

### **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Equal Opportunities:**

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care, including support for children with special educational needs or disabilities.



#### **11.1**

#### **VALUING DIVERSITY AND PROMOTING EQUALITY**

The Ark Centre will ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children. We recognise that our students and their families come from diverse backgrounds. All families have needs and values that arise from their social and economic, ethnic and cultural or religious backgrounds. Students grow up in diverse family structures that include two parent and one-parent families; some students have two parents of the same sex. Some students have close links with extended families of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins; while others may be removed from close kin, or may live with other relatives or foster carers. Some students have needs that arise from disability or impairment, or may have parents that are affected by disability or impairment.

Some students come from families who experience social exclusion or severe hardship; some have to face discrimination and prejudice because of their ethnicity, the languages they speak, their religious or belief background, their gender or their impairment.

We understand that these factors affect the well being of our students and this can impact on their learning and attainment. Our setting is committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children and families. We aim to:

- Provide a secure and accessible environment in which all of our children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued;
- Include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- Provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse family structures, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people;
- Improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity;
- Challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions;
- Make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the setting; and
- Foster good relations between all communities.

#### **Procedures:**

***Our ENCO is Charlotte Reynolds.***

#### **Admissions:**

Our setting is open to all members of the community.

- We advertise our service widely.
- We reflect the diversity of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We provide information in as many languages as possible.
- We base our admissions policy on a fair system.

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- We ensure that all parents are made aware of our Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality policy.
- We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our setting, on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act (2010). These are:
  - disability;
  - race;
  - gender reassignment;
  - religion or belief;
  - sex;
  - sexual orientation;
  - age;
  - pregnancy and maternity; and
  - marriage and civil partnership.
- We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our setting for reason relating to disability.
- We ensure wherever possible that we have a balanced intake of boys and girls in the setting.
- We develop an action plan to ensure that people with impairments can participate successfully in the services offered by the setting and in the curriculum offered.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff or parents whether by:
  - direct discrimination – someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic e.g. preventing families of some racial groups from using the service;
  - indirect discrimination – someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy e.g. children must only speak English in the setting;
  - association – discriminating against someone who is associated with a person with a protected characteristic, e.g. behaving unfavourably to someone who is married to a person from a different cultural background; or
  - perception – discrimination on the basis that it is thought someone has a protected characteristic e.g. making assumptions about someone's sexual orientation because of their mannerisms or how they speak.
- Displaying of openly discriminatory and possibly offensive materials, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on or around the premises and will be dealt with in the strongest manner.

### **Employment:**

- Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
- Applicants are welcome from all backgrounds and posts are open to all.
- We may use the exemption clauses in relevant legislation to enable the service to best meet the needs of the community.

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- The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service. This ensures fairness in the selection process.
- All job descriptions include a commitment to promoting equality and recognising and respecting diversity as part of their specifications.
- We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.

### Training:

- We seek out training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish.
- We ensure that staff are confident and fully trained in administering relevant medicines and performing invasive care procedures when these are required.
- We review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for valuing diversity and promoting equality.

### Curriculum:

The curriculum offered in the setting encourages students to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves. It encourages students to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

Our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and service users. If access to the settings is found to treat disabled students or adults less favourably then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults. We do this by:

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves and others;
- Ensuring that children have equality of access to learning;
- Undertaking an access audit to establish if the setting is accessible to all of our students;
- Making adjustments to the environment and resources to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical and sensory impairments;
- Making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each student receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities, e.g. recognising the different learning styles of girls and boys;
- Positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources;
- Avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual materials;
- Celebrating a wide range of festivals;
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
- Differentiating the curriculum to meet student's special educational needs;
- Helping students to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;
- Ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of students with special educational needs and students with disabilities;

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- Ensuring that students learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning; and
- Ensuring that students speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages.

### Valuing diversity in families:

- We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
- We encourage our students to contribute stories of their everyday life to the setting.
- We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the setting and to contribute fully.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion.
- We offer a flexible payment system for families of differing means and offer information regarding sources of financial support.
- We take positive action to encourage disadvantaged and under-represented groups to use the setting.
- The Ark take a keen interest in ensuring that all families with their children are fully integrated into their local community and are enabled to make a positive contribution to this (part of anti-terrorism strategies).

### Food:

- We work in partnership with parents to ensure that dietary requirements of our students that arise from their medical, religious or cultural and dietary needs are met.
- We help students to learn about a range of food, and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them.

### Meetings:

- Meetings are welcome where families wish to discuss any element regarding the running of the setting, we have a comments and suggestion box in reception area.
- We positively encourage fathers to be involved in the setting, especially those fathers who do not live with the student.
- Information about meetings is communicated in a variety of ways - written, verbal and in translation - to ensure that all parents have information about, and access to, the meetings.

### Monitoring and reviewing:

- To ensure our policies and procedures remain effective we will monitor and review them annually to ensure our strategies meets the overall aims to promote equality, inclusion and valuing diversity.
- We provide a complaints procedure and a complaints summary record for parents to see.

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Legal framework:

- The Equality Act (2010)
- Children Act (1989), (2004)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001