

Equal Opportunities Policy

Rationale

At The Willow we believe in valuing and celebrating the diversity within our community. We aim to develop good practice and positive attitudes in the early years and encourage an anti-discriminatory approach to the world in general, and other human beings in particular. We believe that all people should have equal opportunities to learn, develop and grow with dignity in a community of mutual respect.

Implementation of the policy in The Willow

The Joint Heads must ensure that:

- New members of staff, including students and volunteers, receive copies of the Equal Opportunities Policy, and that this is discussed with them during their induction meeting.
- The Equal Opportunities Policy is made available to all parents and carers.
- All Staff are involved in the planning and implementation of the policy.
- The help of key workers is offered to assist and support families.
- Every effort is made to obtain suitable specialist equipment, aids or resources.
- Reasonable adjustments are made to the premises to cater for anyone with any form of disability.
- Volunteers, local speakers or personalities who reflect the diversity of the local community are invited to visit The Willow.

Our practice

- The Equal Opportunities Policy applies to every staff member, parent, carer and child. Each person is valued as an individual, with differing social, intellectual and cultural backgrounds. Different needs, likes, dislikes, similarities and differences are respected and accounted for.
- Discrimination under sex, race, religion, colour, creed, marital status, ethnic or national origin, disability or political belief, has no place in The Willow.
- We hold a discussion with parents before their child starts The Willow, to establish their concerns about their child's specific emotional, medical, cultural or religious needs. This takes place during the induction process. The parents' contribution is recorded and relayed to other members of staff at the relevant staff meeting.
- We value parents as their children's first educators, and staff work closely with parents to share information, experiences, conversation and quality time, thus promoting positive role models for their children.

- We cater for cultural, religious and medical differences at all snack times.
- We celebrate a variety of festivals and special events each year from cultures represented within our community and outside.
- Our curriculum plan takes into account each child's individual route to learning.
- We give the children equal opportunities and equal access to the full range of activities available, including visits and trips outside The Willow.
- We monitor activities on a regular basis to ensure that every child has freedom of choice, time for discovery, and support, when it is necessary.
- During play we encourage the children to respect and value each other. We discourage them from making hurtful and unkind remarks. Staff ensure that children are helped towards understanding that it is wrong to judge someone because of their gender, colour, beliefs, disability or social background. We explain why, talk things through and praise positive behaviour.
- We challenge and deal with inappropriate practices and attitudes promptly.
- We record any seriously inappropriate racist or sexist comments made by children and staff, including volunteers and students.

Staff training

- We take great care to apply the Equal Opportunities Policy when advertising for, interviewing and appointing staff.
- We keep staff informed and updated on new legislation and train them accordingly. We display information on new national initiatives and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCP) courses.
- We give our staff the opportunity to attend courses for whom:
 - have identified an area in which they wish to improve their own knowledge and expertise
 - have been identified through an inspection or an in-house appraisal as having a training need
 - want to further their own personal development.
- We expect all staff to behave in a professional manner, follow the above policy and try to be consistent, sensitive and fair. We expect them to challenge others who make inadvertent racist, sexist or insensitive remarks.
- The Joint Heads are responsible for co-ordinating, advising on and reporting back to staff on how successfully the Equal Opportunities Policy has been implemented.

Equipment

- We purchase, organise and monitor equipment, toys, books and resources to reflect diversity in the immediate and wider society. We display positive images of differing races, cultures, religions, social groups, physical abilities and disabilities and gender in and around The Willow.

- Should any person believe that this policy is not being totally complied with, it is their duty to bring the matter to the attention of the Joint Heads at the earliest opportunity. If you wish to make this more formal, then a complaint can be made using the complaints procedure

Links, References and Regulations

Links to other policies

- Suitable Person
- Organisation
- Safety
- Health
- Food and Drink
- Special Needs
- Behaviour
- Safeguarding

Children Act Regulations relating to our policy

None apply.

Name of Person Reviewing Policy	Date Review Carried Out	Date to be reviewed (Yearly / when necessary)
Amanda Hunt	January 2024	As necessary