

## Inclusion and Equality

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## ***Intention***

This policy is intended to ensure that every child, family, and staff member within the nursery community is treated with fairness, respect, and dignity, regardless of background, ability, or personal circumstance. It sets out the nursery's commitment to creating an inclusive environment where diversity is valued, individual needs are met, and all children have equal opportunities to learn, play, and thrive.

## ***Legislative context***

### Legal guidelines and frameworks

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2025 (EYFS)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2025
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025 (KCSiE)
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice, 2015
- Equality Act, 2010
- Children Act, 2004

### Legal duties

The nursery has a legal duty to promote equality, inclusion, and the well-being of every child. Staff must actively challenge bias, respect diversity, and provide non-discriminatory practices to safeguard children's rights to equality in all aspects of nursery life.

## ***Acronyms used in this policy***

EAL: English as an Additional Language

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

## ***Definitions of terms used in this policy***

### Equality

Equality is the principle that all people are treated fairly and have the same rights, status, and opportunities, without discrimination. It means everyone is valued equally in society, whether under the law, in access to opportunities, or in everyday treatment, although achieving equality may sometimes involve ensuring people have equal chances rather than identical outcomes.

### Discrimination

Discrimination is the unfair treatment of individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, or religion. It can be direct discrimination, where someone is treated worse explicitly because of a characteristic, or indirect discrimination, where a rule or policy applies to everyone but disadvantages a particular group more than others.

### Diversity

Diversity is the acknowledgment of differences among individuals — such as variations in race, gender, and other characteristics—and the inclusion of a broad range of these differences within a group to promote their representation and recognition.

## Inclusion

Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that all individuals feel welcomed, respected, and able to participate fully. It focuses on creating an environment where everyone is supported, valued, and able to contribute.

### **Guiding principles**

This policy is guided by the principle that education is a universal right, and all children should have equal access to learning and the support they need to reach their potential. The nursery is committed to fostering a genuinely inclusive environment where every child is valued, heard, and supported. Staff work closely with families to identify and remove barriers, challenge bias, and promote a culture of respect and belonging, ensuring that inclusion and diversity are integral to everyday learning and care.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Role	Responsibility
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Treat all children, families, and colleagues with respect and fairness</li><li>• Demonstrate empathy and understanding to deliver learning and care that meets the diverse needs, abilities, and backgrounds of the children who attend the nursery</li><li>• Identify and remove barriers to participation and inclusion by continually assessing provision to ensure this remains accessible, and equitable for all children</li><li>• Work collaboratively with parent/carers to understand children's needs and share inclusive practices</li><li>• Guide children to understand, value, and appreciate differences among peers</li><li>• Identify and raise any issues of exclusion, discrimination, or barriers to participation following nursery procedures</li></ul>
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure the delivery of all policies and procedures supports equality, inclusion, and diversity</li><li>• Provide staff with training, guidance, and resources to implement inclusive practices</li><li>• Monitor and evaluate the nursery's environment, activities, and outcomes for inclusivity</li><li>• Address incidents of discrimination or exclusion promptly and appropriately following nursery procedures</li><li>• Promote a culture of respect, belonging, and collaboration among staff, children, and families</li></ul>
Parents/carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share relevant information about child's needs, abilities, or background</li><li>• Respect and model inclusive values in interactions with staff, children, and other families</li><li>• Raise concerns about equality or inclusion in a timely and constructive manner</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the nursery in promoting a positive, respectful, and diverse community</li> </ul>
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### ***Updates to this policy***

This policy may be unilaterally updated at any time with immediate effect to ensure clarity, reflect the nursery’s current operational practices, and maintain compliance with the latest government legislation and guidance. Please refer to the ‘More Information’ section on the website.

### ***The 9 protected characteristics***

In line with the nursery’s commitment to equality and inclusion, all individuals are protected from discrimination based on the 9 protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

<b>The 9 protected characteristics</b>	
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Age	Ensuring fair treatment across all age groups
Disability	Supporting and making reasonable adjustments for children, families, and staff with physical or learning disabilities
Gender Reassignment	Respecting individuals undergoing, or who have undergone, a process of gender transition
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Treating those who are married or in a civil partnership without bias
Pregnancy and Maternity	Protecting the rights and needs of expectant or new parents
Race	Ensuring equal treatment regardless of ethnicity, nationality, or skin colour
Religion or Belief	Respecting the beliefs or faiths of children, families, and staff
Sex	Treating all individuals fairly regardless of gender
Sexual Orientation	Respecting the sexual orientation of all individuals, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual people

### **Fostering a culture of inclusivity and equality within the curriculum**

By embedding diversity and equality into everyday learning, the nursery fosters respect, understanding, and curiosity about the world, whilst also ensuring all individuals making up the nursery community are represented and valued.

#### Celebrating diversity and cultural traditions

The nursery ensures that learning activities and resources reflect a wide range of cultures, religions, family structures, and traditions. This not only exposes children to positive role models from a variety of communities but also fosters a collective understanding of diversity as a natural and integral part of everyday life.

Cultural events and festivals are acknowledged and celebrated within meaningful and personalised contexts, with staff actively engaging children in conversations and play opportunities to help deepen their understanding and appreciation of the world around them.

#### Promoting the British Values

The nursery actively promotes the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect. Activities nurture fairness, responsibility, and an understanding of how individual actions impact the wider community. For further information, please refer to our British Values policy.

#### Adapting activities and environments

The nursery is committed to ensuring that all children can access and enjoy a wide range of learning experiences by adapting activities and the environment to meet individual needs. In practice, this may include:

Method	How this is implemented into practice
Differentiating activities	Activities are planned and differentiated to meet the unique needs, interests, and abilities of each child. Staff provide targeted support, reasonable adjustments, and alternative approaches to ensure all children can participate fully and reach their potential.
Use of resources	A range of resources is provided to support different learning styles, including visual aids (e.g. picture cards), sensory materials, and hands-on activities.
Physical environment	Spaces are arranged to ensure accessibility for all children, including clear pathways, quiet areas, and well-organised, child-accessible resources.
Sensory support	Adjustments are made for children with sensory sensitivities, such as reducing noise, offering ear defenders, using soft lighting, or creating calm spaces.
Flexible routines	Daily routines are adapted where needed, including allowing extra time for transitions, offering rest breaks, or adjusting mealtimes.

Method	How this is implemented into practice
Adult support	Staff provide targeted support by modelling language, breaking tasks into manageable steps, and encouraging independence at an appropriate pace.
Inclusive participation	Group activities are adapted so all children can take part, for example using props, movement-based learning, or alternative communication methods such as gestures or sign language.

For more information, please see the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.

### ***Fostering inclusive values and challenging stereotypes***

Staff actively challenge traditional assumptions, including gender roles, cultural biases, or limiting expectations. Learning experiences are designed to expand children's understanding of what individuals can do, regardless of age, gender, background, or ability.

Common area of focus	Inclusive approach in practice
Promoting inclusive language	→ Staff model respectful, bias-free language and gently challenge stereotypical comments e.g. reinforcing that toys and interests are for everyone, not just 'boys' or 'girls'.
Fostering diverse role models	→ Resources are selected that show people of all backgrounds in different careers, roles and positions of vulnerability with staff modelling empathy, emotional literacy, and confidence with all children and praising these behaviours amongst the group.
Challenging biased comments	→ Staff respond sensitively to stereotypical or exclusionary remarks (e.g., families are made up of a mum and a dad) and guide children to understand fairness and inclusion through open discussions and use of learning resources.
Respecting children's personal identities and individuality	→ Staff use children's correct names as preferred by them and their family whilst acknowledging their cultural, linguistic, and personal backgrounds, supporting them to develop confidence and self-expression.

Common area of focus	Inclusive approach in practice
Encouraging individuality	→ Children have free flow access to all toys and resources, promoting personal choice and authentic exploration without restrictions.

### ***Encouraging family and community engagement***

Families are encouraged to play an active role in nursery life by sharing their cultures, traditions, and experiences. This not only enriches the learning environment but also helps children develop a deeper understanding of diversity, respect, and inclusion, while strengthening connections between home and the nursery community.

Practical ways the nursery supports this include:

- Inviting parents and carers to take part in activities such as storytelling, cooking, music, or celebrations linked to their cultural or family traditions
- Celebrating a range of festivals and events with input from families to ensure they are represented in an authentic and meaningful way
- Encouraging families to share photographs, artefacts, or key words from their home language which are incorporated into the nursery environment
- Hosting informal events such as stay-and-play sessions, workshops, or family days to promote engagement and relationship-building
- Creating opportunities for community involvement, such as visits from local services, cultural groups, or professionals, to broaden children's experiences and awareness

To support family involvement in decision-making, the nursery ensures that parents/carers feel listened to, valued, and included in shaping provision. This is achieved by:

- Seeking regular feedback through questionnaires, suggestion boxes, and informal conversations
- Involving families in reviews of their child's progress and next steps, ensuring their views and knowledge are reflected in assessment and planning
- Offering opportunities to contribute to nursery policies, events, and practices, where appropriate
- Providing clear and accessible communication channels so families can share ideas, raise concerns, or ask questions
- Being flexible and responsive to family needs, taking into account cultural preferences, work patterns, and individual circumstances when making decisions

### ***Recognising marginalised groups within the nursery community***

Marginalised groups are communities or individuals who experience systemic disadvantage, exclusion, or reduced access to resources, opportunities, or rights compared with the wider population. This can be due to factors such as race, ethnicity, disability, gender, socio-economic status, religion, or other personal or social characteristics; and may create barriers to full participation in education and nursery provision. Within the nursery, this includes not only children but also families and staff who may face challenges linked to these factors.

As individuals may belong to more than one marginalised group, the nursery takes a holistic approach to support, focusing on understanding how overlapping factors can impact learning, wellbeing, and participation, while maintaining clear communication to identify barriers early.

#### Practical strategies to support marginalised groups

The nursery is committed to supporting marginalised individuals through meaningful and practical actions that respond to their diverse needs. Examples of strategies used within the nursery include:

- Ensuring that resources, activities, and displays reflect a wide range of cultures, backgrounds, abilities, and family structures so all children feel represented. This includes incorporating culturally diverse books, toys, and activities meaningfully into learning opportunities
- Ensuring staff receive ongoing training in cultural awareness, anti-bias practice, and inclusive teaching approaches to promote understanding and challenge discrimination
- Taking steps to remove barriers to participation, including financial, cultural, or physical barriers. This may include offering community hours where available to reduce financial strain and encouraging participation through home-based or low-cost activities
- Signposting families to local support services such as food banks, welfare advice, and housing support where needed
- Creating an inclusive approach to events and fundraising activities, ensuring they are accessible to all families e.g., offering alternatives such as toy collections during holiday periods
- Promoting an inclusive and supportive workplace by offering flexible working arrangements for staff (such as part-time or term-time only roles where possible), adjusting workloads, providing cover support when needed, and fostering a culture of understanding and respect

#### Creating a sense of belonging for all

Through the continual creation and maintenance of positive relationships with the nursery, children are provided a sense of belonging to a community. Early experiences of belonging can help marginalised individuals feel accepted and valued from a young age, which in turn builds confidence and resilience, reduces the risk of social isolation, and encourages participation in wider community life.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Supporting children and families with English as an Additional Language***

The nursery recognises that children and families who speak English as an additional language bring valuable cultural and linguistic diversity to the setting. Children with EAL will be supported through a range of strategies to help them feel confident, included, and able to participate fully in nursery life. This may include using visual aids, gestures, simplified language, and repetition to support understanding. Staff may also use books, songs, and resources in different languages, and encourage children to share words, stories, or traditions from their home language and culture.<sup>2</sup>

Partnership with families is essential in supporting children with EAL. Where possible, staff will work with families to understand key words, routines, and cultural practices that may help the

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, please see the [Further Reading](#) section of this policy.

<sup>2</sup> For more guidance, please see the [Further Reading](#) section of this policy.

child feel more settled and supported. The nursery will also make reasonable efforts to ensure important information is communicated clearly with families who may have limited English, which may include using translated materials, visual communication, or support from translation services where available. The aim is to ensure that all children and families feel welcomed, understood, and able to engage fully with the nursery community.

### ***Staff's role in championing diversity and inclusion and challenging bias***

All staff members are expected to actively champion diversity and inclusion through their daily practices. This includes actively addressing stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination whenever they occur.

Staff also have a responsibility to reflect on their own beliefs, assumptions, and behaviours to ensure they do not unintentionally disadvantage or exclude anyone within the nursery community. Staff should make conscious changes to activities, communication, and decision-making to ensure all children have equal opportunities, regardless of background or ability and participate in training and discussions to broaden understanding and challenge assumptions.

### ***Addressing discriminatory behaviour***

The nursery operates a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, prejudice, or harassment. Any discriminatory behaviour will be taken seriously and addressed promptly to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for children, families, and staff. Where appropriate, further action may be taken, which could include involvement of external authorities e.g., the police.

#### What should staff do if they feel discriminated against

If a staff member believes they have been subjected to discrimination, they should report the matter to their manager as soon as possible. If they wish to raise a formal concern, the grievance procedure outlined in the Staff Handbook must be followed. Any staff member found to have discriminated against another individual may face disciplinary action, which could include a formal warning, retraining, suspension, or dismissal in cases of serious misconduct.

#### What should families do if they feel discriminated against

If a family member believes that they or their child has experienced discrimination, they are encouraged to raise the concern with the nursery as soon as possible so that it can be addressed appropriately. Concerns should initially be discussed with the nursery manager. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the concerned individual should follow the nursery's formal Complaints Procedure, as outlined in the Compliments and Complaints Policy. The nursery will take all concerns seriously and investigate them promptly and fairly.

#### Expectations for parents/carers

Parents and carers are expected to support the nursery's commitment to equality, inclusion, and respectful behaviour. Discriminatory behaviour towards staff, children, or other families will not be tolerated and may result in temporary restrictions on access to the premises or, in serious or repeated cases, the withdrawal of the child's place at the nursery.

### ***Responding to conflicting cultural values***

The nursery recognises and respects that children, families, and staff come from a wide range of cultural, religious, and social backgrounds, and that beliefs, values, and parenting practices

may differ. Staff are expected to approach these differences with sensitivity, openness, and respect, recognising the importance of understanding each individual's perspective.

There may be occasions where values held by families or staff appear to conflict with the nursery's policies, legal duties, or what is considered to be in the best interests of the child. In such situations, respectful and open dialogue should take place to explore the concern while ensuring that the nursery's responsibilities and expectations are clearly explained.

Where necessary, guidance may be sought from management or relevant professionals to ensure that decisions are made fairly and in line with the nursery's safeguarding and inclusion responsibilities. The aim is always to work collaboratively to find solutions that respect diversity while ensuring that all children are protected, valued, and supported.

#### What actions should be taken if conflicting values raise safeguarding concerns

The nursery's primary responsibility is to protect children from harm. To help uphold this responsibility, staff must follow the approaches highlighted below:

- Maintain a firm commitment to safeguarding principles at all times. Work in partnership with families, promoting mutual respect and understanding while prioritising the safety, rights, and wellbeing of every child
- Remain alert to cultural practices that are illegal in the UK, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, or honour-based abuse, and follow safeguarding procedures where concerns arise
- Understand that the Prevent Duty is a legal obligation requiring the nursery to protect children from radicalisation or exposure to extremist influences
- Avoid assumptions or stereotypes. Children from any background may be at risk, and a consistent, respectful approach must be applied to all families
- Record and report all safeguarding concerns in line with the nursery's safeguarding procedures

#### ***Making reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility for individuals with additional needs***

The nursery is committed to promoting inclusion and aims to make the setting accessible to all children and families. Every effort will be made to anticipate needs and implement reasonable adjustments to support individuals with additional requirements. This may include adapting activities, providing additional support, adjusting the environment, or working with external professionals to ensure children can participate fully in nursery life.

#### Timeframes for implementing adjustments

While the nursery is committed to making reasonable adjustments wherever possible, some changes may require time to plan and implement. This could involve sourcing specialist equipment, arranging staff training, consulting with professionals, or making physical changes to the environment. As a result, immediate implementation may not always be possible. Families and relevant professionals will be kept informed throughout the process and provided with regular updates on progress.

#### When adjustments may not be feasible

There may be rare circumstances where making a reasonable adjustment is not possible from the outset, or where an inclusive arrangement that was initially in place becomes

unsustainable. In such cases, decisions will be made carefully and sensitively, with a strong emphasis on exploring all possible alternatives before concluding that an adjustment cannot be implemented. Examples of situations where certain adjustments may not be possible include:

- When a requested adjustment would place an unreasonable operational or financial strain on the nursery that could affect the safety or quality of provision for all children. This may include situations where changes are not possible due to significant cost, structural limitations, or legal restrictions related to the building
- When the level of specialist resources, equipment, or expertise required to meet a child’s complex needs cannot be accessed through local support services or external agencies or would create an unsustainable staffing or financial demand that impacts the wider nursery environment
- When a child’s behavioural needs cannot be safely managed within the existing staff-to-child ratios or physical environment, despite reasonable adjustments and specialist support being explored
- When implementing a particular adjustment would compromise the safety or wellbeing of the child, other children, or staff within the setting

**Essential knowledge for staff from this policy**

Key learning	Level
Explain what the 9 protected characteristics stand for and give some examples of these	L1
Explain what is meant by marginalised groups and how these can be supported within the nursery	L1
Explain how stereotypes can be challenged within the nursery to promote inclusivity and equality	L1
Explain how the nursery supports children and families with EAL	L1
Explain staff members roles in championing diversity and inclusion	L1
Explain the nursery’s approach to discriminatory behaviour, including actions which may be taken if such behaviour takes place	L1
Explain how the nursery may respond to conflicting cultural values, including when these raise safeguarding concerns	L1
Explain how the nursery makes reasonable adjustments to promote accessibility for those with additional needs	L1
Explain what steps may be taken if reasonable adjustments are not sufficient to support the needs of the child	L2

**Training requirements**

There are no additional training requirements to accompany this policy.

### **Monitoring and review**

<b>Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review resources available to ensure these represent the backgrounds and cultures of the children and staff within the setting</li> </ul>
<b>Confirm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm that the reasonable adjustments in place to support children with additional needs are sufficient and effective</li> <li>Confirm that reasonable adjustments have been made to support children with EAL</li> </ul>
<b>Observe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observe a staff member conducting an activity that promotes inclusion and equality</li> </ul>
<b>Ask</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask a staff member how stereotypes can be challenged within the nursery</li> <li>Ask a staff member what steps they have taken to ensure their key children are represented and included within the nursery</li> </ul>

### **Further reading**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Summary of content</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Link</b>
6 steps to EAL inclusivity	Guidance on how to make EAL learners feel safe and included	Famly	<a href="#">Link</a>
Building belonging in early childhood education: A holistic approach	Practical tips and real life examples on how to foster belonging from community to classroom	Famly	<a href="#">Link</a>
How to make your setting culturally inclusive	Guidance on how to make a nursery setting culturally inclusive	Famly	<a href="#">Link</a>
Nurturing children through an inclusive and diverse lens	Video on how to nurture children through an inclusive lens	Famly	<a href="#">Link</a>
The Early Years Inclusion Revolution	Document discussion how Race and Inclusion can be represented in the Early Years	Famly	<a href="#">Link</a>