

FUNDAMENTAL BRITISH VALUES IN THE EARLY YEARS

Our duty in keeping the youngest members of our society safe and promoting their welfare is prioritised in our kindergarten. We are committed to being alert to any safeguarding or child protection issues, including our Prevent duties, identifying and helping children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation or FGM, as well as our responsibilities around wider safeguarding risks.

We actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. (The Education Regulations 2014, part 2, section 5).

In the early years, these values are embedded in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in the *Personal, Social and Emotional Development* section and in the *Understanding the World* section. Our commitment to lifelong learning as members of a Steiner Waldorf kindergarten also commits us to supporting all members of this community – children, parents and the extended community and staff to create a more fair, tolerant and respectful world.

In the kindergarten we lead and teach through imitation, because from our experience we have seen that the young child learns more actively from observing what we do – not necessarily what we say. The young child is an excellent observer, but not necessarily as good at interpretation. With this as a baseline, we place a very high value on how staff interact with each other, the children in their care and with their parents. All staff are expected to be empathic and kind in how they speak and behave. It is a priority for all staff to nurture the children in their care to enable them to develop their confidence and secure relationships. Education through self-directed play is equally important, enabling children to access their feelings and interact socially, and as an active learner, know what it is to be part of a community and the rewards thereof.

Here are some examples from the four key areas that illustrate how we approach this requirement to promote British values:

Democracy: - making decisions together

- Helping every child to know that they have a voice and will be listened to (and the corollary that they will listen to others) – conversations at the snack table and at birthday celebrations; resolving disagreement and conflict; negotiating rules of a game.
- Taking turns, sharing, collaboration - in outdoor games, circle games, play, and puppet shows and plays.

Rule of Law: - Understanding that rules matter as cited in *Personal, Social and Emotional Development*

- Visits from outside people like the fire service who have a positive influence in the community.
- Distinguishing right from wrong in stories (fairy and folk tales with clear values regarding the benefits of moral behaviour).
- Rules of games – traditional games, skipping games, guessing games.
- Tidying up - in the garden and room - our collective behaviour matters in order to move on to the next step; on walks (no littering).
- High expectation of appropriate behaviour – e.g. clear rules regarding sand-pit (not throwing sand, no metal spades).

Individual Liberty: - Freedom for all.

This is part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness and on “People and Communities” cited in *Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Understanding the World*.

- Making choices and taking risks in a safe and supportive environment – e.g. Michaelmas courage trail, climbing trees and physical challenges.
- Encouraging confident independent learning through an enriched environment – choices between single, group play and adult-led or child-led work/activities in the free play part of the morning.
- A rich use of language in circle time, stories and social interaction with the children, facilitating children to verbalise their feelings, listen to differences of experiences and opinions. Giving children the necessary opportunities, time and encouragement to do this, for example in the case of family bereavements, divorce, and house moving.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance: - treat others as you would like to be treated.

Part of the focus on “People and Communities”, managing feelings and behaviours and making relationships as cited in *Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Understanding the World*.

- All children and their families are encouraged to share their cultural backgrounds in ways they feel comfortable with, including celebrating religious and cultural festivals through stories, songs, crafts, food, clothes and other related experiences.
- Respect and tolerance is modelled by the staff and high expectation of behaviour encouraged in all children.
- Similarities and differences are celebrated in an atmosphere of inclusivity and tolerance. For example, the change of light from autumn to winter, from external to internal as celebrated by worldwide festivals of light are included in our yearly

planning – e.g. Martinmas, Diwali, Hanukah, Santa Lucia, Christmas – with reference to the cultural composition of the group.

- Gratitude to nature, the earth, other people and each other – e.g. snack blessing, ‘Thank You’ when given food.
- Gender, cultural and racial stereotyping actively challenged e.g. conversations like ‘boys don’t wear skirts’; ‘only girls and boys can marry’.
- Boys and girls are not segregated for any activities
- Responses from adults are developmentally appropriate and expand the child’s horizons and points of reference sensitively.

To ensure an ethos of respect, tolerance and inclusivity in our setting, behaviour not in line with the fundamental British values of Democracy, the Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance, is actively challenged.

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