

Equality & Diversity Policy

Race Relations Act 1976

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Sex Discrimination Act 1989

Children's Act 2004

Special Educational Needs & Disability Act 2001

The Equality Act 2010

Policy statement

At St Mary's Playgroup, we welcome each individual as a person in their own right whether child or adult. 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 backgrounds. Children grow up in diverse family structures that include two parents 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 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. We aim to:

- provide a secure and accessible environment 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 family structures, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people;
- improve our knowledge of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity;
- challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions;

- make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the setting; and
- foster good relations between all communities.

Procedures

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 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 a service;
- indirect discrimination – someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy e.g. children must only speak in 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 that someone has 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 monitor the use of toys, equipment and space so that all children have equal access, and no child has dominance over others.

We always try to adapt Playgroup activities to take account of either permanent or semi-permanent disabilities where appropriate

Jane Bates is the Playgroup's named Equal Opportunities Coordinator. She is responsible for recording any incidents of negative attitudes and behaviour, and for bringing them to the attention of all staff.

Training

When recruiting staff, we welcome applications from all who apply regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability or age. We believe St Mary's Playgroup should reflect the differences found in society.

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 service users. 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;
- 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;
- 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

- 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 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 take positive action to encourage disadvantaged and under-represented groups to use the setting.

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.
- 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.

Meetings

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

Monitoring and reviewing

So that our policies and procedures remain effective, we monitor and review them annually to ensure our strategies meets the overall aims to promote equality, inclusion and to value diversity.

September 2019

Review Date: February 2021