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05. Promoting inclusion, equality and valuing diversity policy 26-27

Alongside associated procedures in 05.01 Promoting inclusion, equality and diversity, this policy was adopted by Little Fishes on 5th May 22, reviewed and amended on 26th May 23, 16th May 24, 2nd May 25 and 22nd April 26.

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05. Promoting inclusion, equality and valuing diversity policy

At Little Fishes we consider and meet relevant employer and service provider duties and legal obligations as set out in the Equality Act (2010). As an early years setting, we are in receipt of funding and must eliminate discrimination including indirect, direct discrimination, discrimination and harassment based on association and perception and discrimination for reason relating to a disability or by failing to make a reasonable adjustment to any provision, criterion, or practice. This duty is anticipatory. We want to advance equality of opportunity and 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 acknowledge our obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015, updated 2023) which highlights the need to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

Aim

Our provision actively promotes inclusion, equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity. **At Little Fishes we want to have in place robust procedures for 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.**

Objectives

We support the definition of inclusion as stated by the Early Childhood Forum:

> '*Inclusion is the process of identifying, understanding and breaking down the barriers to participation and belonging.'*

We interpret this as consisting of several tasks and processes in relation not only to children but also to parents and visitors in the setting. These tasks and processes include awareness and knowledge of relevant barriers to inclusion for those with a protected characteristic namely:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- sex (gender)
- age
- marriage or civil partnership (in relation to employment)

This includes unlawful behaviour towards people with protected characteristics. Unlawful behaviour being direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, associative discrimination, discrimination by perception, harassment, and victimisation (in addition, we are aware of

the inequality that users facing socio-economic disadvantaged may also encounter). We will not tolerate behaviour from an adult which demonstrates dislike and prejudice towards groups and individuals living outside the UK (**xenophobia**). This also applies to the same behaviour towards specific groups of people and individuals who are British Citizens residing in the UK.

We promote understanding of discrimination – through training and staff development – the causes and effects of discrimination on both adults and children and the long-term impact of discrimination; the need to protect children from discrimination and ensure that childcare practice is both accessible and inclusive; the need for relevant support to allow children to develop into confident adults with a strong positive self-identity.

Developing practice that includes:

- Developing an environment which reflects the 'kaleidoscope' of factors that can provide settings with a myriad of influences and ideas for exploring and celebrating difference.
- Ensuring that barriers to inclusion are identified and removed or minimised wherever possible; for example, we complete 01.1b Access audit form.
- Understanding, supporting and promoting the importance of identity for all children and recognising that this comprises multiple facets which are shaped by a 'kaleidoscope' of factors including British values, 'race'\ethnicity and culture, gender, difference of ability, social class, language, religion and belief, and family form and lifestyle, which combine uniquely in the identity of each individual; for example, we welcome and promote bi/multi-lingualism and the use of alternative communication formats such as sign language, and we promote gender equality while at the same time recognising the differences in play preferences and developmental timetables of girls and boys.
- Recognising that this 'kaleidoscope' also reflects negative images which may be internalised and negatively affect the development of self-concept, self-esteem, and confidence.
- Promoting a welcoming atmosphere that genuinely appreciate British values, different cultural and personal perspectives, without stereotyping and prejudicing cultures and traditions on raising children, by always involving parents.
- Promoting community cohesion and creating an environment that pre-empts acts of discrimination so that they do not arise.
- Recruitment of staff to reflect cultural and language diversity, disabled staff, and staff of both genders, where possible.
- Addressing discrimination as it occurs from children in a sensitive, age-appropriate manner to ensure that everyone involved understands the situation and are offered reassurance and support to achieve resolution.
- Challenging discriminatory behaviour from parents, staff or outside agencies or individuals that affect the well-being of children and the early years community.
- Creating an ethos within which staff work confidently within a culturally complex environment; learning when to change or adapt practice in the setting and having the confidence to challenge practice (including parental) that is not in the child's best interest, seeking support and intervention from agencies where appropriate.

- Ensuring that practitioners work closely with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator to make sure that the additional needs of all children are identified and met.
- We are aware of anti-discriminatory legislation and able to use it to shape the service and support parents and children against discrimination in the local community, for example, against asylum seekers, the Travelling community and same sex parents.
- We regularly monitor and review our practice including long-term preventative measures to ensure equality such as auditing of provision, formulating an equality plan, applying impact measurements and positive actions. In addition, short term measures such as recognition and assessment of children's additional support needs (e.g. impairment, home language, family hardship, specific family beliefs and practices), day-to-day activities, provision of suitable support and resources, activity programme and curriculum., assessment, recognition of special educational needs and developing inclusive relationships.

05.1 Procedure: Practise to Promote inclusion, equality and value diversity

Overview

We actively promote inclusion, equality of opportunity and value diversity. As an early years setting we have legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. We are in receipt of public funding, therefore, have public equality duties 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 have obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015 updated 2023) which highlights the need to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

We achieve this through our curriculum and resources:

- 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, especially those represented in our community, 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 should 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.
- 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.
- Developing a range of activities through which children can explore aspects of their identity, explore similarities, differences and develop empathy including:
    - self-portraits, photograph albums and displays showing a range of families
    - books about 'me' or my family
    - food activities, such as tasting and cooking, creating real menu additions
    - activities about real celebrations such as new babies, weddings, cultural and religious events
    - use of textiles and secular artefacts in the room, and to handle and explore, that demonstrate valuing of the cultures from which they come
    - creating textiles such as tie dying, batik and creative use of textiles
    - developing a music area with a variety of musical instruments for children to use to create a range of music.
    - creating an art and mark making area with a variety of materials from other countries such as wood blocks for printing, Chinese calligraphy brushes etc.
    - 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
    - a language and literacy area with a variety of books, some with dual language texts and signs, involving parents in the translation where possible
    - tapes with stories read in English and other languages
    - examples of writing in other scripts from everyday sources such as papers and magazines, packaging etc. children's names written on cards in English as well as in their home language script where appropriate
    - labels for children's paintings or other work are made with their name in English and home language script (parents can help with this)

- conversations with young children which explore unfamiliar objects and subjects to help foster an understanding of diversity and identity such as spectacles or hearing aids, religious and cultural practices

Record keeping

- 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 communication styles and identities in positive terms.
- Records that show the relevant involvement of all children, especially children with special educational needs and disabilities, and those using English as an additional language in the planning of their care and education.

Working with families and children: 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 should be 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.
- We will work with parents and families where English is an additional language to support their home language, providing appropriate support and activities depending on the needs of the child.
- We will work in partnership with parents to ensure the medical, cultural and dietary needs of the child is met.

Monitoring and reviewing strategy: Implementing an equality strategy to foster a 'can do' approach

- We have an equality strategy in place outlining our vision on equality alongside a timetabled list of actions summarising how we build equality into the provision and how this is monitored and evaluated.
- An equality check will be completed, an access audit (see Health & Safety Policy, form 01.01b) has already been completed to ensure that there are no barriers to inclusion of any child, families and visitors to the setting.
- Early years settings in receipt of nursery education funding are covered by the public sector equality duty. These bodies must have regard of the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations between

disabled and non-disabled persons, and publish information to show their compliance with the duty.

Staff employment and training: Promoting dynamic and balanced mixed gender, culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse staff teams who work constructively together in providing for diverse communities.

- We seek out and encourage training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop skills in promoting inclusion, equality and diversity.
- 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 individuals, social and/or cultural insight, although staff should not be put in an uncomfortable position of being an 'expert' or 'ambassador'.
- Staff respect similarities and differences between each other and users such as ability, disability, religious and personal beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment etc. Staff do not discriminate or harass individuals on the grounds of these or encourage any other member of staff to do so; evidence of such will be dealt with by management immediately.
- Members of staff make the best use of different perspectives in the team to find solutions to difficult problems that arise in socially/culturally complex situations.
- Members of staff support each other to highlight similarities 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 male workers are under-represented in the early years workforce so may be more likely to experience inequality and discrimination.
- Staff should be aware that male workers may be more vulnerable to allegations. Therefore, work practices should be developed to minimise this. These practices are valuable for all staff.
- Where staff may feel threatened, or under attack, from discriminatory behaviour, staff and managers follow procedure 01.10 Threats and abuse towards staff and volunteers.
- There is an ethos wherein staff, parents and children are free to express themselves and speak their own languages in ways that enhance the culture of the setting.
- To ensure the above new jobs are advertised and applicants judged on fair and explicit criteria, using a job description and person specification. Roles may have exemption clauses depending on legislations eg The rehabilitation of Offenders. Persons are recruited according to the staffing policy 08.02. We monitor our application process to check it is fair and accessible.

Training: 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. This is discussed regularly at staff meetings to monitor how we are reducing barriers,

Supporting children to become considerate adults

Children's social and emotional development is shaped by early experiences and relationships and incorporates elements of equality and British and Universal values. The EYFS supports children's earliest skills in an age appropriate way to become social citizens, namely listen and attend to instructions; know the difference between right and wrong; recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others; make and maintain friendships; develop empathy and consideration of other people; take turns in play and conversation; risk taking behaviours, rules and boundaries; not to hurt/upset other people with words and actions; consequences of hurtful/discriminatory behaviour and regulating behaviour.

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. Please see *Fundamental British values in the Early Years* for further clarification and Little Fishes British values poster.

Democracy: making decisions together

- For self-confidence and self-awareness (PSED), practitioners 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)

- Practitioners ensure children understand their and others' behaviour and consequence.
- Practitioners 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. Practitioners 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 talk with an adult about how they feel about sharing.

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

We display these values, include a copy of them in our welcome pack and regularly discuss them with the children and at staff meetings.

Resources

- *Fundamental British values in the Early Years* for further clarification.
- The Prevent duty and British values | early years alliance (eyalliance.org.uk)
- Little Fishes British values poster

Legal references

- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Children and Families Act 2014 Part 3
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015
- Disability Equality Duty 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Prevent Strategy 2015 (updated in 2023)

Further guidance

- Guide to the Equality Act and Good Practice (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2015)

This policy was adopted on: 5th May 2022
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Name of Manager: Amber Delves
Signature:

