**Equal Opportunities**

At 1st Steps Day Nursery we recognise our responsibilities under the Race Relations Act, The Sex Discriminations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act to eliminate discrimination and to promote good relations between children, staff, parents and the local community. The promotion of equal opportunities is the responsibility of the whole nursery and must be reflected throughout the organisation of the nursery.Our commitment to equal opportunities has been demonstrated with 13 staff undertaking as NCFE level 2 qualification in Equality and diversity in their own time to further their CPD.

**Equal opportunities** is the right of each individual to make the maximum progress in, and derive the greatest possible benefit from their education/care experiences, regardless of gender, age, sexuality, learning needs, ethnic origin, social or cultural background, religion, disability or any minority interest.

**Discrimination** is acting upon a perceived difference between individuals or groups. it can be direct or indirect.

**Direct discrimination** takes place when a person or group, intentionally or not, is treated less favourably than others.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when, although treatment may appear to be equal, it results in unequal outcomes.

**Discrimination by association**
This is direct discrimination against an individual because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

**Perception discrimination**
This is direct discrimination against an individual where the person is treated less favourably than another, and the less favourable treatment is because others think they possess a protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

**Harassment**
This is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of either: (a) violating another person's dignity; or (b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other person.

**Victimisation**
This occurs where an individual is subjected to less favourable treatment by reason of the fact that s/he has done a ’protected act‘ under the discrimination legislation – e.g. someone has made a complaint about discrimination on grounds of their age or sex, or helped somebody else to do so, and they are now being treated less favourably by their manager.

**Aims:**

* to state that each child is of equal value and that each child has particular needs and potential.
* to confirm that the care and concern for the individual child is consistent with both sound educational and equal opportunities practice.
* to foster every child's self-esteem.
* to appreciate that all children and people are different and that this uniqueness must be valued.
* to empower every child by nurturing positive self-image.
* to understand that equality of opportunity is not about providing the same experiences for all, but diverse experiences which can deliver the same knowledge and skills with regard to the needs and potentials of the child.
* to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices and procedures from the nursery.
* to recognise and counter prejudice.

**Procedure (how we put our aims into practice)**

We will recognise and welcome all legislation and existing codes of practice produced by appropriate commissions, for example the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

We will value and respect the different racial origins, religion or belief, cultures and languages in a multi-ethnic society so that each child is valued as an individual without racial or gender stereotyping. We will also not discriminate against children, parents, carers and staff on the grounds of disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, civil partnership, class, gender reassignment, family status, and HIV/Aids status.

We will provide equal chances for each child to learn and develop to their full potential, taking into account each child's age and stage of development, gender, ethnicity, home language, and ability.

We will provide, and make sure that all children have access to a range of books, puzzles and other toys which provide positive images and examples of the diversity of life in our society.

We will challenge racist and discriminatory remarks, attitudes and behaviour from the children in our care and other adults.

We will always help children to feel good about themselves and others by celebrating the differences which make us all unique.

**Achieving Equality**

In order to achieve this:

* We aim to acknowledge all the festivals, which are celebrated by the families in the nursery.
* Children will be made aware of the festivals, which are being celebrated by their own families, and where appropriate will be introduced to the stories behind the festivals.
* Before introducing a festival with which staff are not themselves familiar, appropriate advice will be sought from parents and other people who are familiar with that festival.
* Children will become familiar with and enjoy taking part in a range of festivals, together with the stories, celebrations and special food and clothing they involve, as part of the diversity of life.

**Equal Opportunities in Recruitment**

Jobs within nursery will be advertised in the Job Centre as well as local newspapers. We offer competitive rates of pay to encourage suitability, qualified members of staff.

We aim to work closely with local training agencies. We will use trainees from the agencies and possibly offer them permanent posts at the end of the training. Agencies may also be used to find assistants or qualified nursery nurses to employ within the nursery.

Job adverts will state the wage, hours and position required. Jobs may be full or part time. Employees are required to complete an application form, provide a letter of application, clear DBS checks, and provide evidence of past experience. Staff must meet requirements and provide the above information to gain employment.

During the interview stage of recruitment, staff are asked a series of questions such as past experience in childcare; how they would deal with certain incidents; whether they would be interested in further training; childcare matters and knowledge of the EYFS. Others questions will arise during the interview according to answers given. Staff will be selected on the type of answers given along with experience, qualifications, personal appearance, manner and attitude during interview. Staff applying for nursery nurse or assistants jobs will be required to provide evidence of qualifications, such as certificates.

Before staff and work in the nursery, references and DBS clearance have to be obtained. If DBS clearance pending, then the member of staff can start work but only if they work alongside somebody else with a DBS clearance and not left in charge of any of the children.

At 1st Steps, we intend to provide on-going training for all staff to help their professional development. We have facilities to offer onsite training and have developed strong links with local training agencies and Early Years Development Childcare Partnership to help staff develop their knowledge and understanding in all areas connected to childcare and the running of a day nursery. We will have regular appraisals with staff and staff meetings to discuss new courses or training opportunities. A notice board in the staff room will offer advice and information on latest courses.

A designated member of staff will be assigned to look after all issues of Equal opportunities. Bev Bowden has been nominated as the Equal Opportunities Representative. She will receive relevant training as and when it arises.

Staff are given a copy of the equal opportunities policy before interview and is then asked to sign in their induction that they have read and understood the company policies. Parents will also be given a copy of the policy that refers to equal opportunities of their child and the running of the day nursery.

**Equal Opportunities**

**England**

Meeting the Early Years Foundation Stage welfare requirements.

**Safeguarding and Promoting Children’s Welfare.** The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Reviewed by Christina Neary May 16 Next review: May 18

**Leadership & Management**