

St Joseph's Preschool

Equal Opportunities policy and procedures

We actively promote inclusion; equality of opportunity and value diversity. We have legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. In receipt of public funding, we also 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. St Josephs also follows the obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015) which highlights the need to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

Policy Statement

We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all children regardless of their ethnic heritage, social and economic background, language, gender or ability. We aim to:

- Promote inclusive practice to ensure every child is welcomed and valued.
- Discuss 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).
- Discuss 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.
- Provide 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. This includes photographs taken by staff of the local and wider community, of parents and families and local events.
- Using textiles, prints from diverse cultures in displays.
- Ensuring toys, learning materials and resources reflect diversity and provide relevant materials for exploring aspects of difference, such as skin tone paints and pens.

Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum offered encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves and the people around them. Our Special Educational Needs policy supports children with disabilities and special educational needs to integrate and to develop their learning and achieve their potential.

We offer a wide 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
- 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
- tapes with stories read in English and other languages
- labels for children's paintings or other work are made with their name.

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 underly 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.

Staffing

- 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 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.
- Where staff may feel threatened, or under attack, from discriminatory behaviour, staff and managers will follow the complaints procedure.

Environments

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 would make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs.

Partnership with families

- * All families are welcome to apply for a place at pre-school and all applications will be considered with reference to the criteria set out in our Admission Policies
- * 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 parents/carers to take part in the life of the setting and to contribute fully
- * For families who have English as an additional language we develop means to ensure their full inclusion, for example, the translation of documents and use of an interpreter
- * Information is communicated in a variety of ways – electronically, written, verbal and in translation
- * We offer a flexible payment system for families of differing means and offer information regarding sources of financial support
- * We ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met
- * We support children to learn about a range of food and cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them

Legal framework

- * The Equality Act 2006
- * Disability Discrimination Act 1995, 2005
- * Race Relations Act 1976

- * Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- * Sex Discrimination Act 1976, 1986
- * Children Act 1989, 2004
- * Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

This policy was accepted at a meeting of St Joseph's Preschool Trustees.

Policies will be reviewed each academic year.

This policy will be reviewed sooner if there is a change to legislation or guidance which may affect it.