

## Equal Opportunities Policy

Stepping Stones Pre-School will ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children, irrespective of their ethnic heritage, social and economic background, gender, ability or disability. Stepping Stones is committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children and families. We aim to:

- provide a secure and accessible environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued.
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity.
- provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles and diverse family structures.
- diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people.
- challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions.
- create an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance, where children feel valued and are supported to value others.

Our setting is open to all members of the community.

- We advertise our service widely and reflect the diversity of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We base our Admissions Policy on a fair system.
- We ensure that all parents are made aware of our Equal Opportunities Policy.
- We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our setting, on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act 2010. These are:
  - disability
  - race
  - gender reassignment
  - religion or belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation
  - age
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - marriage and civil partnership.
- We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or medical condition or refuse a child entry to our setting for reasons relating to disability or illness unless after consultation between parents/carers, staff and outside agencies it was felt the child's individual needs could not be met.
- We develop Support Plans to ensure that children with disabilities and medical conditions can participate successfully in the services offered by the setting and in the curriculum offered.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff or parents. Displaying of openly discriminatory and possibly offensive materials, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on or around the premises and will be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

## **Employment**

- Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
- Applicants are welcome from all backgrounds and posts are open to all.
- The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service. This ensures fairness in the selection process.
- We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.

## **Training**

- We encourage attendance on training courses where available for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish.
- We ensure that 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 promoting equality, valuing diversity and inclusion.

## **Curriculum**

Stepping Stones follows the EYFS and encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

Our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and service users. If access to the setting is found to treat children or adults with disabilities or medical needs less favourably then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs.

We do this by:

- ensuring that children have equality of access to learning and undertaking an access audit if necessary.
- making adjustments to the environment and resources to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical and sensory impairments.
- making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities eg recognising different learning styles of girls and boys.
- positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources.
- avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual materials.
- celebrating a wide range of festivals.
- helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable.
- ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning.
- ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages.

## **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 the setting.
- We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the setting and to contribute fully.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion.
- Where necessary we would offer a flexible payment system for families of differing economic means and offer information regarding sources of financial support.

### **Food**

- We work in partnership with parents to ensure that dietary requirements of children that arise from their medical, religious or cultural needs are met.
- 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.

### **Toileting**

- We accept children whatever their stage of toileting and will follow their home toileting routines and training strategies.

### **Meetings**

- Meetings are arranged to ensure that all families who wish to, may be involved in the running of the setting.
- We ensure that information about meetings is communicated to all parents and carers.

### **Monitoring and reviewing**

- To ensure our policies and procedures remain effective we will monitor and review them bi-annually to ensure our strategies meets the overall aims to promote equality, inclusion and valuing diversity.
- We provide a complaints procedure.

### **Legal framework**

The Equality Act 2010

Children Act 1989, 2004

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014