



FIRST STEP PLAYGROUP



Equality of opportunity

1.11 Valuing diversity and promoting equality

Policy statement

Our team is committed to promote the fundamental British Values of: Democracy, Rule of Law, Freedom and Tolerance. We also “have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism” (The Prevent Duty June 2015).

At First Step Playgroup we ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children, 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. 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 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.
- We challenge discrimination and stereotypes amongst our staff children and parents.
- We do not make cultural allowances in regards to safety and wellbeing of the children.

Admissions

Our setting is open to all members of the community.

- 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 base our admissions policy on a fair system.
- We ensure that all parents/carers 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 colour, ethnicity, religion or social background.
- We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our setting for reason relating to disability.

- 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.

Addressing prejudice related incidents

We act against any discriminatory behaviour (including that of staff, parents/carers, children and any visitors to our setting). Displaying of openly discriminatory and possibly offensive materials, name-calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on or around the premises and will be proactively dealt with and reported. We will follow the guidance in the ENCO handbook regarding prejudice-related incidents. We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents and feedback anonymous data to the local authority.

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 service 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 practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for promoting equality, valuing diversity and inclusion.

Designated roles and responsibilities

- Our setting's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) is...Angie Kelly.
- The SENCo coordinates the provision for children with SEN/D within the setting, works in partnership with parents/carers, staff and external agencies and ensures appropriate record keeping procedures are in place.
- Our setting Equalities Named Coordinator's (ENCo) is ... Angie Kelly.
- The ENCo coordinates the development of equalities provision throughout the setting.

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 settings 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;
- 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, as we recognise that each child is unique and aim to meet their individual needs in order for them to achieve their full potential.
- 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.

Valuing diversity in families

- We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
- We understand that equal treatment doesn't necessary mean the same treatment.
- 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.

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 differences among them.

Narrowing the Gap

- We aim to identify the vulnerable and underachieving groups within our setting and include strategies to close the gap in achievement between underachieving groups of children and others.
- SEND is a recognised vulnerable group – in our setting we understand the need for early identification and assessment. We work closely with parents/carers and offer a differentiated curriculum, targeted learning and development to improve outcomes for children with SEND.
- We adhere to the Code of Practice for SEND 2014, we seek further support via an Early Help Assessment (EHA)/Early Support where appropriate.

Monitoring and reviewing

- We continually review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy.
- We review our equalities policy regularly, at least annually, in consultation with staff and parents/carers.
- We provide a complaints procedure and a complaints summary record for parents/carers to see.

Legal framework

- UNCRC 1989
- The Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989, 2004
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 (0 – 25 years)
- Children and Families Act 2014 (incorporates Support and Aspiration 2011)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Early Years Foundation Stage (2017)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

First Step Playgroup, Somersham

Held on

9th November 2019

Reviewed

07 October 2020

Name of signatory

Angie Kelly

Role of signatory

Playgroup Manger