



Equalities and Diversity Policy

Arrangements for Review:

Marian Horton is responsible for the implementation of this policy and conducting regular reviews. This policy was adopted in July 2010 and will be reviewed in **September 2011**

Policy Context:

Seashells and Sheerness Neighbourhood Nursery staff are committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity by providing services which are accessible and relevant to children and families of all backgrounds and cultures within the local community. We respect and celebrate difference, and will promote the principles of tolerance, understanding, and respect for others. No one will be discriminated against including children and their families, staff members or visitors to the centre on the grounds of social circumstances or background, gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, sexuality, age, or religion.

Aim

Seashells and Sheerness Neighbourhood Nursery aim to:

- Provide services which are accessible to all children and families within the local community and which meet diverse needs;
- provide a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity, and work with them in assessing service needs and provision;
- Listen and respond to the views of the community through consultation and participation;
- provide positive non-stereotypical information about gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and people with disabilities;
- improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity;
- make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the centre; and
- monitor take up of services to ensure they do not discriminate or exclude.

The legal framework for this policy is:

- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986;
- The Children Act 1989;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act 2001;
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1998
- The Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2006

Methods

Access

We aim to encourage children and families from all backgrounds within our catchment area to take part in the activities on offer at the centre, and we monitor the uptake of our services to ensure that they are accessible and relevant to different community groups. In pursuit of this aim we take the following specific actions:

- We advertise our service widely in different languages and formats.
- We reflect the diversity of members of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We ensure that all parents are made aware of our equal opportunities policy and parents/carers are also made aware of any policy reviews.
- We do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of colour, ethnicity, religion or social background, such as being a member of a travelling community or an asylum seeker.
- We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to the Children's Centre because of any disability. Help and advice is sought when necessary to aid a smooth integration (see Special Education Needs Policy).
- We work closely with the parent/main carer of the child with disabilities to ensure they can participate successfully in the services offered by the centre and in the curriculum offered.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff or parents. Displaying openly racist insignia, distribution of racist material, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on or around the premises and will be dealt with in the strongest manner.

Early learning and play

- The Early Years Foundation Stage 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 begin to develop the skills of critical thinking. Through the activities and support offered by the centre, we will promote positive, non-stereotypical images about diverse ethnic and cultural groups and people with disabilities or special educational needs and help children to value other people's ideas and contributions.
- We will do all that we are able to ensure that all children are able to participate in the activities offered by the centre and are able to overcome any barriers to participation, which may relate to sensory or physical impairment, learning difficulties or emotional or social development, or may relate to factors in their environment. For more information, please see our SEN and Inclusion Policy.

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 Children's Centre, through photo albums of our families, projects and general discussions etc.
- We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the Children's Centre and to contribute fully, e.g. through news letters, topic letters, social and fund raising events.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will do our best to develop a means to ensure their full inclusion.

Food

- We work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children 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.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

- Seashells and Sheerness Neighbourhood Nursery aim to create a warm and friendly environment where parents/carers feel able to communicate and voice their opinions freely.
- We work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that information is communicated clearly both verbally and in written form, through news letters, notices and leaflets.
- We communicate verbally on a daily basis with parents and carers and encourage them to become involved in social events throughout the year and/or to be involved in our Parents'/Carers' forum.
- Any changes in policy are communicated in written format
- We operate an open door policy and we welcome and value the views and opinions of our parents/carers.

Policy Implementation

- Marian Horton is responsible for the implementation of this policy and conducting regular reviews.
- All staff are made aware of this policy as part of their induction, reviews, and training.
- This policy is linked to all Centre policies, but has particular relevance to the following policies: Food and Drink, Partnership with Parents and Carers, Play, and SEN/Inclusion Policy.

Arrangements for complaint

Any family who feels they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against by Seashells or Sheerness Neighbourhood Nursery has the right to make a complaint and have their complaint heard and acted upon accordingly.

Our policy for handling complaints is defined in the Seashells Complaints Policy.