EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Kingshurst Caterpillars Playgroup believes in valuing and celebrating the diversity within our community. We aim to develop good practice and positive attitudes in the early years and a recognition that all people should have equal opportunities to learn, develop and grow with an anti-discriminatory attitude to the world. This means no child, individual or family will be excluded from our playgroup on the grounds of race, gender, disability, language, religion, belief or for social or cultural reasons.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy applies to every staff member, committee member, parent, child, volunteer and visitor to the playgroup. Each person is valued as an individual with differing social, intellectual and cultural backgrounds and different needs, likes and dislikes. Similarities and differences are respected and taken account of.

The legal framework for this policy is:

- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- The Equality Act 2010

Admissions

Our playgroup is open to all members of the community. We reach out to as many children as possible by:

- advertising Kingshurst Caterpillars Playgroup in places accessible to all sections of the community;
- ensuring that information about our playgroup is accessible in written and spoken form;
- ensuring that information given is translated appropriately for those whose first language is not English;
- making our equal opportunities policy widely known;
- basing our admissions policy on a fair system;
- ensuring our playgroup offers equal access to all children and their families from the community irrespective of disability, culture, race, gender, social or religious beliefs;
- ensuring our playgroup welcomes fathers and mothers, other relations and other carers including childminders and foster carers;
- not refusing admission to playgroup to children with a disability;
- developing an action plan to ensure that those with disabilities can participate successfully in the services offered by the playgroup and in the curriculum offered;
- the playgroup offers 20 places for morning and afternoon sessions each day. Two extra places are available for exceptional circumstances and at the manager's discretion.

Families

- We welcome the diversity of family life and work amongst families.
- We recognise that many different kinds of family successfully love and care for children.
- We discuss with parents before their child starts playgroup any concerns they may have about family customs and beliefs, dietary needs, toilet routines, family names, favourite toys, likes and dislikes
- We value parents as their child's first educator and work closely to share information, experiences and conversations.
- We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life.
- We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the playgroup and to contribute fully.
- For families who have a first language other than English, we value the contribution their culture and language offer.

Staffing, Recruitment and Training

Kingshurst Caterpillars is an equal opportunities employer and has legal obligations as an employer to prevent discrimination. We will ensure that: -

- all posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
- the applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). This ensures fairness in the selection process.
- all job descriptions include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their specifications.
- our application process is monitored to ensure that it is fair and accessible.
- all staff members have attained the age of 18.
- new members of staff, including students and volunteers, receive copies of this policy which will be discussed with them during their induction and training period.
- staff are expected to behave in a professional manner, follow the policy and try to be consistent, sensitive and fair. The CIO expects them to challenge others who make racist, sexist or insensitive remarks whether intentional or inadvertent.

Curriculum

The curriculum offered in the playgroup encourages children to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from themselves. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

We do this by:

- celebrating a variety of festivals and special events each year from cultures represented within our community and outside;
- planning a curriculum that takes into account each child's individual route to learning;
- showing respect for all children and recognising, valuing and nurturing their individuality;
- offering children activities and play equipment that allow them to develop in an environment free from discrimination and prejudice;
- encouraging children to respect and value each other and discouraging them from making hurtful and unkind remarks;
- helping children towards understanding that it is wrong to judge someone because of their gender, colour, beliefs, disability or social background
- praising children when they respond positively to others;
- providing children with opportunities to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others;
- providing equal access to the full range of activities available including visits;
- giving children the opportunity to appreciate and respect cultures other than their own, for example, through music, art activities, cooking and role-play;
- ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with disabilities and other special educational needs;
- ensuring that children whose first language is not English have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning.

Resources

- We purchase, organise and monitor equipment, toys, books and resources to ensure that they reflect and provide the children with a balanced view of the world and an appreciation of the rich diversity of our multi-cultural society.
- We display positive images of differing races, cultures, religions, social groups, physical abilities and gender around the playgroup, including a welcome poster written in different languages, to help every child and family feel included and valued.

Special Needs

- We recognise the wide range of special needs of children and families in our community and will value and acknowledge their individuality, adapting activities to enable all children to take part.
- We have due regard to the SEND code of practice and our own Special Needs and Disabilities Policy.

Discriminatory Behaviour/Remarks

- We challenge and deal with inappropriate practices and attitudes promptly. We will aim to respond in a way that is sensitive to the feelings of those involved and to help those responsible to overcome and understand their prejudices.
- We record any seriously inappropriate racist or sexist comments made by children, staff, parents, volunteers, students and visitors on an incident form.

Language

- Information, written or spoken, will be clearly communicated in as many languages as necessary.
- Bilingual/multilingual children are an asset to our playgroup. They will be valued and their languages recognised and respected.
- Parents who are experiencing problems with the English language are offered support.
- Our playgroup seeks to involve the help of other agencies and makes every effort to translate information into other languages when needed.

Food

- We work in partnership with parents to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met.
- We help children to learn about a range of food and cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating and help them to respect the differences among them.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the playgroup which is the safety and well-being of the child.

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