



11. Equal Opportunities Policy

Statement of Intent

At The Oak Montessori we are committed to equal opportunities in relation to employment and in the delivery of our service. We acknowledge that no two children are the same therefore we aim to identify how best to support each individual child and their families during their time spent with us. We believe that each child has the right to reach their true potential and aim to ensure that each child is not discriminated against.

We believe that children and adults should be treated fairly regardless of race, religion or ability. This applies no matter what they think or say, what type of family they come from, what languages they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. All children have a right to be listened to and valued in the setting.

We act in accordance with all relevant equality legislation and guidance relating to race, gender, disability and employment to ensure that discrimination is eliminated and that equality of opportunity is promoted in line with promoting fundamental British Values.

The legal framework for our practice is:

- The Children and Families Act 2014, Children Acts 2004, Equality Act 2010
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Human Rights Act 1998, Ofsted Common Inspection Framework, May 2019

Employment

- All posts are advertised to ensure that applicants from all backgrounds have an equal opportunity to apply.
- Each applicant is judged against fair and explicit criteria. We may use the exemption clauses of the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act where necessary to enable the service to best meet the needs of the community.
- A job is offered to the applicant who best meets the criteria for the post (subject to thorough verification checks, see Employment Policy)



Staff

- Charlotte Wheeler is the Business Manager and Natasha Rawdon-Rego is the Nursery Manager. They are both the lead persons responsible for equalities in the setting, although providing a fully inclusive service is the responsibility of the whole staff team. As part of their induction all new staff are briefed on the equal opportunities policy and its implementation into practice.
- We try not to make any assumptions about children and their families, their lifestyles and their beliefs. It is our intention to find out accurate information when we are unsure.
- All staff have access to ongoing equalities training to ensure that they keep up to date with new developments, current research and appropriate practice.

Admissions

- We advertise our service widely and the families that use the setting reflect the cultural diversity of the community we serve.
- When appropriate we would try to enlist the support of a bilingual support worker.
- We base our admissions policy on a fair system. We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our setting, on the basis of colour, ethnicity, religion or social background, such as being a member of a traveling community or an asylum seeker. We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our setting because of a disability.
- We aim to gather full and accurate information about all children before they start at the setting to ensure their needs are met to the best of our ability. We take care to ensure we have the correct spelling of names and know their correct pronunciation.
- A key person is identified for each child early before they start to liaise with and support both the child and their family.

Environment and Resources

- We aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all children and their families in which they can fully access and express themselves.
- We realise that the displays we have on offer to children, families and visitors are windows to the wider world. We offer positive images of a diversity of backgrounds engaged in a variety of roles, living and working together and respecting each other.
- We use resources that reflect ethnic and cultural diversity and do not promote negative stereotypes.



- We value linguistic diversity and provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning. We value bilingualism as a strength and encourage all children to learn some of the languages they hear around them.
- We work together with professionals from other agencies as part of a multi-agency network of support for families such as EMAS, CEYC, PreSENS, Traveller Education Service, Speech and Language therapists, local and community health services, to promote the best care and learning opportunities are available for individual children.

Curriculum

- All children have a need to develop, which is helped by exploring and discovering the people and things around them. Children are encouraged to recognise their own unique qualities and the characteristics they share with other children.
- We plan opportunities that build on and extend all children's knowledge, experiences, interests and skills and develop their self esteem and confidence in their ability to learn. We consider what might be appropriate to offer them according to their ages, stages of development and levels of understanding.
- We provide activities and experiences which celebrate diversity.
- We join in the celebration of community festivals and events, exploring diversity of foods, raising awareness and respect of cultural differences at mealtimes and eating.
- Both sexes are encouraged to explore resources and activities traditionally used by the other. We involve local people at nursery to demonstrate positive roles.
- Our staff at the setting aim to continually be aware of the language we use, we use non-gender specific language wherever possible.

Working with parents and carers.

- We believe that a positive relationship between parents and carers and the setting is very important in supporting children to reach their potential.
- We make time to listen to the expectations of parents and carers and to explain our procedures clearly and carefully, particularly when settling a child into the setting.
- When possible we provide resources in languages other than English for parents and carers for whom this is not their first language.
- We are fully aware that parents are their children's first educators and an important resource for nursery, especially in terms of information about their child. We need to work with them alongside their children, sharing the benefits of joint education.
- We value the contribution that parents can make to the setting, we aim to make all parents feel comfortable enough to share in the daily life of the group.



Discriminatory remarks or behaviour

- As a staff team we aim to recognise and examine our own beliefs and prejudices, being conscious of the effect they have on our practice and seek to overcome them.
- We take all incidents of discrimination very seriously.
- We aim to challenge overt prejudice and discrimination when it occurs in a way that is sensitive and constructive. We endeavour to help the person who has offended to see what was wrong with what they did or said and to support them in making any changes.
- We intend to point out untrue statements in a sensitive way and give correct information.

Review

We regularly review practice and resources to ensure we are continuing to meet all current needs. Addressing equalities issues is an ongoing process, not a one-off activity.

Policy Written in June 2019
Natasha Rawdon-Rego

Review Date: July 2020
Charlotte Wheeler