

SHIRLEY CHILDREN'S CENTRE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

This policy links to the following:

- Special educational needs
- Volunteering
- Partnership with parents and the local community
- Confidentiality policy and guidelines
- Publicity and marketing

Document Control

Amendment History

Version/Issue Number	Date	Author	Remarks/Reason for change	Review Date
1	October 2014	Eyullahemaye Henry-Miller	To be ratified by the governing body	October 2015
2	October 2015	Eyullahemaye Henry-Miller	Revised	October 2016
3	October 2016	Eyullahemaye Henry-Miller	Revised	October 2017
4	October 2018	Nicky Cook & Katie Coomber	Reviewed	October 2019

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Statement of Intent

Shirley Children's Centre is committed to providing equality of opportunity and observing a high level of anti-discriminatory practice towards all children, families and parents/carers.

Aim

Shirley Children's Centre will:

- Provide a secure environment in which all children and families can flourish
- Include and value the contributions of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity
- Provide positive non-stereotyping information about different ethnic groups, religious groups, family groups, age groups, gender roles and disabled people
- Help all children feel positive about diversity by ensuring that people from all these groups are represented in the resources we use
- Share its knowledge and understanding of issues of equality and diversity
- Make inclusion a consistent theme which runs through all the activities of the centre
- Take positive action to remove, and/or counter, discrimination in all aspects of our work with children and families

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, families and visitors using the centre.

'Staff' includes both those employed by the Croydon Council as well as those from other agencies (e.g. the Health Service, Connexions and Job Centre Plus) who provide services for the centre, as part of the multi-agency framework delivering the Every Child Matters change for children agenda.

This also applies to staff from the statutory and non-statutory sector; the latter includes private, voluntary and independent groups.

Legal context

This policy is in line with:

- Equality Act 2010 (and the consequent Public Sector Equality Duty 2011)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- SEND Regulations 2014
- The Children Acts 1989 & 2004, Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Early Years Foundation Stage Principles 2011: **A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development**
- Best Start Children's Centre Practice Guidance 2013
- Every Child Matters: change for children 2004. Outcomes: **Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution**
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Statutory Guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 & 2018
- The Duty to Promote Community Cohesion 2011

The general equality duty, placed on all public bodies by the 2010 Equality Act, requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation** and any other conduct prohibited by the 2010 Equality Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The following 'protected characteristics' are covered by the duty:

- age (for adults only)
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (just with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex (gender)
- sexual orientation

Mandatory systems and procedures

Code of conduct

Relationships in the centre

- People will be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, culture gender, sexual orientation, disability and/or age
- People's feelings will be respected at all times
- Language or humour that people may find offensive will not be used and where concerns are raised about use of language they will be welcomed and discussed openly
- Nobody will be harassed, abused or intimidated on grounds of age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation and/or disability; any such incidents will be dealt with as appropriate

Admissions

The centre is open to all members of the community, and:

- Advertises the services widely
- Reflects the diversity among members of society in the centre's publicity and promotional materials
- Provides information in clear, concise, language, whether in a spoken or written form
- Provides information in as many languages as possible, or in alternative formats such as large print or Braille, when needed
- Will not discriminate against any family with a disability, or refuse a family entry to the centre because of disability
- Ensures that all families are made aware of the centre's Equality and Diversity policy

Employment

- Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria
- The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, after taking up references and completing checks made by the Disclosure Bureau Services (DBS) and List 99. This ensures fairness in the selection process. All job descriptions/person specifications include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their requirements
- Croydon Council monitors the application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible to all

Training

- The centre seeks training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop practices which enable all families to flourish
- The centre ensures that all staff have had equalities and diversity training at an appropriate level
- The centre regularly reviews its practice to ensure that it is fully implementing its policy for optimum equality and diversity

Family support services

The services offered in the centre encourage families to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from them. It encourages families to empathise with others and to develop the skills of critical thinking. It actively promotes community cohesion.

Concern and complaints

- All concerns and complaints made by families or staff related to equal opportunities will be fully investigated and feedback will be given following investigation
- A record will be kept of all alleged racial incidents, and reports will be made to Croydon Council

All staff members are responsible for:

- Making families feel valued and good about themselves
- Ensuring that families have equality of access to learning opportunities
- Reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of play and publicity resources
- Avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of publicity materials
- Celebrating a wide range of festivals
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance
- Helping families to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable
- Ensuring that the services offered are inclusive of families with special /additional needs and disabilities
- Ensuring that all families whose first language is not English, have full access to the services and are supported in accessing them

Valuing diversity in families and staff

All staff will:

- Welcome the diversity of family life with all families
- Encourage children and parents/carers to take part in the life of the centre and to contribute fully
- Value all contribution of families for whom English is not a first language, in terms of their culture, religion, diet and language

Food

- The centre's staff will help families to learn about a diverse range of food items, cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and respect the differences among them

Meetings

- These will be arranged to ensure that all families who wish to, may be involved in the running of the centre i.e. the parents' forums, management committee

Staff and volunteers

- We will value diversity within our workforce and volunteers
- We will take account of the specific strengths and needs of staff and volunteers when planning our work

How are we going to make sure that this happens?

Implementation, methods

This policy will be made available in the Children's Centre, and anywhere else where the centre regularly provides services on an outreach basis

- This policy will be made available to all those who provide services in the Children's Centre
- Staff, volunteers and the management committee will share responsibility for implementing this policy
- All publicity, marketing, and any other literature will reflect this policy
- In order to fulfil our duty to promote equality, we will review regularly the impact of our policies and practices on people from different groups and assess the likely impact of new policies before they are introduced, in order to minimise negative equality impact and maximise opportunities to promote equality (assessment of such impact is the responsibility of centre managers)
- If necessary we will maintain and implement an equalities action plan or equalities section of our overall development plan, which will include specific and measurable objectives to address equality issues and improve our services

In conjunction with the lead provider

This will be monitored on an annual basis.

How will we check this?

Monitoring and reviewing

- It is the responsibility of the Children's Centre Manager to monitor and review the effectiveness of all policies relating to the centre
- The Children's Centre Manager will review and update this policy in accordance with the document history review date
- The Children's Centre Manager will update and amend this policy and its procedures in line with any emerging and relevant government legislation or Croydon Council guidance

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping staff, volunteers, families and the management committee informed/trained and up-to-date with procedures, the centre can avoid the need for complaints.

However, the Children's Centre Manager is the first point of contact should any queries arise over this policy and its related procedures.

Policy endorsement

This policy is agreed and signed by the governing body of Forest Academy School