

Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy



Commitment to Equality of Opportunities

We aim to provide a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued. We include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity and value children's home cultures. We provide positive non-stereotyping information about different ethnic groups and people with disabilities. It is our aim to make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities and experiences we are involved in at the setting. We actively promote Fundamental British Values (democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance).

We welcome all children of all abilities and their families and carers. We recognise that every child has individual needs and we will work together to help each child reach their potential. We will provide opportunities to enable them to develop and encourage parents/carers to be fully involved in their child's education. The setting is aware of and follows relevant legislation and codes of practice including the Special Educational Needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years "A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her".

Admissions

Fledglings Montessori Preschool is open to all members of the community. We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to our setting because of a disability. We ensure that all parents are made aware of this policy and we are able to develop individual action plans to ensure that people with special education needs or disabilities can participate successfully at Fledglings and in the curriculum offered. We also aim to provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.

Employment

We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by us imposing conditions or requirements which are not justifiable. All posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria. The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service. This ensures fairness in the selection process. All job descriptions include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their specifications.

Training

Fledglings Montessori Preschool recognises that regular training and the monitoring of professional development is important for all staff. Development training is vital as it keeps staff up to date with anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices and Fledglings is committed to keeping up to date records of staff qualifications and training. This will help to ensure that staff development needs are being met and that staff training and qualifications are meeting the requirements of the setting.

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Differentiating provision within the learning environment and the curriculum

A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development and it is our aim to meet the needs of each individual child. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the setting to ensure all children, regardless of their ability or need, will feel included, valued and supported. The curriculum offered at Fledglings encourages children to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from themselves. We actively promote fundamental British values. Our curriculum encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking. We do this by making the children feel valued and good about themselves. We ensure that children have equality of access to learning. We avoid stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of materials and celebrate a wide range of festivals. We aim to create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance by helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable. We ensure that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with Special Educational Needs and children with disabilities, differentiating the ordinarily available provision as appropriate. We also ensure that children whose first language is not English have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning and reasonable steps (such as staff learning some words) are taken to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning. We provide a range of accessible resources and equipment and we are able to make reasonable adjustments to the environment and resources indoors and outdoors to cater for the needs of the individual child.

Inappropriate attitudes and practices.

Threatening or abusive behaviours or any expression of prejudice or discriminating behaviour towards or between staff or families will not be tolerated and all such incidents will be challenged and recorded on an incident form. We recognise that incidents of racial discrimination are a serious offence and all staff members are responsible for reporting any incidents of discrimination to the manager. The manager will record all incidents of discrimination and how the situation was dealt with. Where children are discriminated against, parents are informed of the incident and of the actions that were taken.

Commitment to working with Parents and other Agencies

Fledglings Montessori Preschool welcomes the diversity of family life and we aim to work in partnership with all families. We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life and we encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of our setting. We encourage everyone to feel they can contribute fully to the life at our preschool by seeking the views and feelings of all children, their families and all members of staff. For families who have a first language other than English, we value the contribution their culture and language offer. It is our aim to work in partnership with parents to ensure the medical, cultural and dietary needs of each child are met. Prior to a child starting, the parent/carer will be asked to fill in a Registration Form which will give us the necessary personal information for our records. The manager/key worker will discuss with the child's parent/carer how best to support the child during their time with us. We ensure that parents are kept informed in advance about what will happen at transition times, such as when children join the setting. Also if a child

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attends several settings outside Fledglings, we aim to share their development and learning records and any other relevant information. We take time to listen to colleagues from other professional backgrounds and be open about differences of language and approach. At least one member of staff attends EYFS network meetings and then shares information and advice to all staff.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice

Fledglings has regard to this code and we welcome all children of all abilities and their families and carers. The overall member of staff to act as the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is Clare

She is responsible for liaising with parents and other professionals in respect of children with special educational needs, advising and supporting other practitioners in the setting and ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with special educational needs is collected, recorded and updated. Parents/Carers have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education. The SENCO will work closely with all parents/carers; listening to their views, so they can build on children's previous experiences, knowledge, understanding and skills. Information about the child will be shared on a regular basis so that developments and progress can be monitored and a partnership between the SENCO and parent/carer can be achieved. All concerns will remain confidential at all times. It is the SENCO's responsibility to be aware of all information regarding children with SEND in their setting. Information obtained on entry to the setting, which will include the child's registration form, information gathered during the introductory visit and any discussion with other professionals the child may be involved with such as speech and language therapists will be kept on file. This information will remain confidential between the parent/carer, the SENCO and any other members of staff involved with the child. The parent/carer will be able to access this file. It is also the SENCO's responsibility to attend any meetings with outside agencies such as Education and Health Care Plan meetings

Our system of observations and record keeping including the 2 year old check, alongside the health visitor where appropriate, operated in conjunction with parents/carers, enables us to monitor children's needs and development on an individual basis. Within Fledglings Montessori Preschool, for every child identified as having SEND, we will devise a structured programme to meet the child's needs. Strategies employed to enable the child to progress will be recorded with the APDR sheet (Assess, Plan, Do, Review). These will be kept continually under review. If a child has an EHCP, this will be reviewed by the setting, with parents at least every 6 months. When a child leaves Fledglings, their individual records will be handed onto the new setting (either by the parent or the SENCO) so that they will have an understanding of that child's needs. Where appropriate an application is made for Inclusion fund, High Needs Funding, or an Educational and Health Care Needs Assessment via the iSEND team.

It is essential that Fledglings Montessori Preschool maintains a close partnership with the Early Years and Childcare Service to ensure that high quality support is provided for our setting and to make sure arrangements for SEND is correctly put into practice. Early Years Action Plus is characterised by the involvement of external support services who can help early education settings with advice for the APDR and targets,

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provide more specialist assessments, give advice on the use of new or specialist strategies or materials, and in some cases provide support for particular activities. Triggers for intervention through Early Years Action and for seeking advice from outside agencies could be that despite receiving an individual programme and/or concentrated support, that child continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period. This may be due to the child having an emotional or behavioural difficulty that substantially and regularly interferes with his/her own learning or that of the group, despite having an individual behaviour management programme. A child with sensory or physical needs may require additional equipment or regular visits for direct intervention or advice from a specialist service or a child who has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships may require support from outside agencies. Parental permission will be sought before any outside agencies are notified, such as health visitors and speech and language therapists.

The principal of seeking and taking account of the ascertainable views of the child is of vital importance and this can be achieved through a variety of different ways, such as talking and listening to the child and parent/carer, through observations and role play. Provisions for children with Special Educational Needs are a matter for everyone in the setting.

Fledglings Montessori Preschool will make all reasonable attempts to make all the facilities within the setting available to any child with a special need as advised in the SEN Disability Act.

Arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices

Fledglings will monitor and review its policy on Equality of Opportunity on a regular basis. This will involve staff meetings to discuss any action taken throughout the term and to update any information received during training. It will also be reviewed and amended by the Manager and SENCO at least on an annual basis.