

INCLUSION AND EQUALITY POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Dealing with Discriminatory Behaviour policy.

At Storybook Montessori we take great care to treat each individual as a person in their own right, with equal rights and responsibilities to any other individual, whether they are an adult or a child. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families and according to their individual needs. Discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, ethnic or national origin, or political belief has no place within our nursery school.

A commitment to implementing our Inclusion and Equality Policy will form part of each employee's job description. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is his or her duty to bring the matter to the attention of the nursery manager at the earliest opportunity. Appropriate steps will then be taken to investigate the matter and if such concerns are well founded, disciplinary action will be invoked under the nursery school's Disciplinary Policy.

The Proprietor and the leadership team wish to make it clear that extremist religious views and partisan political views when teaching or caring for children will not be tolerated. All members of staff are expected to offer a balanced presentation of views and opinions and to promote British values. Staff complete regular training on British values. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- Equality Act 2010 (brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act)
- Children Act 2004
- Care Standards Act 2002
- Childcare Act 2006
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Children and Families Act 2014.

The senior management team and staff are committed to:

- Recruiting, selecting, training and promoting individuals on the basis of occupational skills requirements. In this respect, we will ensure that no job applicant or employee will receive

less favourable treatment because of age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity which cannot be justified as being necessary for the safe and effective performance of their work or training;

- Providing a childcare place, wherever possible, for children who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or are deemed disadvantaged according to their individual circumstances, and the nursery schools ability to provide the necessary standard of care;
- Making reasonable adjustments for children with special educational needs and disabilities;
- Making reasonable adjustments for visitors and staff where necessary;
- Striving to promote equal access to services and projects by taking practical steps (wherever proportionate and reasonable), such as ensuring access to people with additional needs and by producing materials in relevant languages and media for all children and their families;
- Providing a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and all contributions are valued;
- Including and valuing the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality, inclusion and diversity;
- Providing positive non-stereotypical representation and information;
- Continually improving our knowledge and understanding of issues of equality, inclusion and diversity;
- Regularly reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices to ensure that we promote and value diversity and difference and that the policy is effective and practices are non-discriminatory;
- making inclusion a thread, which runs through the entirety of the nursery school, for example, by encouraging positive role models through the use of toys, imaginary play and activities, promoting non-stereotypical images and language, celebrating a wide range of festivals and challenging all discriminatory behaviour (see dealing with discriminatory behaviour policy).

Admissions/service provision (also see admissions policy)

Storybook is accessible to all children and families in the local community and further afield through a comprehensive and inclusive Admissions Policy.

We will strive to ensure that all services and projects are accessible and relevant to all groups and individuals in the community within the targeted age groups.

Recruitment

All members of the recruitment and selection group will be committed to the inclusive practice set out in this policy and will have received appropriate training in this regard.

Application forms will be sent out along with a copy of the equal opportunities monitoring form. Application forms will not include questions that potentially discriminate on the grounds specified in the statement of intent. In line with the privacy policy and GDPR regulations, all application forms will be stored securely, kept only for as long as necessary and used only for recruitment purposes.

At interview, no questions will be posed which potentially discriminate. All candidates will be asked the same questions and members of the selection group will not introduce nor use any personal knowledge of candidates acquired outside the selection process. Candidates will be given the opportunity to receive feedback on the reasons why they were not successful.

Staff

It is the policy of Storybook Montessori not to discriminate in the treatment of individuals. All staff are expected to co-operate with the implementation, monitoring and improvement of this and other policies. All staff are expected to challenge language, actions, behaviours and attitudes which are oppressive or discriminatory on the grounds specified in this policy and recognise and celebrate other cultures and traditions. All staff are expected to participate in equality and inclusion training.

Staff must bring to the attention of the proprietor or manager or follow the Whistleblowing Policy, where applicable, to report any discriminatory behaviours observed.

Training

Storybook Montessori recognises the importance of training as a key factor in the implementation of an effective Inclusion and Equality Policy. All new staff receive induction training including specific reference to the Inclusion and Equality Policy. The nursery school will strive towards the provision of inclusion, equality and diversity training for all staff on an annual basis.

The nursery school has a named person responsible for coordinating the provision for children with special educational needs (SENCO) and equality.

Early Learning Framework

Early learning opportunities offered in the nursery school encourage children to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from them. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

We do this by:

- Making all children feel valued and good about themselves
- Ensuring that all children have equal access to early learning and play opportunities
- Ensuring that all children have their care, cultural and dietary needs met
- Reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources
- Avoiding stereotypical or derogatory images in the selection of materials
- Acknowledging and celebrating a wide range of religions, beliefs and festivals
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and empathy
- Helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable
- Ensuring that all early learning opportunities offered are inclusive of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children from disadvantaged backgrounds

- Ensuring that children whose first language is not English have full access to early learning opportunities and are supported in their learning
- Working in partnership with all families to ensure they understand the policy and challenge any discriminatory comments made
- Ensuring the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met
- Helping children to learn about a range of food and cultural approaches to meal times and to respect the differences among them.

Information and meetings

Information about the nursery school, its activities and children's development will be given in a variety of ways according to individual needs, to ensure that all parents can access the information they need.

Wherever possible, one to one and group meetings will be arranged to give all families options of times and dates to attend so that they can contribute their ideas about the running of the nursery school.