Equality and diversity policy

Statement of intent

St Mary’s Playschool is committed to providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families.

“Inclusion is a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down the barriers to participation and belonging.” (National Children’s Forum)

*We aim to:*

* provide a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
* include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
* provide positive non stereotyping information about different ethnic groups, gender and people with disabilities;
* improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of equality and diversity;
* challenge behaviours that are not in line with the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance.
* make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities of the preschool.

The legal framework for this policy is:

Equality Act 2010;

Children Act 1989;

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989;

The Childcare Act 2006 (Every Child Matters);

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2015.

• We have an Equality Named Coordinator (ENCO), Julie Lord.

• The named ENCO will oversee and evaluate the practice of the preschool on a regular basis unless a review is required before. Time will be allocated for this by the preschool.

• Staff will support the named ENCO by discussing equality issues at staff meetings and informing the ENCO of any concerns.

• It is the responsibility of all staff to uphold the policy through their dealings with children, parents, carers and each other.

Admissions (see also Admissions Policy)

• Our preschool is open to all members of the community.

• We advertise our service widely.

• We reflect the diversity of members of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.

• We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.

• We provide information in as many languages as possible, where appropriate.

• We base our admissions policy on a fair system.

• We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our preschool because of any disability.

• We ensure that all parents have access to our Equality and Diversity Policy.

• We develop an action plan to ensure that people with disabilities can participate successfully in the services offered by the preschool and in the curriculum offered.

Employment

Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.

The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and satisfactory DBS checks. This ensures fairness in the selection process. All job descriptions include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their specifications.

Training

We seek out training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop practices which enable all children to flourish.

We review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for equality and diversity.

Curriculum

The curriculum offered in the preschool encourages children to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from themselves. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking and enquiring minds.

Promoting fundamental British values

* **Democracy** – making decisions together. Including children in decision making, promoting sharing, turn taking and collaboration.
* **Understanding rules** – learning right from wrong.
* **Freedom for all** – developing self esteem, feelings and differences, ensuring that children have equality of access to learning. We ensure that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and disabilities.
* **Mutual respect and tolerance** – making children feel valued and good about themselves and helping them to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable. We avoid stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of materials.

Valuing Diversity in Families (see also Partnership with Parents Policy)

* We welcome the diversity of family life and work with all families, celebrating a wide range of festivals.
* We ensure that children whose first language is not English have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning.
* We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life into the preschool.
* We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the preschool and value their contribution.
* For families who have a first language other than English, we value the contribution their culture and language offer.

Professional Partnerships

The preschool works in partnership with other adults to support the inclusion and development of all children. These include primarily the parents/guardians of the child.

Where appropriate we also work with the Local Authority, health visitors, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and other qualified professionals involved in the care and development of young children and their families.

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, cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating and to respect the differences among them.

See also:

Admissions Policy

Behaviour Policy

Complaints Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Food and Drink Policy

Parental Involvement Policy

Safeguarding Children Policy

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Staffing and Employment Policy

This policy has been reviewed and agreed at a meeting of St Mary’s Playschool Committee

Signed................................................................................................................(Chair)

Date.....................................................................................................................