



Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy

At Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school, we uphold a strong commitment to equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion, providing an environment where every child is respected, valued, and treated equitably. Aligned with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), this policy ensures every child's holistic development is supported regardless of background, ethnicity, religion, or ability.

This policy adheres to the Equality Act 2010, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and current EYFS guidelines.

Promoting Equality and Diversity:

- We actively challenge discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping to foster positive attitudes towards diversity.
- We create an inclusive and respectful environment celebrating the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and identities of all children and families.
- 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.
- Promoting inclusive practice to ensure every child is welcomed and valued.
- 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, gender, physical attributes and languages spoken (including signing).
- 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.
- Discussing similarities and differences positively without bias and judgement.
- Celebrating festivals, holy days and special days authentically to provide a positive experience for all.
- Providing books with positive images of children and families from all backgrounds and abilities.
- 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.
- 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 and books about 'me' or my family, food activities, such as tasting and cooking, developing a music area with a variety of musical instruments for babies and children to use to create a range of music.
- Records that show the relevant involvement of all children, especially children with special educational needs and disabilities, those using English as an additional language and those who are 'more able' in the planning of their care and education.

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 underline 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/carers.
- Parents/carers are expected to abide by the policy for inclusion, diversity and equality and to support their child in the aims of the setting.

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
- Staff are aware of the different barriers to inclusion and equality and consider the wider implications for children and their families.

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

<https://ndna.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/British-Values-in-Practice-England-only-FACTBV.pdf>

Democracy: making decisions together

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

- We ensure children understand theirs and others' behaviour.

- We 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.
- We 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 small group discuss what they feel about transferring into Reception Class.

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
 - fail to challenge behaviours (whether of staff, children, or parents/carers) 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

Supporting Children with Additional Needs:

- We are committed to making reasonable adjustments and individualised support to facilitate full participation and inclusion.
- Collaborate closely with parents and external professionals, such as therapists or educational specialists, ensuring tailored support for each child.

Curriculum and Resources:

- Provide a diverse and inclusive curriculum reflecting various cultures, identities, and abilities.
- Select and utilise resources, including books, toys, and materials, that positively represent diverse family structures, ethnicities, cultures, and abilities.

Language and Communication:

- Respect and value children's home languages and actively promote bilingualism and multilingualism.

- Use inclusive language practices that validate children's identities and enable authentic self-expression.

Partnership with Parents:

- Foster active collaboration with parents and guardians, acknowledging their vital role in promoting equality and inclusion.
- Regularly seek parental feedback and participation in creating inclusive strategies and supporting their child's unique needs.

Staff Training and Development:

- Regularly provide staff with training focused on equal opportunities, inclusive practices, recognising unconscious bias, and supporting children with additional needs.
- Cultivate continuous professional development and reflective practice, ensuring staff remain informed about best practices in inclusion.
- We understand our obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015) which highlights the need to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

Review and Monitoring:

- Annually or as needed, review and update this policy to align with EYFS standards, legislation, and best practices.
- Actively seek and integrate feedback from parents, staff, and external agencies to enhance the effectiveness of our inclusion and equal opportunity practices

This policy was adopted by Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school on 01 September 2023