

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Equal opportunity for children to learn is a fundamental aspect of our services curriculum. Equality means open access for every child and family to participate in activities.

Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. We promote equal opportunities through a wide range of policies and procedures which are reflected in the practice of our early years setting.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) states:

“It is the States obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights”.

Principle

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 and the Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework.

Procedures

We provide equal opportunities by ensuring that:

- We are aware that everyone’s tastes vary and each of us has a different way of doing things. We all have different interests and ways of expressing ourselves.
- All staff have a responsibility to show clearly, through their work, that they respect all children and their families regardless of ability, culture, belief and traditions.
- Staff are non-discriminatory, and we believe in equal attention and care for all children without regard to race, gender, national origin, ancestry or special needs.

Favouritism:

National Standard 9.8 - Staff do not demonstrate favouritism towards any child. Staff should not develop favouritism or become over involved with any one child. The children in our service should be comfortable in the care of any of our staff as there may be different staff working each day with groups or individual children. Children can feel resentful or isolated if staff always favour one child and a child who is always over indulged or favoured can be led to feel that he or she can do no wrong and grow up to have a feeling of entitlement which may affect future relationships and behaviour as an adult.

Meetings:

Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd will convene meetings at a time and venue that enable the majority of parents/carers to attend and to ensure equal access to information and involvement.

Access:

Everyone in the community regardless of religious affiliation, political background, race, culture, linguistic needs, disability, sexual orientation or age, has access to the service.

The Curriculum:

- All children are to be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured.
- Activities and the use of play equipment will offer children opportunities to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination.
- Through the proactive use of planning and curriculum, development opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.
- It is important for children to experience a variety of cultures at an early age so that they realise that cultural diversity is part of everyday life.
- We ask families to share their own cultures, religions and traditions with our staff so that all values are respected and celebrated in the service.
- It is our objective to support and encourage each child in their experience and guide them to embrace their own values and the values of others. These experiences help set the child's foundations and potentially shape the people they will become.

Resources:

All materials are to positively and accurately reflect cultural and racial diversity. These materials will help children to develop their self-respect and respect other people by avoiding stereotypes. We use a range of books, images, music and songs and experiences that reflect diversity. Boys and girls are to have equal opportunity, and be actively encouraged to use all activities.

Discriminatory Behaviour/Remarks:

Any discrimination (language, behaviour or remarks) by children, parents/carers or staff/volunteers is unacceptable in the service. Discrimination will be positively challenged by supporting the victim and helping those responsible to understand and overcome their prejudices.

Festivals:

We aim to show respect for and awareness of all major events in the lives of the children and families in the service and in the wider society. Without indoctrination we aim to acknowledge festivals celebrated by all families in our local community and in the wider society through stories, activities, special food and clothing which reflect the diversity of life. We have a sensitive approach to Father's Day, Mother's Day etc. and welcome parents contributions.

Recruitment:

Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd is an equal opportunities employer. Staff are selected using a fair, non- biased and strict recruitment procedure.

Language:

For us it is important that all children and their parents feel welcome and encouraged to be involved.

To help children with little or no English we will:

- Ensure inclusion in the group and staff will talk to the child, speaking slowly and simply, demonstrating what is meant by the words.

- Support the child and parents by a staff member who will try and learn some key phrases in the child's language, e.g. 'hello' 'goodbye' 'hungry' 'thirsty' 'do you need help?'
- We encourage children to use their home language whenever they are so inclined. Dual language books are helpful to encourage the use of other languages.
- Make it easy for the child to settle into the setting, we encourage other children to talk to non English speaking children in the same way as usual.
- Parents are invited to help with key words and phrases in the child's home language.

Communication

All parents/guardians are informed of this policy on enrolment. Staff members will check with parents that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy will be included in the parent handbook. This policy will also be reviewed with staff members at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents in the Policy Folder located in the setting.

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the full policy and procedures at any time upon request. Parents/guardians and all relevant staff members will receive written notification of any updates to this policy.

This policy was adopted by **Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** on:

Date: _____

Manager

co-Manager

Review Date: _____