

Inclusion & Equality Policy Childcare

Policy Owner: Director of Communities/SLT	Policy Developer: Head of Family & Children’s Services/AA
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The current version of any policy, procedure or guideline is the version held in the Knowledge Library on Workplace. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they are following the current version.

EYFS:1.1 – 1.17, 2.4,
2.5, 2.6, 3.1 - 3.68, 3.80.

Inclusion is a process of identifying, understanding, and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging. Inclusive early years practice is about anticipating, paying attention, responding to, and reflecting on the needs and interests of all children. A commitment to inclusion should permeate all aspects of the design of educational programmes and the structuring of environments, as well as shaping every interaction with children, parents, and other professionals (Birth to 5 Matters, 2021).

Statement of intent

As an association we take great care to treat everyone as a person, with equal rights and responsibilities to any other individual, whether they are an adult or a child. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families according to their individual needs. Discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, ethnic or national origin, or political belief has no place within our settings.

A commitment to implementing our inclusion and equality policy will form part of each employee's job description. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the Head of Family and Children's Services or a senior manager at the earliest opportunity. Appropriate steps will then be taken to investigate the matter and if such concerns are well-founded, disciplinary action will be invoked under the YMCA Thames Gateway disciplinary policy.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- Special Education Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2015
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Childcare Act 2006
- Children Act 2004
- Care Standards Act 2002
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

At YMCA Thames Gateway Group we are committed to:

- Recruiting, selecting, training and promoting individuals on the basis of occupational skills requirements. In this respect, we will ensure that no job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment because of age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or maternity/paternity
- Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- Providing a childcare place, wherever possible, for children who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or are deemed disadvantaged according to their individual circumstances, and the individual settings ability to provide the necessary standard of care
- Making reasonable adjustments for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Striving to promote equal access to services and projects by taking practical steps (wherever possible and reasonable), such as ensuring access to people with additional needs and by producing materials in relevant languages and media for all children and their families where required
- Providing a secure environment in which all our families are listened to, children Belong, Contribute and Thrive and all contributions are valued
- Including and valuing the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality, inclusion and diversity
- Providing positive non-stereotypical information
- Continually improving our knowledge and understanding of issues of equality, inclusion, and diversity and training all staff about their rights and responsibilities under the inclusion and equality policy.
- Regularly reviewing, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices to ensure they promote and value diversity and difference and that the policy is effective, and practices are non-discriminatory
- Making inclusion a thread which runs through the entirety of all of our settings, for example, by encouraging positive role models through the use of toys, imaginary play and activities, promoting non-stereotypical images and language and challenging all discriminatory behaviour (see dealing with discriminatory behaviour policy).

- At this time our family support inclusion coordinator working with all children and their families in particular those who maybe struggling a little or falling behind in some areas of their development. Children with emerging needs will receive additional support in line with their needs. All parents and children are included in workshops and creative play where we are committed to champion and promote positive images in a non-discriminatory way.
- Promoting British Values throughout all of our settings and the services we provide.

Admissions/service provision

All our settings are accessible to all children and families in the local community and further afield through a comprehensive and inclusive admissions policy.

All settings strive to ensure that all services and projects are accessible and relevant to all groups and individuals in the community within targeted age groups.

Recruitment

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting is done by more than one person where possible.

All members of the selection group will be committed to the inclusive practice set out in this policy and will have received appropriate training in this regard including safer recruitment training.

Application forms will be sent out along with a copy of the equal opportunities monitoring form. Application forms will not include questions that potentially discriminate on the grounds specified in the statement of intent.

Vacancies will generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

At interview, no questions will be posed which potentially discriminate on the grounds specified in the statement of intent. All candidates will be asked the same questions and members of the selection group will not introduce nor use any personal knowledge of candidates acquired outside the selection process. Candidates will be given the opportunity to receive feedback on the reasons why they were not successful.

Under the Equality Act 2010 we only ask questions prior to offering someone employment in the following circumstances:

- You need to establish whether the applicant will be able to comply with a requirement to undergo an assessment (i.e. an interview or selection test)
- You need to establish whether the applicant will be able to carry out a function that is intrinsic to the work concerned
- You want to monitor diversity in the range of people applying for work
- You want to take positive action towards a particular group – for example offering a guaranteed interview scheme
- You require someone with a particular disability because of an occupational requirement for the job.

The national College for Teaching and Leadership provides further guidance specific to working with children:

Providers have a responsibility to ensure that practitioners have the health and physical capacity to teach and will not put children and young people at risk of harm. The activities that a practitioner must be able to perform are set out in the Education (Health Standards England) Regulations 2003. Providers are responsible for ensuring that only practitioners who have the capacity to teach remain on the staff team.

People with disabilities or chronic illnesses may have the capacity to teach, just as those without disabilities or medical conditions may be unsuitable to teach. Further information on training to teach with a disability is available from the DfE website.

Successful applicants offered a position may be asked to complete a fitness questionnaire prior to commencing the programme. Providers should not ask all-encompassing health questions, but should ensure that they only ask targeted and relevant health-related questions, which are necessary to ensure that a person is able to teach.

Staff

It is the policy of YMCA Thames Gateway not to discriminate in the treatment of individuals. All staff are expected to co-operate with the implementation, monitoring and improvement of this and other policies. All staff is expected to challenge language, actions, behaviours and attitudes which are oppressive or discriminatory on the grounds specified in this policy and recognise and celebrate other cultures and traditions. All staff are expected to participate in equality and inclusion training.

Training

At YMCA Thames Gateway we recognise the importance of training as a key factor in the implementation of an effective inclusion and equality policy. All new staff receives induction training including specific reference to the inclusion and equality policy. We will strive towards the provision of inclusion, equality and diversity training for all staff on a bi-annual basis.

Early learning framework

Early learning opportunities offered within our settings encourage children to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from them. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking.

We do this by:

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves
- Ensuring that all children have equal access to early learning and play opportunities
- Reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources
- Avoiding stereotypical or derogatory images in the selection of materials
- Acknowledging and celebrating a wide range of religions, beliefs and festivals
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and empathy
- Helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable
- Ensuring that all early learning opportunities offered are inclusive of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Ensuring that children whose first language is not English have full access to early learning opportunities and are supported in their learning

- Working in partnership with all families to ensure they understand the policy and challenge any discriminatory comments made
- Ensuring the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met
- Identifying a key person to each child who will continuously observe, assess and plan for children’s learning and development
- Helping children to learn about a range of food and cultural approaches to meal times and to respect the differences among them.

Information and meetings

Information about the settings, the activities and children’s development will be given in a variety of ways according to individual needs (written, verbal and translated), to ensure that all parents can access the information they need.

Wherever possible, meetings will be arranged to give all families options to attend and contribute their ideas about the running of our settings.

This policy was adopted by	YMCA Thames Gateway Group
On	14/01/2023
Signed on behalf of the provider	
Name of signatory	Amanda Allen
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Head of Family and Children’s Services

Policy review date	13/01/2024 – on or before
Name of reviewer	
Signature of reviewer	
Role of reviewer	