45. PROMOTING INCLUSION & EQUALITY, & VALUING DIVERSITY

Policy statement

All Early Years providers must consider and meet relevant employer and service provider duties as set out in the Equality Act (2010). Those in receipt of funding 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. Providers must 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.

Aim

ASK actively promotes inclusion, equality of opportunity, and the valuing of diversity.

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;
  - by identifying the causes and effects of discrimination on both adults and children and the long-term impact of discrimination;
  - by protecting children from discrimination and ensuring that early years practice is both accessible and inclusive; and
  - by identifying the need for relevant support to allow children to develop into confident adults with a strong positive self-identity.
- We are committed to 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;
  - 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, staff with disability, and staff of both genders;
- 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; and
- ensuring that educators work closely with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) 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.

Admissions

ASK is open and accessible to all members of the community.

- We base our Admissions Policy on a fair system.
- We do not discriminate against a child or their family in our service provision, including preventing their entry to ASK based on a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act (2010).
- We advertise our service widely.

- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form and provide information in other languages (wherever possible).
- We reflect the diversity of our community and wider society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information on our offer of provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- We ensure that all parents/carers are made aware of our Valuing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion & Equality Policy.
- We make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled children can participate successfully in the services and in the curriculum offered by the setting.
- We take action against any discriminatory, prejudice, harassing or victimising behaviour by our members of staff, volunteers or parents/carers whether by:
  - direct discrimination – someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic e.g. preventing families of a specific ethnic group from using the service;
  - indirect discrimination – someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy e.g. children must only speak English in the setting;
  - discrimination arising from a disability – someone is treated less favourably because of something connected with their disability e.g. a child with a visual impairment is excluded from an activity;
  - association – discriminating against someone who is associated with a person with a protected characteristic e.g. behaving unfavourably to someone who is married to a person from a different cultural background; or
  - perception – discrimination on the basis that it is thought someone has a protected characteristic e.g. making assumptions about someone's sexual orientation.
- We will not tolerate behaviour from an adult who demonstrates dislike or prejudice towards individuals who are perceived to be from another country (xenophobia).
- Displaying of openly discriminatory xenophobic and possibly offensive or threatening materials, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on, or around, our premises and will be dealt with immediately and discreetly by asking the adult to stop using the unacceptable behaviour and inviting them to read and to act in accordance with the relevant policy statement and procedure. Failure to comply may lead to the adult being excluded from the premises.

Employment

- We advertise posts and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
- Applicants are welcome from all backgrounds and posts are open to all.
- We may use the exemption clauses in relevant legislation to enable the service to best meet the needs of the community.
- The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and suitability checks. This ensures fairness in the selection process.
- All our job descriptions include a commitment to promoting equality and recognising and respecting diversity as part of their specifications.
- We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for our members of staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish.
- We ensure that our members of staff are confident and fully trained in administering relevant medicines and performing invasive care procedures when these are required.
- We review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for Valuing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion & Equality.

Curriculum

The curriculum offered at ASK encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as people who are different from themselves. It encourages development of confidence and self-esteem, empathy, critical thinking and reflection.

We ensure that our practice is fully inclusive by:

- creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
- modelling desirable behaviour to children and helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;
- positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities within resources;
- avoiding use of stereotypes or derogatory images within our books or any other visual materials;
- celebrating locally observed festivals and holy days;
- ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning;

- ensuring that disabled children with and without special educational needs are fully supported;
- ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages

We will ensure that our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and service users. We do this by:

- undertaking an access audit to establish if ASK is accessible to all disabled children and adults. If access to the premises is found to treat disabled children or adults less favourably, then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults.
- fully differentiating the environment, resources and curriculum to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical and sensory needs.

Valuing diversity in families

- We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
- We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life to ASK.
- We encourage mothers, fathers, and other carers to take part in the life of ASK and to contribute fully.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to encourage their full inclusion.
- We take positive action to encourage disadvantaged and under-represented groups to use ASK.

Food

- We work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that dietary requirements of children that arise from their medical, religious or cultural needs are met wherever possible.
- We help children to learn about a range of food, and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them.

Meetings

- Meetings are arranged to ensure that all families who wish to, may be involved in the running of ASK.
- We positively encourage fathers to be involved at ASK, especially those fathers who do not live with the child.
- Information about meetings is communicated in a variety of ways – written, verbal, and where resources allow, in translation – to ensure that all mothers and fathers have information about, and access to, the meetings.

Monitoring and reviewing

- So that our policies and procedures remain effective, we monitor and review them annually to ensure our strategies meet our overall aims to promote equality, inclusion and to value diversity.
- We provide a complaints procedure and a complaints summary record for parents/carers to see.

Public Sector Equality Duty

- We have regard to the Duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Legal Framework

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

Further information

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

SEND Code of Practice 2014 for the Early Years (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2014)

Where's Dad? (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2009)

This policy was adopted by:	ASK Kindergarten & Clubs
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Signatory:	Mark Stewart
Role of Signatory:	Owner & Ofsted Registered Provider