13 Promoting inclusion, equality and valuing diversity policy

At Parley Community Preschool 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 or religious backgrounds. Children grow up in diverse family structures that include two parent 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 their 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 for all children and families. We aim to:

* Provide a secure and accessible environment in which all of 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 and understanding 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
* Foster good relations between all communities.

Guiding Principals

In fulfilling our legal duties listed above, we are guided by three essential principals: -

* Every member of the group should have opportunities to achieve the highest possible standards and the best possible proficiencies for the next stages of their life and education.
* Every member of the group should be helped to develop a sense of personal and cultural identity that is confident and open to change, and which is receptive and respectful towards other identities.
* Every member of the group should develop their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order that they may participate in Britain’s multi ethnic society, and in the wider context of an interdependent world.

**Procedures**

***Promoting a ‘Single Equality Approach’ in Parley Pre-school includes:***

1. Promoting and fostering a strong identity, positive self-esteem and confidence for all children by treating each child as an individual and with equal concern, ensuring each child’s individual developmental and emotional needs are recognised and met.
2. Challenging discrimination and fostering positive attitudes towards difference and equality.
3. Implementing a ‘can do’ approach.
4. Promoting dynamic and balanced mixed gender, culturally, socially and linguistically diverse staff teams where possible, who work constructively together in providing for diverse communities.
5. Ensuring that barriers to accessibility are identified and removed or minimised wherever possible.
6. ***Promoting 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.***
* Discussing aspects of a family’s identity with parents when welcoming a new family.
* Promoting inclusive practice for children with disabilities or special educational needs including those children who are identified as being gifted or talented.
* Maintaining a positive attitude and language with children to talk about topics such as family composition and background, skin colour, hair texture, physical attributes, different ability, languages spoken (including signing) and gender attitudes and behaviour.
* 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.
* Celebrating festivals, holy days and special days authentically through involving parents, staff or the wider community to provide a positive experience for all children.
* Providing books with positive images of children from all backgrounds and abilities, and where individual differences are portrayed with sensitive accuracy. Stories reflect children from all backgrounds; the central character/s should be of both genders, from a range of ethnic, family and social backgrounds and be positively reflected so that their story is identifiable by any child. This includes publications which show disabled children or/and adults with impairments within the storyline.
* Providing visual materials, such as posters and pictures that provide non-stereotypical images of people, places and cultures and gender roles that are within children’s range of experience. This includes photographs taken by staff of the local and wider community, and of parents and families.
* Using textiles, prints, sculptures or carvings from diverse cultures in displays.
* Providing artefacts from a range of cultures, particularly for use in all areas of the setting, not just in the home corner.
* Ensuring toys, learning materials and resources reflect diversity and provide relevant materials for exploring aspects of difference, such as skin tone paints and pens.
* 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.
* A language and literacy area with a variety of books, some with dual language texts and signs, involving parents in the translation where possible.
* Developing a range of activities through which children can explore aspects of their identity, explore differences and develop empathy. These can include: Photograph albums and displays about children’s families, Self –portraits, Books about ‘me’ or my family, Persona doll stories, Food activities – tasting and cooking, creating real menu additions, Activities about real celebrations such as weddings and new babies, Use of textiles and secular artefacts in the room, and to handle and explore, that demonstrate valuing of the cultures from which they come, Developing a music area with a variety of musical instruments for children to access, Home corner play that reflects domestic articles from diverse cultures; providing dolls that sensitively portray difference, such as, ethnicity, gender and impairment, Examples of writing in other scripts from everyday sources such as papers and magazines, packaging etc., A variety of objects that children can explore which help foster an understanding of difference i.e. spectacles or hearing aids.
* Record keeping includes reference to children’s identity and self-concept and their attitudes towards difference, when talking about personal, social and emotional development.
* Record keeping that refers to children’s differing abilities in positive terms.
* Records that show the relevant involvement of all children, especially disabled children and those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented in the planning of their care and education.
1. **Challenging discrimination and fostering positive attitudes towards difference and equality.**

**Allegations of discriminatory remarks or behaviour are taken seriously. However, young children are learning how to grow up in a diverse world and develop appropriate attitudes. This is difficult, they will make mistakes and may pick up inappropriate attitudes or just get the ‘wrong idea’ that may underlie attitudes of ‘pre-prejudice’.**

* Parents are expected to abide by the policy for inclusion, diversity and equality and to support their child in the aims of the pre-school.
* Where a parent makes discriminatory remarks to staff at any time, or other persons while on the premises, this is recorded on the child’s file and is reported to the manager. The policy is explained and the parent asked to comply while on the premises. Parents should be given the chance to amend their behaviour and an ‘escalatory’ approach taken with those who continue to make discriminatory remarks or engage in discriminatory behaviours. The second stage comprises a letter to the parent requesting them to sign a written agreement not to make discriminatory remarks or behave in discriminatory ways; the third stage may be considering withdrawing the child’s place.
* If the behaviour involves violence or threats of violence, the police will be called.
* Should Longham Preschool suffer extreme discriminatory behaviour from an organised group, gang or individuals external to the setting, this will reported to the police immediately with full written statements made by all staff who witness it.
1. **Implementing a Single Equality Strategy to foster a ‘can do’ approach.**
* An ‘Equality Audit’ is completed to ensure that there are no barriers to inclusion for all children, parents, families and visitors to the Preschool.
* The following areas of inequality as outlined by the Equality Act (2010) are addressed in all areas of our work and are reflected within the organisational policies and procedures: sex, gender reassignment, race (ethnicity), disability and special educational need, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity.
1. **Promoting dynamic and balanced mixed gender, culturally, socially and linguistically diverse staff teams where possible, who work constructively together in providing for diverse communities.**
* It is recognised that members of staff in diverse teams bring a range of views and opinions to the setting regarding a range of issues to do with the job. It is important that a range of views and perspectives are shared and respected in staff meetings and that decisions are made on which way of looking at the situation will result in the best outcomes for the child.
* Staff views are sought where these offer social and/or cultural insight, although staff should not be put in an uncomfortable position of being an ‘expert’ or ‘ambassador’.
* Staff respect differences between each other and users such as religious and personal beliefs, sexual orientation gender reassignment etc. Staff will not discriminate or harass individuals on the grounds of these differences or encourage any other member of staff to do so.
* Members of staff support each other and respect differences.
* Members of staff of both sexes carry out all tasks according to their job description – there are no jobs that are designated men’s or women’s jobs.
* Staff are sensitive to the fact that staff may be vulnerable to allegations and develop work practices to minimise this. These practices are valuable for all staff.

***5*. Ensuring that barriers to accessibility are identified and removed or minimised wherever possible.**

Barriers to accessibility 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 preschool.
* Negative attitudes – stereotypes and prejudices or commitment by staff and managers to the time and energy required to identify and remove barriers to accessibility.
* Staff are aware of the different barriers to accessibility and consider the wider implications for children and their families.
* Barriers are minimised or removed.

**Responsibilities**

The committee and pre-school managers are responsible for ensuring that the pre-school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

The pre-school managers are responsible for implementing this policy, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support, and for taking any appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

All staff are expected to deal with any racist incidents that may occur, to know how to identify and challenge racial and cultural bias and stereotyping, to support any children of the pre-school for whom English is an additional language, and to incorporate principals of equality and diversity into all aspects of their work.

### **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
* 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
* Ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages.

### **Admissions**

Our setting is open to all members of the community.

* We advertise our service widely in the community.
* We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
* We provide information in languages other than English when requested, with help from the Early Years team.
* We base our Admissions Policy on a fair system.
* We ensure that all parents are made aware of our Equality Promotion and Valuation of Diversity 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
	+ 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 the service
	+ Indirect discrimination - someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy e.g. children must only speak 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
	+ Perception – discrimination on the basis that it is thought someone has a 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.

## **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 Criminal Records Bureau. 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 Equality Promotion and Valuation of Diversity.

**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 offer a flexible payment system for families of differing means.

**Meetings**

* Meetings are arranged to ensure that all families who wish to may be involved in the running of the setting.
* We positively encourage fathers to be involved in the setting, especially those fathers who do not live with the child.
* Information about meetings is communicated in a variety of ways - written, verbal and when required, in translation – to ensure that all mothers and fathers have information about, and access to, the meetings.

**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.

**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.
* Parents represent the families of the group at regular committee meetings. All are involved in reviewing the preschool policies and are invited to offer their input and suggestions.

**Legal Framework**

The Equality Act (2010)

Children Act (1989) & (2004)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)