Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

Providers must follow their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

05 Promoting inclusion, equality, and valuing diversity policy

All early years providers must meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Providers must eliminate unlawful discrimination, including direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination by association or perception, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination arising from disability. They must also make reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility and inclusion. This duty is anticipatory, requiring providers to consider and address potential barriers in advance.

Providers must advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations, and promote inclusion for people with the protected characteristics of:

- Disability
- Race (including ethnicity)
- Religion or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership (in relation to employment)

Providers 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.

Aim

Little Berries Preschool actively promotes inclusion, equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity. We are committed to embedding a culture of inclusion, equality and diversity in everything we do, ensuring that everyone feels respected, valued and welcomed, and has equitable opportunities to develop and thrive.

Objectives

We support the Early Childhood Forum definition of inclusion:

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

We apply this principle to children, families, visitors and staff by identifying and removing barriers that may affect participation, wellbeing and belonging.

We recognise and challenge unlawful behaviour, including direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination by association or perception, harassment and victimisation. We also acknowledge the additional inequalities that may be experienced by those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

We do not tolerate prejudice, discrimination or xenophobic behaviour towards any individual or group, whether from within or outside the UK.

Through training and professional development, we support staff to understand:

- The causes and impact of discrimination.
- The long-term effects of discrimination on children and adults.
- Their responsibility to provide accessible, inclusive practice.
- The importance of supporting positive identity, confidence and self-esteem.

Our Practice

Little Berries Preschool promotes inclusion and equality by:

Partnership with families

- Encouraging families to share information about themselves, their culture, what is important to them and any barriers they may experience.
- Offering flexible opportunities for families to contribute and participate and reducing communication barriers.
- Respecting different cultural perspectives and parenting practices while working in partnership with parents and carers.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals to ensure children with additional needs and disabilities are supported, and that practice is developmentally appropriate and inclusive.

Training and professional development for staff

- Recognising colleagues lived experience and encouraging them to share their own experiences and knowledge.
- Accessing training and supporting staff to work confidently within a culturally diverse community and to challenge practices that are not in a child's best interests.
- Using induction, supervision, and reflective practice to review inclusive practice, challenge assumptions, and agree on actions to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.
- Using recruitment practices that aim to ensure a workforce that reflects cultural and linguistic diversity, includes individuals with disabilities, and is representative of all genders

Creating an inclusive environment and removing barriers to access

- Recognising and valuing the multiple factors that shape individual identity, including culture, ethnicity, language, religion, belief, gender, disability, family structure, socio-economic background and life experiences.
- Welcoming all children and families and not discriminating against any group or individual with regard to admissions, attendance, participation or access to support.
- Identifying, removing or minimising barriers to participation wherever possible, through regular accessibility audits completed using 01.1b Access audit form and reviewing any adjustments made with families and staff regularly
- Challenging stereotypes and supporting positive self-esteem and self-concept by ensuring that children and families can see themselves positively reflected in the environment and resources.
- Promoting bilingualism, multilingualism and alternative communication methods.

Inclusive, play based curriculum and resources

- Creating an accessible, developmentally appropriate environment and play based experiences that reflect and celebrate the diversity of children, families and communities.
- Embedding actively anti-racist practice by challenging stereotypes, avoiding tokenism, and ensuring that representations of race and culture are accurate, respectful and celebratory.

- Planning for each child or young person as an individual, taking account of their interests, abilities, communication, home language(s), culture, family structure and lived experience.
- Overcoming gender stereotypes by promoting gender-equal play, using inclusive language, and auditing resources for bias.
- Supporting children to develop a positive self-image and a sense of belonging through personal, social and emotional development experiences, and through respectful conversations about similarity and differences in age-appropriate ways.
- Reviewing resources regularly and removing or adapting any materials that promote bias, stereotypes, or exclusion.

Responding to discrimination, bias and exclusion

- Not tolerating discriminatory behaviour, language, harassment, or victimisation from anyone, including staff, parents, visitors and external agencies within our setting or services.
- Addressing discriminatory behaviour from children in a sensitive, age-appropriate manner.
- Supporting children, families and staff involved in understanding the impact of what has happened, repairing relationships, and feeling safe and included.
- Using equality and anti-discrimination legislation to support children, families and staff who may experience prejudice or discrimination.

Monitoring, reviewing and working to continuously improve

- Regularly monitoring and reviewing our practice and environment through audits, action plans and evaluation processes to ensure equality, accessibility and inclusion remain embedded in all aspects of provision.
- Seeking regular feedback from children, parents/carers and staff to understand whether people feel respected, valued and welcomed and whether any barriers to access remain.

Legal Framework

- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Equality Act 2010