ensure that all parents have information about and access to the meetings.

Festivals

Our aim is to show respectful awareness of all the major events in the lives of the children and families in the Pre-school and in our society by welcoming diversity from all backgrounds. We will plan activities for this in partnership with parents to ensure we are going to be explaining it correctly to the other children. We also do promote parents to come in and lead play sessions/activities which are based around a festival or celebration

Special Needs

The Pre-school recognises the wide range of special needs and disability of children and families in their community and will consider/have awareness of what part we need to play in meeting these needs.

When there is a concern about a child an individual meetings are held between the setting Senco and Key Person before gaining parental permission to complete an Individual Child Plan(ICP) will be set up after consultation and in partnership with the child's parents/carers, the child's key worker and Special Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SEND). Observations and assessments are completed before with the ICP being set with certain attainable SMART targets and the progress made by the child is monitored and reviewed on a six to eight-week basis. For children with complex needs an Early Help Assessment (EHA) is completed after consultation with parents and any other professionals involved, such as a Health Visitor to gain access/ assessments from professionals to help support the child. Early years Access Funding may be applied for to fund a one-to-one for the child within the setting to support their learning and development.

For more indepth detail refer to Policy 9.2.

Language

Information, written or spoken, will be clearly communicated in as many languages as necessary. Bilingual/ Multilingual children and adults are an asset. They will be valued and their language(s) recognised and respected in pre-school.

Should information need to be presented in Braille or large print, or be translated or taped for parents/carers then we will make every effort to provide these resources.

English as an additional Language (EAL) is promoted within the setting by staff having the knowledge about the key stages children will go through. These stages are:

-Crying stage: this is where the child may be upset for prolonged periods of time whilst they are within the setting. In this circumstance a comforter from home would be good to ensure the child has some familiarity. Also parents being able to pass on child's home interests for activities to be set up for children to join in with. Gradual settling in sessions may be best for a child going through this stage.

-Silent/Mute stage: this is where the child is communicating through facial expressions, eye contact and gestures. Children within this stage will follow adults to activities that they have made close bonds with e.g. key person. During free-play a child will observe what the other children are doing and the way in which they socially interact with each other and with adults. Children during this stage will be becoming accustomed to the English language tones.

-Silent rehearsing stage: During the time a child is non-verbal they will be picking up key English language tones and will be silently-rehearsing to themselves before they have the confidence to communicate out loud with adults and other children.

Due to every child being unique there is no time scale for each of these stages children will transition through them at their own rate and the practitioners within the provision will not rush them through.

Practitioners will use key words which have been provided by parents to reinforce a question they are asking. This key word is used in conjunction with an English question to allow children to hear both their home language and English.

Monitoring and reviewing

To ensure our policies and procedures remain effective we will monitor and review them annually to ensure our strategies meet the overall aims to promote equality, inclusion and valuing diversity.

We provide a complaint's procedure and a complaint's summary record for parents to see.

Complaints

We have a complaint's policy and procedure which is available in Pre-school.

Legal framework

- The Equality Act 2010

- Children Act 1989, 2004
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations Act 1976
- January 2015
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Guide to the Equality Act and Good Practice (2011)
- All Together Now (2011)
- Where's Dad? (2009)
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This policy was adopted at a meeting of Witchford Rackham Pre-school

Held on _____

Signed on behalf of the
Management Committee _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory _____

Date to be reviewed _____