

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

AIM

Through this policy, it is the aim of the Children's Garden to promote equality of opportunity in our Kindergarten and Parent and Child group, ensuring that no child, parent, potential child and parent, teacher, assistant or job applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, gender orientation, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, social and economic background, age, gender, gender reassignment or marital status, sexual orientation, ability or disability.

At the Children's Garden, we aim to provide a warm and harmonious environment and atmosphere in which children and adults feel their individuality is regarded as an asset and differences and diversity are recognised, respected and celebrated.

Through the Steiner Waldorf way of educating, we aspire to contribute to the building of a society based on respect, tolerance and cooperation and, to develop in children and adults a sense of empathy and mutual respect, which is reflected in our Positive behaviour and anti bullying policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

Through its ethos, structure and curriculum, the Children's Garden kindergarten aims to:

- provide a warm, caring, safe and accessible environment in which all children may flourish, and where everyone's contributions are given value and consideration.
- help each child develop self-discipline, self-esteem and a respect for others in a multi-cultural and multi-racial society.
- consider and value the contribution of all staff and families to our understanding of equality and diversity.
- develop a mutual respect between all involved, based on an understanding and valuing of diversity and on shared respect for equality and human rights.
- develop a great sense of community, belonging and worthiness amongst all involved.
- promote equality, value diversity and support every child's learning and development through inclusion in our practice.
- promote positive attitudes and behaviour amongst staff, children and families.

This Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually unless new legislation, local and national guidance or feedback generate the need for an earlier reviewing.

This Policy will be kept in our Book of Policies, and will be included in the Staff Handbook. A shorter version will be included in our Parent Handbook.

PROCEDURES

Admissions

The Children's Garden kindergarten advertises through varied ways (Open days, local newspapers, Children Information Services, Web) in order to reach and welcome all members of the community.

When admitting children, we aim to have, as much as possible, a balanced intake of boys and girls.

We will not discriminate against a child or his/her family on the basis of cultural or religious beliefs, colour, ethnicity, social or financial background, or disability. Our Admission Policy is based on a fair system and is to be found in our Book of Policies.

Staff and parents are made aware of our Equal Opportunity Policy. Any discriminatory behaviour towards children or adults will be challenged and dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Employment

Our posts are openly advertised and applicants are welcome from all background. Our recruitment criteria are based on experience, skills, qualifications and personal qualities. Following an interview, the most suitable person will be offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Criminal Record Bureau.

We aim to provide a good and harmonious working environment in which all are treated with respect.

We ensure, that all staff is aware, confident and able to administer relevant medicine, through giving them the appropriate training, whenever required.

We regularly review our application process and our practice to ensure that equality, inclusion and diversity are correctly promoted and that we are fulfilling our legal obligations in regard of the equality legislation and their code of practice.

All staff and volunteers are expected to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practice through attending regular training courses.

Any breach of Equal Opportunity will be regarded as misconduct and might lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Curriculum

The Steiner Waldorf curriculum offered at the Children's Garden, aims to develop in every child a sense of self-respect and of respect and tolerance for the other, a sense of empathy and of cooperation, and promotes the development in children, of positive attitudes about themselves as well as others.

In kindergarten, adults aim to create a warm emotional atmosphere within which children are able to develop their own confidence, self-esteem, and life skills for present and future and respect for the dignity and worth of each individual.

We ensure that different cultures and beliefs are recognised and valued through the celebration of a wide range of festivals, and through our songs and stories.

We aim to meet every unique child's individual needs through careful observation. This allows us to plan according to their stage of development, their needs and their likes and dislikes in order to create an environment rich in development opportunities for the child.

We ensure that children with English as a Second Language (ESL) are supported in their learning of English as well as in the maintenance of their home language.

We ensure that the play and learning opportunities offered are inclusive of children with Special Educational Needs and children with disability.

Great care is given to developing a positive relationship and an ongoing dialogue with parents (through home visits, parents evening, individual meetings), as working in an open and courteous partnership with parents, allows us to reach a deeper knowledge and understanding of every child, and to cater more accurately for his/her particular needs and for the needs of his/her family.

Valuing and celebrating diversity in families

We encourage all parents to fully contribute to the life of the kindergarten through involving them in the celebration of a particular festival, and their qualities and views are valued and put into action through their involvement in the kindergarten various committees: fundraising, maintenance, social events (Christmas and Summer fairs, outings for children), search for new premises.

The linguistic diversity of the children (and their parents) will be valued, and opportunities will be provided for children to develop and use their home language within the setting, thus developing a respect by all, of the children's cultural background. All staff will commit to support the children's home language as well as develop their understanding and use of the English language.

Supporting and including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), additional needs and disability

We believe that all children are different and unique, and through being inclusive, we are able to celebrate and appreciate those differences.

The Steiner Waldorf principles recognise that all children are special and have individual needs. Therefore all children will be included, valued and supported by all teaching staff to reach their full potential.

We recognise and value individuals without making any one child feel less valued than the rest. No child will be treated 'less favourably' than another for a reason connected to his/her individual needs or his/her disability.

The needs of a child with a disability will be thoroughly assessed in conjunction with his/her family and other professionals in order to provide him/her with the right support to participate as fully as possible in all activities.

Following the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requirement, the Children's Garden will make all 'reasonable adjustments' necessary to welcome and fully include all children in the morning activities, routines and experiences in kindergarten.

When working in partnership with parents and liaising with outside agencies, great attention is given to the sharing of information and to confidentiality, in order to develop a trusting relationship with all involved.

The Children's Garden kindergarten SEN Co-ordinator is Régine Charrière . Her contact numbers are: 020 8948 2959 (work) and 020 8968 4605 (home).

The Special Educational Needs co-ordinator will ensure that the provision meets the special educational needs of individual children, through:

- Using a system of planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing individual educational plans (Imps).
- Using a graduated response system
- Making sure that responsibility is shared between all staff
- Making reasonable adjustments in order to resolve any issues that might prevent children from being included in all activities
- Working in partnership with parents and outside agencies
- Providing the right training and development opportunities for all staff

All discriminatory remarks or behaviour, will be dealt with in appropriate manner and both children and adults will be encouraged to understand the effect of any such remarks or behaviour.

COMPLAINTS

Members of staff and families who believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, must raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. Details of this procedure may be found in our Book of Policies or from our Equality of Opportunity officer (Birgit Möller, 020 8994 0238).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Equality Act 2006

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 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 adopted at a meeting of The Children's Garden kindergarten,

Held on

Date to be reviewed

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of signatory

Role of signatory