

Inclusion & Equality Policy

Statement of intent

At Play Days we take great care to treat each individual as a person in their own right, 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 age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, ethnic or national origin, or political belief has no place within our nursery.

We understand inclusion in its widest sense. As well as those who share a protected characteristic, this includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), children who are disadvantaged, and children who are looked after or who are known (or previously known) to children's social care — and any child who, for whatever reason, may need additional support to thrive. We are committed not only to preventing discrimination, but to actively advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between all groups, in keeping with our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

A commitment to implementing this policy forms 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 nursery manager at the earliest opportunity. Appropriate steps will then be taken to investigate, and if such concerns are well-founded, disciplinary action will be invoked under the nursery's disciplinary policy.

Legal framework

This policy has regard to:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014, and the SEND Code of Practice (0–25 years)
- The current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, and Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Childcare Act 2006, Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2002

Note: SEND reform is expected in autumn 2026; we will review this policy in light of any changes.

Our commitments

The nursery and staff are committed to:

- Recruiting, selecting, training and promoting individuals on the basis of occupational skills, so that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on any of the grounds above that cannot be justified as necessary for the safe and effective performance of their work.
- Providing a childcare place, wherever possible, for children who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or who are deemed disadvantaged, according to their individual circumstances and our ability to provide the necessary standard of care.
- Making reasonable adjustments for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Identifying and meeting the needs of looked-after children through tailored, high-quality support, and having regard to their personal education plans (PEPs) where these are in place.
- Promoting equal access to services by taking practical steps — such as ensuring physical access, and producing materials in relevant languages and media for children and their families.

- Providing a secure environment in which all children can flourish and all contributions are valued, and including and valuing the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality, inclusion and diversity.
- Providing positive, non-stereotypical information, and continually improving our knowledge and understanding of equality, inclusion and diversity.
- Regularly reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of our inclusive practice on the children who benefit from it — so that our practice is evidenced by outcomes, not intentions alone — and ensuring practices are non-discriminatory.
- Making inclusion a thread that runs through the entirety of the nursery — through positive role models, toys, imaginary play and activities, non-stereotypical images and language, and by challenging all discriminatory behaviour (see our Dealing with Discriminatory Behaviour policy).

Leadership for inclusion

Responsibility for inclusion is held at leadership level. Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) / inclusion lead is [name / role], who oversees inclusive practice, support for children with SEND and additional needs, and liaison with families and external professionals. All leaders champion inclusion, and inspectors, professionals and families can expect to engage with a named leader on these matters.

Admissions and service provision

The nursery is accessible to all children and families in the local community and further afield, through a comprehensive and inclusive admissions policy. We strive to ensure that all services and projects are accessible and relevant to all groups and individuals within our targeted age groups.

Recruitment

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises (such as redundancy selection) are conducted on merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting is done by more than one person wherever possible, and all members of the selection group are committed to inclusive practice and appropriately trained.

Application forms are issued with an equal-opportunities monitoring form and avoid questions that could discriminate on the grounds in our statement of intent. At interview, all candidates are asked the same questions; no discriminatory questions are posed; and selectors do not rely on personal knowledge acquired outside the process. Unsuccessful candidates may request feedback. In line with the Equality Act 2010, health-related questions are not asked before an offer of work, save for targeted and relevant questions necessary to ensure a person has the health and physical capacity to fulfil the role and keep children safe.

Staff

It is our policy 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, and to challenge language, actions, behaviours and attitudes that are oppressive or discriminatory on any of the grounds in this policy, while recognising and celebrating other cultures and traditions. All staff participate in equality and inclusion training and follow the 'Dealing with Discriminatory Behaviour' policy to report any discriminatory behaviour observed.

Training

The nursery recognises training as key to an effective inclusion and equality policy. All new staff receive induction training with specific reference to this policy. We provide inclusion, equality and diversity training for all staff on at least an annual basis, and revisit it whenever guidance changes.

Early learning framework

Early learning opportunities in the nursery encourage children to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from them, to empathise with others, and to begin to develop critical thinking. We do this by:

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves, and ensuring all children have equal access to early learning and play.
- Reflecting the widest possible range of communities in our resources, and avoiding stereotypical or derogatory images.
- Acknowledging and celebrating a wide range of religions, beliefs and festivals, and creating an environment of mutual respect and empathy.
- Helping children understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable.
- Ensuring early learning is inclusive of children with SEND, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and children who are looked after or known to children's social care.
- Ensuring children whose first language is not English have full access to early learning and are supported in their learning.
- Working in partnership with all families so they understand the policy and challenge any discriminatory comments made.
- Ensuring the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met, and identifying a key person for each child who observes, assesses and plans for their learning and development.
- Helping children learn about a range of foods and cultural approaches to mealtimes, and to respect the differences among them.

Information and meetings

Information about the nursery, its activities and children's development is given in a variety of ways according to individual needs (written, verbal and translated), so that all parents can access what they need. Wherever possible, meetings are arranged to give all families options to attend and contribute their ideas about the running of the nursery.

Version control

Supersedes	Inclusion and Equality policy (May 2025)
Updated	July 2026 — inclusion 'in its widest sense', looked-after children & PEPs, named inclusion lead, evidenced impact, active Equality Act duty, refreshed legal framework, terminology
Owner	Imelda (Mel) Rylatt, Director
Next review	July 2027, or sooner if guidance changes (including the expected autumn 2026 SEND reform)

Please insert the name of your SENCo / inclusion lead where marked, and check the legal-framework references against current guidance before adopting. This reflects our own commitments and is not legal advice.