**Equalities and Inclusion Policy**

This policy is for the centrally managed (by Bristol City Council Early Years Service) early education and childcare provision in our Children’s Centres.

**Statement**

The Children’s Centre is committed to eliminating discrimination of all kinds. This involves tackling the barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for children and families so that there is equality of access and the diversity within the local community is celebrated and valued.

We will strive to make our service accessible to all parents who wish to use it and we will ensure that no child, individual or family will be unlawfully discriminated against on the grounds of age, sex, sexuality, gender, family status, means, disability, race, ethnic origin, culture, religion or belief.

We are committed to creating an environment in which individual differences and everyone’ s contributions are recognised and valued and we believe in promoting dignity and respect to all.

**Staff Recruitment and Professional Development**

* We aim to ensure that no applicant or employee is subject to discrimination of any kind on the grounds of having, or being perceived as having, or being associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
* All posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants;
* All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and to ensure equality of opportunity.
* We encourage diversity amongst our workforce and encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels within the Children Centre.
* All staff will be made aware of this policy through the Induction process and will be offered training in all relevant aspects of Equal Opportunities

**Information**

We will aim to make information in the Children’s Centres as accessible as possible to all users, potential users and interested parties, seeking appropriate additional support to do so where necessary. Where appropriate, we will provide translations into relevant languages, large print or Braille and will use jargon free, clear and understandable language. We will also use a translator where appropriate.

**Inclusive Practice**

We aim to provide play opportunities and experiences that are inclusive and accessible for all children and families and for all children and families to feel welcomed and valued. We will do this by:

* Recognising children’s individual needs through observation, reflective practice and working in partnership with parents and other professionals.
* Creating opportunities in the curriculum to value and gain understanding of identity and equality
* The use of images and materials that positively reflect a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles
* Providing appropriate support and making reasonable adjustments to meet each child’s needs, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
* Challenging inappropriate attitudes and practices
* Identifying a member of staff who will take on the role of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), who will lead on and take responsibility for inclusive practice

**Achievement**

There is a consistently high expectation of all children regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability and social background. To secure the best possible outcomes we recognise that:

* Adults in the setting will be expected to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity;
* It is important to identify the particular needs of individuals and groups within the Children’s Centre and to use targeted interventions to narrow gaps in achievement.

**Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community**

The Children Centres work in partnership with parents/carers. We endeavour to:

* Take action to ensure all parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the life of the setting;
* Maintain good channels of communication to ensure parents’ views are captured to inform practice;
* Encourage members of the local community to join in activities and celebrations;
* Ensure that the parents/carers of newly arrived children with protected characteristics e.g. EAL, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller or pupils with disabilities are made to feel welcome.

**Harassment**

We will not tolerate incidents of harassment or abuse and will address any complaint or occurrence of harassment or abuse promptly. This includes harassment by a third party and harassment directed at others, as defined by the Equalities Act 2010.

We will deal with incidents sensitively, with a view to supporting both parties involved in the incident, that is the person who has been harassed and the perpetrator. We will work with the perpetrator with the aim of helping them to overcome their prejudice and understand the effect of their behaviour. Cases of harassment will invoke disciplinary measures for the perpetrator. For staff and management this will be in line with our Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. In the case of parents exhibiting discriminatory behaviour, we will remind them of their need to comply with this policy. If further incidents occur, this will result in them being asked to leave the premises and prevented from returning until written assurance has been received stating that they will comply with it.

Parents with concerns over staff behaviour should follow our general complaints policy.

All incidents of harassment or abuse will be recorded as an incident on the appropriate form and if necessary Ofsted will be informed.

**Definitions of Types of Discrimination – Equalities Act 2010**

Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:

* Direct Discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others
* Indirect Discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
* Harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone’s dignity or creates an offensive environment for them
* Victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they’ve complained about discrimination or harassment

**The Protected Characteristics – Equalities Act 2010**

The Act protects individuals and groups from discrimination based on their “protected characteristics”. There are nine protected characteristics and they vary slightly in their bearing according to whether a person is using a service or at work:

• Age

• Disability

• Gender Reassignment

• Marriage and Civil Partnership

• Pregnancy and Maternity

• Race

• Religion or Belief

• Sex

• Sexual Orientation