

# Equal Opportunities Policy



## Policy Statement

At Freshlings we value and respect all racial origins, religions, cultures, and languages. The respect covers all aspects of the nursery including children, parents, and employees. We are committed to ensuring that our service is fully inclusive, and each person is valued as an individual, without racial or gender stereotyping.

We recognise that children and their families come from a wide range of backgrounds with individual needs and values. They may grow up in family structures that include one or two parents of the same or different sex. Children may have close links or live with extended family while other children may live with other relatives or foster carers. Some children come from families who experience social exclusion, hardship, discrimination and prejudice because of their ethnicity, disability and/or ability, the languages they speak, their religious or personal beliefs, their gender, sexual orientation, and marital status. We understand that all these factors can affect the well-being of children within these families and may adversely impact on children's learning, attainment, and life outcomes.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and value diversity for all children and families using our setting. We will actively include all families and value the positive contribution they make.

The Management of Freshlings is responsible for implementing this policy and has a zero tolerance to any discrimination brought to their attention from staff, parents, and children. Any inappropriate attitudes or practices will be challenged by the senior management team. Failure to comply may lead to the adult being excluded from the premises. This includes the following characteristics as defined by the Equality Act (2010);

- |                 |                          |                      |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| *Age            | *Gender                  | *Gender Reassignment |
| *Marital Status | *Pregnancy and Maternity | *Race                |
| *Disability     | *Sexual Orientation      | *Religion or Belief  |

We will take action against any discriminatory, harassing or victimising behaviour by our staff, volunteers or parents whether by:

- \* **Direct discrimination** – someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic
- \* **Indirect discrimination** – someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy
- \* **Discrimination arising from a disability** – someone is treated less favourably because of something connected with their disability
- \* **Association** – discriminating against someone who is associated with a person with a protected characteristic
- \* **Perception** – discrimination on the basis that it is thought someone has a protected characteristic

It is mandatory that all staff do not express any views or comments that are discriminatory; or appear to endorse such views by failing to counter behaviour, which is prejudicial in a direct manner. We expect all staff to use a sensitive and informed approach to counter any harassment perpetrated out of ignorance.

We expect all staff to be aware of and alert to any discriminatory behaviour taking place and expect staff to intervene firmly and quickly. We aim to create an atmosphere where the victims of any forms of discrimination have confidence to report such behaviour and that subsequently they feel positively supported by the staff and management of the setting. We record any incidents of discriminatory behaviour or bullying to ensure that strategies are developed to prevent future incidents, patterns or persistent behaviours are identified and to monitor the effectiveness of the setting policies.

## Procedures

### Admissions (See Admissions Policy for more information)

Spaces are offered on a first come first served basis for University of Plymouth staff and students, with the exception of siblings currently attending the setting. We do accept booking forms from members of the public; however, staff and students of the University do take priority. Children who are already attending the setting will have priority over any session changes or spaces before being offered out to new families. We are committed to working with parents to meet the individual needs of each child and will ask for information to support this during settling in sessions. We will work with other professionals or agencies to support the needs of your child and family where required.

We do not discriminate against any child or their family based on the characteristics as defined by the Equality Act (2010). We will provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form and will provide

information in other languages (where possible). (Please see Admissions Policy for further information).

We will provide a childcare place, wherever possible, for children who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or are deemed disadvantages according to their individual circumstances, and the setting's ability to provide the necessary standard of care and will make reasonable adjustments for children with additional needs or disabilities.

## **Employment**

We aim to offer all our employees and parents' equal opportunities within Freshlings.

Accordingly, our employment policies for recruitment, selection, training, development, and promotion are designed to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, trade union membership or non-membership, sex or marital status. Entry into employment with us is determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which is related to the duties of each particular position. In all cases, ability to perform the job is the primary consideration when we recruit key workers to provide quality childcare for children. All offers of employment are subject to satisfactory references, suitability checks and DBS clearance. For further information please refer to our Safer Recruitment policy. Our job descriptions include a commitment to promoting equality and recognising and respecting diversity as part of their specification.

## **Curriculum**

Every child should be encouraged to develop and learn without prejudice. By educating our young children to celebrate different cultures, religions and races throughout the world; our children are looked after and educated in a setting which is non-gender stereotypical and promotes positive role models. We encourage children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as about people who are different to themselves, this develops their confidence, self-esteem, and the ability to empathize and think critically.

We will endeavour to meet the individual needs of all children and will provide support and adjustments should this be required to ensure children have access to all activities on offer within the environment, (see SEND policy for further information).

Children will be valued and supported within the setting and will be encouraged to share their ideas and thoughts. Children will be consulted on changes within the setting so that they feel their opinions are respected. Children will be encouraged to value and respect each other and their differences, through storytelling and circle time discussions. All our activities and displays respect and value equality and diversity.

Equal opportunities are fully integrated into our setting by activities and displays positively reflecting the History and Culture of living in a multicultural society. We will celebrate festivals and celebrations of all cultures and welcome you to share any that you celebrate with us.

We ensure our practice is fully inclusive:

- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance
- Modelling desirable behaviour to children and helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour is hurtful and unacceptable
- Positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities within our resources
- Avoiding use of stereotypes or derogatory images within our books
- Celebrating locally observed festivals and holy days
- Ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning and are supported in the maintenance and development of their home language
- Ensuring that children with a disability or special educational need are supported
- We encourage children and their families to share stories of their life and to take part in the setting fully
- Ensuring reasonable adjustments are made to support the needs of disabled children or adults
- Ensuring the environment incorporates resources and a curriculum to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical or sensory needs
- We work in partnership with parents to ensure that dietary requirements are met where possible to support medical, religious and cultural needs.

## **British Values**

In accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage we ensure that British Values are embedded in our daily practice. British Values are a set of four values that have been introduced to help keep children safe and to promote their welfare. The four British Values are:

- Individual Liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths, cultures and beliefs
- Democracy
- Rule of Law

British Values allow all children to be treated as individuals, whilst still ensuring an acceptance of other beliefs and faiths is maintained.

The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure all members of Freshlings nursery are working in partnership together.

## **Legal Framework and Guidance**

The Equality Act (2010)

The Children Act (1989 & 2004)

Childcare Act (2006)

Children and Families Act (2014)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (2015)