



## Equal Opportunities

### 1.1 Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality

Steps Pre-School is committed to valuing diversity by providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families.

We will ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children. We recognise that children and their families come from diverse backgrounds. All families have needs and values that arise from their social and economic, ethnic and cultural or religious backgrounds. Children grow up in diverse family structures that include two parent and one parent families; some children have two parents of the same sex. Some children have close links with extended families of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins while others may be more removed from close kin or may live with other relatives or foster carers. Some children have needs that arise from disability or impairment or may have parents that are affected by disability or impairment.

Some children come from families who experience social exclusion or severe hardship; some have to face discrimination and prejudice because of their ethnicity, the languages they speak, their religious or belief background, their gender or their impairment.

We understand that these factors affect the well-being of children and can impact on their learning and attainment.

Our setting 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 of 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;
- Improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity;
- Challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions;
- Make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the setting; and
- Foster good relations between all communities

#### *Admissions*

Our setting is open to all members of the community.

- 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 Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality 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; and
  - ◆ marriage and civil partnership.
- We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our setting for reason relating to disability.
  - We ensure wherever possible that we have a balanced intake of boys and girls in the setting.
  - We develop an action plan to ensure that people with impairments 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 whether by:
    - ◆ direct discrimination – someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic e.g. preventing families of some racial groups from using the service;
    - ◆ indirect discrimination - someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy e.g. children must only speak English in the setting;
    - ◆ association – discriminating against someone who is associated with a person with a protected characteristic e.g. behaving unfavourably to someone who is married to a person from a different cultural background; or
    - ◆ perception – discrimination on the basis that it is thought someone has a protected characteristic e.g. assuming someone is gay because of their mannerism or how they speak.
  - 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 strongest manner.

### *Training*

- We seek out training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish.
- We review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our Equal Opportunities Policy.

### *Curriculum*

The curriculum offered in the setting 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 settings is found to treat disabled children or adults less favourably then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of all children and adults. We do this by:

- making children feel valued and good about themselves and others;
- ensuring that children have equality of access to learning;
- undertaking an access audit to establish if the setting is accessible to all children;
- 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, e.g. recognising the 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;
- creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
- differentiating the curriculum to meet children's special educational needs;

- helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;
- ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities;
- ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning; and
- 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 mothers, fathers and other 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. At the request of the families, we would assist them by either having documents translated or involving a translator.
- We offer a flexible payment system for families of differing means and offer information regarding sources of financial support.
- We take positive action to encourage disadvantaged and under-represented groups to use the setting.

#### *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.

#### *Monitoring and reviewing*

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

## **1.2 Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs**

Steps Pre-School provides an environment in which all children, including those with special educational needs, are supported to reach their full potential.

- We have regard for the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2014).
- We support and involve parents (and where relevant, children), actively listening to, and acting on their wishes and concerns.
- We have in place a clear approach for identifying, responding to, and meeting children's SEN.
- We work in partnership with the local authority and other external agencies to ensure the best outcomes for children with SEN and their families.
- We monitor and review our policy, practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments.
- We have two designated members of staff to be the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator for the Pre-School – **Mrs Celia Sawyer and Mrs Ruth Lanstone**
- The named SENCOs are clearly identified to parents as they are displayed on the notice board for parents.
- The SENCOs work closely with the Manager and other staff who all have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of our Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs Policy and for co-ordinating provision for children with SEN.

- We ensure that the provision for children with SEN is the responsibility of all members of staff, working in the setting.
- We ensure that our inclusive admissions practice ensures equality of access and opportunity.
- We use the graduated response system for identifying, assessing and responding to children's special educational needs.
- We ensure that parents are involved at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their children's special education including all decision making processes.
- Where appropriate, we take into account children's views and wishes in decisions being made about them, relevant to their level of understanding.
- We provide parents with information on local sources of independent advice and support.
- We liaise with other external agencies to help improve outcomes for children with SEN.
- We have systems in place for referring children for further assessment.
- We provide resources (human and financial) to implement our Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs Policy.
- We provide in-service training for practitioners.
- We raise awareness of any specialism the setting has to offer.
- We ensure the effectiveness of our special educational needs provision by collecting information from a range of sources e.g. action plan reviews, staff and management meetings, parental and external agency's views, inspections and complaints. This information is collated, evaluated and reviewed regularly throughout the year.
- We provide a complaints procedure.
- We monitor and review our policy regularly.

### 1.3 British Values

At Steps Pre-School we actively promote inclusion, equality of opportunity, the valuing of diversity and British values.

Under the Equality Act 2010, which underpins standards of behaviour and incorporates both British and universal values, we have a legal obligation not to directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise those with protected characteristics. We make reasonable adjustments to procedures, criteria and practices to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not at a substantial disadvantage. As we are in receipt of public funding we also have a public sector equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and publish information to show compliance with the duty.

Social and emotional development is shaped by early experiences and relationships and incorporates elements of equality and British and universal values. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) supports children's earliest skills so that they can become social citizens in an age-appropriate way, that is, so that they are able to listen and attend to instructions; know the difference between right and wrong; recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others; make and maintain friendships; develop empathy and consideration of other people; take turns in play and conversation; avoid risk and take notice of rules and boundaries; learn not to hurt/upset other people with words and actions; understand the consequences of hurtful/discriminatory behaviour.

#### *British Values*

The fundamental British values of *democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs* are already implicitly embedded in the 2014 EYFS and are further clarified below, based on the *Fundamental British Values in the Early Years* guidance (Foundation Years 2015):

- *Democracy*, or making decisions together (through the prime area of Personal, Social and Emotional Development)
  - ◆ As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness, practitioners encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, encouraging them to know that their views count, to value each other's views and values, and talk about their feelings, for example, recognising when they do or do not need help.
  - ◆ Practitioners support the decisions that children make and provide activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration. Children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.
- *Rule of law*, or understanding that rules matter (through the prime area of Personal, Social and Emotional Development)
  - ◆ Practitioners ensure that children understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequence.
  - ◆ Practitioners collaborate with children to create rules and the codes of behaviour, for example, the rules about tidying up, and ensure that all children understand rules apply to everyone.
- *Individual liberty*, or freedom for all (through the prime areas of Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Understanding the World)
  - ◆ Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, talking about their experiences and learning.
  - ◆ Practitioners encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example discussing in a small group what they feel about transferring into Reception Class.
- *Mutual respect and tolerance*, or treating others as you want to be treated (through the prime areas of Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Understanding the World)
  - ◆ Practitioners create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community.
  - ◆ Children should acquire tolerance, appreciation and respect for their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions.
  - ◆ Practitioners encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours, such as sharing and respecting other's opinions.
  - ◆ Practitioners promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural or racial stereotyping.
- *In our setting it is not acceptable to:*
  - ◆ actively promote intolerance of other faiths, cultures and races
  - ◆ fail to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregate girls and boys
  - ◆ isolate children from their wider community
  - ◆ fail to challenge behaviours (whether of staff, children or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs

### *Prevent Strategy*

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we also have a duty "to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

If you think a child or family may be at risk of extremism, contact the Prevent duty helpline  
Telephone 02073407264  
Email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk)

Approved on behalf of the PCC, at the SRG meeting on 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2025		(date)
Signed on behalf of the PCC		
Name of Signatory	Rev Mark Barker	
Role of Signatory	Chair	
Date to be reviewed:	February 2028	