

## **INCLUSION POLICY**

### **Statement of Intent**

In an atmosphere of mutual respect, we provide a high quality, safe, developmentally appropriate rich and diverse environment, where we encourage children to experience, interact and explore the world around them at their own pace. We are committed to training and development of our staff to provide only the best care and education for all children in our care. We celebrate diversity and provide equal opportunities for all. Our goal is to support children's desire to be life-long learners.

**Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** recognises and respects the rights of all adults and children in our service. We value the ability, individuality and cultural background of all children by providing each child with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential as active learner within an inclusive ethos/culture. We aim to actively promote equality of access and participation and eliminate discrimination on grounds of, gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Travelling Community. This policy represents the agreed principles and commitment for inclusion, in line with Early Childhood Care and Education National Inclusion Charter.

### **Principle**

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2011, the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2012, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 29 & 30), the Disability Act 2005 and the Special Needs Legislation – EPSEN Act 2004.

### **Ethos of the service**

We actively promote inclusive practice in order to best meet the needs of the children, families and staff of our setting. All children are welcome to attend regardless of ability, need, background, culture, religion, gender or economic circumstances. Through inclusive practice, we aim to reflect our wider community and promote positive attitudes to both the similarities and differences in each other. In order to achieve this, we actively engage with children, parents and other organisations as appropriate. We are committed to working in partnership with parents to support children's ability, identity, cultural background and sense of belonging.

- We will support families in their parenting role and respecting their values and beliefs about childrearing.
- We will support children to become respectful of difference and foster each child's critical thinking in order to confront bias and discrimination.
- We will implement a curriculum that meets the individual needs and emerging interests of the child under Solta, The National Quality Framework (2006) and Aistear: The National Curriculum Framework (2009) and respond to children's diverse and individual learning needs and styles through an emerging curriculum.
- We will respond appropriately and sensitively to any additional needs a child may experience. Additional needs may include:
  - Any change introduced into the child's life, such as a new sibling, moving house, absent parent/s, or a situation that may call for a long-term care plan, such as asthma, allergies, disability, development delay and medical conditions.
- We will support continual development for all early childhood practitioners so as to ensure they are trained in an equality and diversity approach to providing care and education to all.

- We will ensure fair and equal opportunities for all potential and existing employees in line with our Recruitment Policy.

### **Policy Statement**

This policy represents the agreed principles and commitments for inclusion, in line with the Early Childhood Care and Education National Inclusion Charter. **Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** will implement this policy to support and develop an inclusive environment for children and adults within our early years setting.

### **Inclusion refers to:**

A process involving a programme, curriculum or education environment where each child is welcomed and included on equal terms, can feel they belong, and can progress to his/her full potential in all areas of development (National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010).

### **Role of the inclusion co-ordinator**

The inclusion co-ordinator within our service is **Ann-Marie Healy**.

### **Procedure**

- All children attending **Over the Rainbow Early Learning Centre Ltd** are supported to:
  - Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
  - Know they belong and are valued as unique individuals
  - Feel strong and confident about their identity
  - Know their cultural backgrounds are respected and valued
  - Learn in groups that allow them all to experience success
  - Engage with materials and experiences that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, gender and ability (visitors, books, music, musical instrument, cooking activities, craft, clothing, multicultural dolls, multicultural jigsaws, games, play equipment, posters and other props).
  - Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
  - Participate fully, having particular regard for and being cognisant of children with a variety of abilities/differences.
  - Respect the purpose for which other children's aids or assistive technology are intended.
- Families attending the centre are supported to:
  - Consult with the service about the care of their child to minimise conflict between the service's philosophy and family values.
  - Be involved in policy and procedure development to ensure cultural sensitivities are included.
  - Access information about the service and the policies and procedures by translating information into their home language if necessary.
  - Participate in the service's programme and to introduce their culture's food, art, music, language, celebrations and dress to the other children in the service.

### **Early years practitioners will promote equality, diversity and inclusion.**

They will:

- Remove assumptions, judgements and expectations about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all families and the team.
- Regard all individuals equally, showing sensitivity and providing equal opportunities for all children of all background.

- Actively intervene in situations when bias is shown and encourage children to challenge bias
- Demonstrate positive attitudes when making changes to accommodate all children.
- Work as a team with parents and other professionals to develop, carry out and review plans for children with additional support needs.
- Adhere to the National Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter.
- All families and children will be encouraged to participate and access learning experiences through the curriculum on offer.

### **Dealing with Discriminatory Incidents:**

- The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
- All children will be informed that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- When an incident occurs (hurtful remark made by one child to another) both children learn from the incident. The response to the incident will reference the rules of Conflict resolution as set out in the Behaviour Management Policy.
- Staff will endeavour to determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so staff will be careful not to make assumptions.
- Some issues may be brought into the early childhood service by the child, arising from comments made by adults outside the service. Staff will recognise when it is an adult issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child's parents or guardians.
- An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussions, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. **This does not mean singling children out in the group.**
- By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings.
- It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. All staff will be mindful that early childhood practitioners are role models for the children and our service. Children will do as we do.

The Inclusion Co-ordinator within our service is **Ann-Marie Healy**.

More information on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion is included in the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2016).

### **Actions to be followed if the policy is not implemented**

If you as a staff member or parent feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow our complaints policy and procedure to make a complaint.

### **Employment of staff**

This inclusion policy forms an important aspect of the recruitment of staff within the service. Applicants will not be excluded from being considered for a position based specifically on their need, background, culture, religion, gender or economic circumstances. (as pertaining to the Equality Act 2004). Positions will be offered based on competency, qualification and enthusiasm for the position.

- Upon commencement of employment, staff will be given a period of induction to the service. All staff will be made aware of inclusive practice within our service and its importance.
- When possible, staff will attend training pertaining to inclusion, for example, behaviour management, equality and diversity, language development or special needs.

### **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: \_\_\_\_\_