



Equality Policy

Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for Bloomsbury Nursery School and Children's Centre brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes. Issues relating to adults within the school community can be embraced under these themes and reflected in the action plan.

Article 2 – The Convention applies to every child whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, no matter what type of family they come from.

Article 30 – Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and Academies, and which extends to all protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements.

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

Protected Characteristics

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating any of them less favourably because of their:

- sex
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity

Our approach

At Bloomsbury, each child and their family are valued as unique. We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school/ Centre community, within all aspects of school/ Centre life.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared Humanity - Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality - We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

Our vision statement about Equality

Bloomsbury Nursery School and Children's Centre is committed to working together to ensure that '**everyone feels welcomed, safe, respected, included and valued**' to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allows us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices,

where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. **We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.**

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

Our duties

We welcome, recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the **Equality Act 2010** and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all. We are also guided by the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and the Governments identified **Code of Conduct**.

Democracy: Everyone has a voice and a say in what we do and how we do it

Mutual Respect: We admire and acknowledge everyone's abilities, qualities and achievements

Liberty: We have the freedom to make our own choices

Tolerance: We accept that everyone has a right to their own views and opinions

Rule of Law: We have community rules and practices which keeps our learning community safe and a code of conduct for all adults working within our service.

Code of Conduct statement for all staff

We will ensure to identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school/Centre life, including the provision of our Children's Centre.

Responsibilities

It is every adult's responsibility to ensure that their own attitudes and behaviour are free from discriminatory practices. Children will be taught strategies for challenging discriminatory behaviour and will be supported by educators in the Nursery to use these strategies. **(See Behaviour management policy for a description of these strategies.)** Staff will include anti-bias objectives in planned activities, and will make use of opportunities to discuss biased actions and attitudes with the children, particularly through the use of puppets at story/circle time. All persons witnessing discrimination of any sort should report it to the Headteacher who will record it on the appropriate Pro forma. These will be kept on file and appropriate information transferred to the LA on request.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- the engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- preparation for entry to the school and preparation of children's transition to the next phase of education
- school/Centre policies
- the provision of school meals
- interaction with peers
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- behaviour management approach and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- learning environment
- daily routines
- grouping of children
- access to school/centre facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school
- employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, children and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our Governing body will:

- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Development Plan
- support the headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 4 years

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP

Our Children will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our Parents/Carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy

As a setting we have identified key objectives in the Equality Act for us to focus on under the following 3 headings; Race, Gender and Disability, which is also mentioned in our SEND Policy 2015:

Race

- To enable children to feel pride, but not superiority about their racial identity;
- To affirm and foster children's knowledge and pride in their cultural identity;
- To foster children's curiosity, enjoyment and empathic awareness of cultural differences and similarities;

- To teach children to overcome any inappropriate responses triggered by cultural differences.

Gender

- To free children from constraining definitions of gender role so that no aspects of development will be closed off simply because of a child's sex;
- To foster children's healthy gender identity by enabling them to gain clarity about the relationship between biological identity and gender roles;
- To promote equality of development for both sexes by fostering each child's participation in activities necessary for physical, cognitive and social growth;
- To develop children's skills for challenging sexist stereotypes and behaviours.

Disability

- To enable children with disabilities to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride;
- To provide all children with accurate, developmentally appropriate information about their own and others disabilities and to foster understanding that a person with a disability is different in one respect but similar in many others;
- To enable all children to develop the ability to interact knowledgeably, comfortably and fairly with people having various disabilities;
- To teach children with disabilities how to handle and challenge name-calling, stereotypic attitudes and physical barriers;
- To teach able-bodied children how to resist and challenge stereotyping, name-calling and physical barriers directed against people with disabilities.

Objectives - for adults

- To increase awareness of personal attitudes about gender, race, ethnicity, and different physical abilities;
- To gain an understanding of how young children develop identity and attitudes;
- To learn to identify ways that institutional racism, sexism and attitudes to disability affect our community;
- To plan ways to introduce anti-bias curriculum into our setting;
- Reviewed and agreed by Governing Body 24th September 2015.
- To establish genuine parent / carer / practitioner dialogue that opens up a discussion of each other's point of view and seeks to gain clarity understanding and solutions agreeable to both practitioner and parent / carer;
- To provide information that facilitates parent / carer awareness of how young children develop racial/ethnic and gender identity and the ways in which sexism, and racism negatively affect healthy socio-emotional and cognitive growth;
- To create safe settings for parents / carers to discuss with each other the issues raised by anti-bias work and to increase their ability to integrate anti-bias perspectives in their child rearing;
- To facilitate the development of children through joint parent / carer / practitioner problem solving and mutual support;
- To involve parents / carers in curriculum development implementation and evaluation.

The Curriculum

The curriculum in all areas of learning will include planned activities that introduce ideas of difference and similarity and provide opportunities for children to discuss differences in gender, race and ability in a non-judgemental manner. We will use an anti-bias approach to teach children to interact comfortably with differences, appreciate all people's similarities, and to recognise and confront ideas and behaviours that are biased.

Environment and resources

"There are three teachers of children: adults, other children, and their physical environment." – Loris Malaguzzi

"In order to act as an educator for the child, the environment has to be flexible: it must undergo frequent modification by the children and the teachers in order to remain up-to-date and responsive to their needs to be protagonists in constructing their knowledge." Lella Gandini (1998)

"An environment that is rich in possibilities for exploring gender, race/ethnicity and different-abilities sets the scene for practising anti-bias curriculum. The material and people resources in the classroom provide children with important data. What is in the environment also alerts children to what the teacher considers important or not important. Children are as vulnerable to omissions as they are to inaccuracies and stereotypes: what isn't seen can be as powerful as what is seen."

(Derman-Sparkes, L. (1989) Anti Bias Curriculum. NAEYC.USA)

In order to provide children with positive images of diversity we will seek to purchase resources that people in a wide range of contexts, and to eliminate resources that depict stereotypes, or inaccuracies. We recognise that this will take time and will identify funding annually in the School Development Plan to be used for the purchase of suitable resources for each area of learning.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Practitioners need to:

- Ensure that all children are enabled to access the full range of learning opportunities, both inside and outdoors;
- Work with children in a range of groupings, making sure that children have opportunities to work with others of different gender, race and ability;
- Plan directed and non-directed activities, including adapted or differentiated activities for children with differing needs, and which promote each child's strengths, background and self-esteem

Respond to individual needs by:

- Varying the pace and length of session
- Using signs, symbols and augmentative communication
- Considering children's emotional well being

- Being aware of each child's cultural heritage.
- Introduce the vocabulary for discussing difference and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust to facilitate such discussions;
- Support children to express their needs and opinions within the group;
- Challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviour and support the children to challenge discrimination for them;
- Teach children strategies for dealing with conflict and solving problems;
- Promote interactions between children of different gender, race and ability;
- Use positive

Unlawful behaviour

1.16 The Act defines **four kinds of unlawful behaviour** – direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation.

1.17 Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination – for example if a school were to refuse to let a pupil be a prefect because she is a lesbian.

1.18 Indirect discrimination occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.

Harassment

We recognise that all forms of discrimination and harassment are harmful. We also recognise that discrimination may be unintentional or thoughtless rather than deliberate. We do not, however, believe that this is a reason to ignore such behaviour or ‘let it go’. Therefore we will deliberately seek to create an atmosphere of mutual trust wherein adults are empowered to challenge and support one another to develop truly inclusive attitudes.

Many discriminatory comments are accidentally overheard. People who overhear such things have to judge how best to deal with the incident, and whether to leave it until later or to respond to it immediately. We encourage adults in the Nursery to consider using one of the following statements in response to a discriminatory comment or action:

- I'm sorry you think that;
- I don't agree with you;
- What makes you think that?
- What makes you say that?
- That's not my experience;
- Please do not include me in that.

Countering discriminatory attitudes (where there are clear notions of superiority) from young children is very different from dealing with the discriminatory attitudes of adults. We know that children have not yet had the opportunity to consider other information and points of view, so we address the situation particularly sensitively. The aim, after supporting the victimised child is to address the situation in a way that will enable the child to listen, understand, consider and change their behaviour.

Children can learn to take responsibility to tell adults when they witness any form of unkindness, racial abuse or name-calling. Staff should encourage this through the use of persona dolls and puppets in story and circle time sessions in the Nursery. These sessions can then be referred back to when an incident occurs.

The following procedures should be used to deal with any situation in which there is a victim and a perpetrator, be it verbal or physical abuse that occurs, and in situations involving children or adults:

- After identifying an incident as discriminatory, whatever its level of severity, the first priority is to comfort and support the adult or child who has been victimised.
- Make sure that anyone listening to or overhearing the incident understands that what was said or done was wrong, hurtful and unacceptable.
- Support the child or adult who has said or done something discriminatory while, at the same time, making sure they know it is wrong, hurtful and unacceptable and will not be condoned. Explain why. Take care not to undermine the child or adult's self – esteem by ensuring that the incident itself, not the child or adult, is dealt with. Try to tap into their concepts of empathy to what it feels like to experience discrimination and, where appropriate, consider raising this sort of issue in circle or story time.

Where appropriate, talk about the incident with the perpetrator and the victim.

- Follow up the incident with whatever strategy is necessary to prevent it happening again, according to the circumstances and the incident itself. Work with staff, parents / carers and children as appropriate.

Recording and Reporting

Verbal and physical abuse by adults should be reported to the head teacher who will record the incident on the appropriate Proforma, which will be kept on file and may be passed on to the LA if requested. Incidents involving children should be recorded in your day book and reported to the Headteacher

Parents / carers will be informed if their child has been involved in a discriminatory incident and will be expected to work with the centre to ensure that their child understands the issues involved and is helped to develop positive attitudes to difference.

Parents / Carers / Visitors who persist in discriminatory behaviour will be asked to leave the premises. In extreme cases the LA will support the centre in excluding perpetrators from Centre premises.

Monitoring

Review: Annually

The Head teacher will monitor any incidents that occur, supported by the Governing body.

Useful Documents

- Lane, J. (1999) *Action for Racial Equality in the Early Years* National Early Years Network
- Reiser, R. & Peasley, H. (2002) *Inclusion in Schools Course Book*. Disability Equality in Education
- EYTARN. (2001) *A policy for excellence*. Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist Network
- Reviewed and agreed by Governing Body 24th September 2015.

- CRE. (2002) *Code of Practice on the duty to Promote Race Equality* Commission for Racial Equality
- DfEE/QCA (2000) *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage*. QCA
- Brighouse, T. & Woods, D. (1999) *How to Improve your School* Routledge
- BASS (2000) *Briefing paper for schools and link advisers – The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry*.
- CRE (2000) *Learning for all. Standards for Racial Equality in Schools*. Commission for Racial equality
- Derman-Sparkes, L. (1989) *Anti-Bias Curriculum. Tools for empowering young children*. NAEYC
- Gender Equality Group (1997) *Gender Equality Guidelines* Birmingham City Council

This Policy was reviewed and adopted on behalf of the school in April 2016