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**Equal Opportunities Policy**

Our Nursery, through its policies and practices, recognises and strives to meet the needs of all our children. We aim to deliver a curriculum that gives all children the chance to realise their full potential and help prepare them for life in our multi-cultural society.

**Code of Conduct statement for all staff**

At Highters Heath Nursery all adults in our community of learning adhere to the following statements:

**Democracy:** Everyone has a voice and a say in what we do and how we do it

**Mutual Respect:** We admire and acknowledge everyone’s abilities, qualities and achievements

**Liberty:** We have the freedom to make our own choices

**Tolerance:** We accept that everyone has a right to their own views and opinions

**Rule of Law:** We have community rules and practices which keeps our learning community safe and a code of conduct for all adults working within our service.

**Statement**

*“An equal society offers equal chances and equal treatment to all its members. It works towards removing any barriers that discriminate against people or hold back equality.”*

(Lane, J. (1999) “Action for Racial Equality in the Early years.” The National Early Years Network)

The nursery is committed to providing inclusive Nursery education. We value diversity and seek to support each child and adult in the Nursery community to reach their full potential.

*“Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs. Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of learning.*

*Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.”*

(Taken from the Salamanca Statement, quoted in Disability Equality in Education, Feb. 2002)

**Principles**

 Equal opportunities are an important part of raising aspirations, self-esteem and educational standards;

 Everyone has the right to receive information, views and guidance in order to effectively make important decisions for themselves;

 Racism, sexism and other discriminatory practices are demeaning for all and must be challenged;

 The richness of cultural diversity must be recognised and celebrated.

 Differences between people should not be linked with ideas of superiority or inferiority;

 While there are real differences between people, no child or adult should be made to feel unhappy because they are ‘different’;

 No child or adult should be treated less equally than others because of these differences;

 Everyone is entitled to access a range of high quality educational opportunities and career choices;

 All children should be enabled to grow up with positive attitudes to those who are different from them as well as those who are similar to them;

 Inclusive education will benefit everyone by increasing our understanding and appreciation of each other’s lives.

**Aims**

 To treat every member of the Nursery community as an individual, and to respect her/his strengths and talents;

 To ensure equal access to the Early Years curriculum;

 To value cultural diversity;

 To offer positive images and role models;

 To enable every child and adult in the nursery community to develop to her / his full potential;

 To provide an inclusive educational environment in which every child, adult and young person can succeed;

 To provide a rich, accurate, non-stereotypic “data-base” about gender roles, racial characteristics, language and physical abilities;

 To provide children with accurate, developmentally appropriate information about gender, race, culture and physical ability;

 To help children become aware of our shared physical characteristics - what makes us all human beings;

 To help every member of our community ‘challenge’ uncomfortable and inappropriate responses to differences into respectful, comfortable interaction;

 To foster children’s developing concept of fairness and feelings of empathy for each other;

 To foster critical thinking about stereotyping;

 To enable all concerned to gain the tools and self-confidence to stand up for themselves and others against biased ideas and discriminating behaviour.

**Objectives - for children**

**Race**

 To enable children to feel pride, but not superiority about their racial identity;

 To affirm and foster children’s knowledge and pride in their cultural identity;

 To foster children’s curiosity, enjoyment and empathic awareness of cultural differences and similarities;

 To teach children to overcome any inappropriate responses triggered by cultural differences.

**Gender**

 To free children from constraining definitions of gender role so that no aspects of development will be closed off simply because of a child’s sex;

 To foster children’s healthy gender identity by enabling them to gain clarity about the relationship between biological identity and gender roles;

 To promote equality of development for both sexes by fostering each child’s participation in activities necessary for physical, cognitive and social growth;

 To develop children’s skills for challenging sexist stereotypes and behaviours.

**Disability**

 To enable children with disabilities to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride;

 To provide all children with accurate, developmentally appropriate information about their own and others disabilities and to foster understanding that a person with a disability is different in one respect but similar in many others;

 To enable all children to develop the ability to interact knowledgeably, comfortably and fairly with people having various disabilities;

 To teach children with disabilities how to handle and challenge name-calling, stereotypic attitudes and physical barriers;

 To teach able-bodied children how to resist and challenge stereotyping, name-calling and physical barriers directed against people with disabilities.

**Objectives - for adults**

 To increase awareness of personal attitudes about gender, race, ethnicity, and different physical abilities;

 To gain an understanding of how young children develop identity and attitudes;

 To learn to identify ways that institutional racism, sexism and attitudes to disability affect our community;

 To plan ways to introduce anti-bias curriculum into our setting;

 To establish genuine parent / carer / practitioner dialogue that opens up a discussion of each other’s point of view and seeks to gain clarity understanding and solutions agreeable to both practitioner and parent / carer;

 To provide information that facilitates parent / carer awareness of how young children develop racial/ethnic and gender identity and the ways in which sexism, racism and handicappism negatively affect healthy socio-emotional and cognitive growth;

 To create safe settings for parents / carers to discuss with each other the issues raised by anti-bias work and to increase their ability to integrate anti-bias perspectives in their child rearing;

 To facilitate the development of children through joint parent / carer / practitioner problem solving and mutual support;

 To involve parents / carers in curriculum development implementation and evaluation.

**Responsibilities**

It is every adult’s responsibility to ensure that their own attitudes and behaviour are free from discriminatory practices.

Children will be taught strategies for challenging discriminatory behaviour and will be supported by the adults in the Nursery to use these strategies. **(See Behaviour management policy for a description of these strategies.)**

Staff will include anti-bias objectives in planned activities, and will make use of opportunities to discuss biased actions and attitudes with the children, particularly through the use of puppets at story/circle time.

All persons witnessing discrimination of any sort should report it to the Head of Nursery who will record it on the appropriate Proforma. These will be kept on file and appropriate information transferred to the LA on request.

**The Curriculum**

The curriculum in all areas of learning will include planned activities that introduce ideas of difference and similarity and provide opportunities for children to discuss differences in gender, race and ability in a non-judgemental manner. We will use an anti-bias approach to teach children to interact comfortably with differences, appreciate all people’s similarities, and to recognise and confront ideas and behaviours that are biased.

**Environment and resources**

*“An environment that is rich in possibilities for exploring gender, race/ethnicity and different-abilities sets the scene for practising anti-bias curriculum. The material and people resources in the classroom provide children with important data. What is in the environment also alerts children to what the teacher considers important or not important. Children are as vulnerable to omissions as they are to inaccuracies and stereotypes: what isn’t seen can be as powerful as what is seen.”*

(Derman-Sparkes, L. (1989) Anti Bias Curriculum. NAEYC.USA)

In order to provide children with positive images of diversity we will seek to purchase resources that depict all sorts of people in a wide range of contexts, and to eliminate resources that depict stereotypes or inaccuracies. We recognise that this will take time and will identify funding annually in the School Development Plan to be used for the purchase of suitable resources for each area of learning. Where it is not possible to purchase suitable resources we will adapt existing materials or create our own.

**Teaching and Learning Strategies**

Practitioners need to:

 Ensure that all children are enabled to access the full range of learning opportunities, both inside and outdoors;

 Work with children in a range of groupings, making sure that children have opportunities to work with others of different gender, race and ability;

 Plan directed and non-directed activities including adapted or differentiated activities for children with differing needs, and which promote each child’s strengths, background and self-esteem.

 Respond to individual needs by:

 varying the pace and length of session

using signs, symbols and augmentative communication

 considering children’s emotional well being

 being aware of each child’s cultural heritage.

 Introduce the vocabulary for discussing difference and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust to facilitate such discussions;

 Support children to express their needs and opinions within the group;

 Challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviour and support the children to challenge discrimination for them;

 Teach children strategies for dealing with conflict and solving problems;

 Promote interactions between children of different gender, race and ability;

 Use positive praise with all children for their strengths and achievements;

 Act as positive role models through what they do and say;

 Monitor access to each area of learning and intervene to ensure that all children have opportunity to use all equipment.

**Harassment**

We recognise that all forms of discrimination and harassment are harmful. We also recognise that discrimination may be unintentional or thoughtless rather that deliberate. We do not, however, believe that this is a reason to ignore such behaviour or ‘let it go’. Therefore we will deliberately seek to create an atmosphere of mutual trust wherein adults are empowered to challenge and support on another to develop truly inclusive attitudes.

Many discriminatory comments are accidentally overheard. People who overhear such things have to judge how best to deal with the incident, and whether to leave it until later or to respond to it immediately. We encourage adults in the Nursery to consider using one of the following statements in response to a discriminatory comment or action:

 I’m sorry you think that;

 I don’t agree with you;

 What makes you think that?

 What makes you say that?

 That’s not my experience;

 Please do not include me in that.

Countering discriminatory attitudes (where there are clear notions of superiority) from young children is very different from dealing with the discriminatory attitudes of adults.

We know that children have not yet had the opportunity to consider other information and points of view, so we address the situation particularly sensitively. The aim, after supporting the victimised child is to address the situation in a way that will enable the child to listen, understand, consider and change their behaviour.

Children can learn to take responsibility to tell adults when they witness any form of unkindness, racial abuse or name-calling. Staff should encourage this through the use of persona dolls and puppets in story and circle time sessions in the Nursery.

These sessions can then be referred back to when an incident occurs.

The following procedures should be used to deal with any situation in which there is a victim and a perpetrator, be it verbal or physical abuse that occurs, and in situations involving children or adults:

 After identifying an incident as discriminatory, whatever its level of severity, the first priority is to comfort and support the adult or child who has been victimised.

 Make sure that anyone listening to or overhearing the incident understands that what was said or done was wrong, hurtful and unacceptable.

 Support the child or adult who has said or done something discriminatory while, at the same time, making sure they know it is wrong, hurtful and unacceptable and will not be condoned. Explain why. Take care not to undermine the child or adult’s self –esteem by ensuring that the incident itself, not the child or adult, is dealt with. Try to tap into their concepts of empathy to what it feels like to experience discrimination and, where appropriate, consider raising this sort of issue in circle or story time.

 Where appropriate, talk about the incident with the perpetrator and the victim.

 Follow up the incident with whatever strategy is necessary to prevent it happening again, according to the circumstances and the incident itself. Work with staff, parents / carers and children as appropriate.

**Recording and Reporting**

Verbal and physical abuse by adults should be reported to the head teacher who will record the incident on the appropriate Proforma, which will be kept on file and may be passed on to the LA if requested. Incidents involving children should be recorded in your day book and reported to the Head of Nursery.

Parents / carers will be informed if their child has been involved in a discriminatory incident and will be expected to work with the nursery to ensure that their child understands the issues involved and is helped to develop positive attitudes to difference.

Parents / Carers / Visitors who persist in discriminatory behaviour will be asked to leave the premises. In extreme cases the LA will support the nursery in excluding perpetrators from Nursery premises.

**Monitoring**

Review: Annually

The Head of Nursery will monitor any incidents that occur, supported by the school adviser, in lieu of a Governing body.

**Useful Documents**

 Lane, J. (1999) *Action for Racial Equality in the Early Years* National Early Years Network

 Reiser, R. & Peasley, H.(2002) *Inclusion in Schools Course Book*. Disability Equality in Education

 EYTARN. (2001) *A policy for excellence.* Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist Network

Reviewed and agreed by Governing Body 29th September 2016.

 CRE. (2002) *Code of Practice on the duty to Promote Race Equality* Commission for Racial Equality

 DfEE/QCA (2000) *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage.* QCA

 Brighouse,T. & Woods,D. (1999) *How to Improve your School* Routledge

 BASS (2000) *Briefing paper for schools and link advisers – The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry.*

 CRE (2000) *Learning for all. Standards for Racial Equality in Schools.* Commission for Racial equality

 Derman-Sparkes, L. (1989) *Anti-Bias Curriculum. Tools for empowering young children.* NAEYC

 Gender Equality Group (1997) *Gender Equality Guidelines* Birmingham City Council

***Equal Opportunities Policy Ratified by Governing Body on Reviewed and Ratified by Governing Body on Thursday 6th April 2017***

***Signed by Chair of Governors – Phil Styles Dated 6/04/2017***