



10. Equality of Opportunity Policy

Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality

Aims of Policy

We ensure that Seer Green Pre-School is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children. We recognise that children and their families come from diverse backgrounds. All families have needs and values that arise from their ethnic heritage, social and economic background, gender, ability or disability. Seer Green Pre-School is committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity, valuing diversity for all children and families, and promoting the Fundamental British Values. We understand that personal family needs can affect the wellbeing of children and can impact on their learning, development, and attainment.

We aim to:

1. provide a secure and accessible environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
2. include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
3. provide positive, non-stereotyping information about gender roles, age, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and people with disabilities;
4. improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity by encouraging senior staff to undergo training on such issues;
5. make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the setting;
6. challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions; and
7. foster good relations between all communities.

The legal framework for this policy is the following, and subsequent updates and regulation, as issued from time to time:

1. Race Relations Act 1976
2. Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
3. Sex Discrimination Act 1975, 1984
4. Children Act 1989, 2004
5. Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
6. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, 2020
7. Disability Discrimination Act 1995, 2005
8. The Equality Act 2010
9. Children and Families Act 2014
10. Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2015

Admissions

Seer Green Pre-School is open to every family, with priority given to those living in Seer Green and Jordans, without prejudice. At Seer Green Pre-School we treat everyone as individuals regardless of their cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic background, sex, social group and disability and do not discriminate on these or any other grounds.

- We advertise our service within the community.
- We reflect the diversity of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.

- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- If required, we will aim to provide information in as many languages as necessary. We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our setting, on the basis of protected characteristics defined in Equality Act 2010, disability, colour, ethnicity, religion, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, or social background, such as being a member of a Travelling Community or an asylum seeker.
- We develop an action plan or make reasonable adjustments to ensure that people with disabilities can participate successfully in the services offered by the setting and the curriculum offered.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff or parents. Displaying of openly discriminatory behaviour (direct, indirect, by association or perception) and possibly offensive materials, name calling and threatening behaviour are unacceptable on or around the premises and will be dealt with in the strongest manner.

Families joining the Pre-School are made aware of our 'Equality of Opportunity' policies (Policies 9 to 11) and we base our 'Admissions Policy' (Policy 2) on a fair system. There are 20 spaces available Monday to Thursday in each session, and 24 on a Friday. We have an intake list and a reserve waiting list for spaces. The 'Admissions Policy' (Policy 2) covers this in more detail.

Employment & The Recruitment of Ex-offenders

This section applies to both the recruiting of Pre-School staff and Trustees.

The Pre-School will appoint the best person for each job and will treat fairly all applicants for jobs and all those appointed. Posts are advertised and applicants are welcome from all backgrounds. Applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria. All staff are committed to promoting equality and recognising and respecting diversity. We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability of trust, Seer Green Pre-School complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Our policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called to interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to a designated person with Seer Green Pre-School and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows Seer Green Pre-School to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about unspent convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We ensure that all those in Seer Green Pre-School who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that may be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We may use the exemption clauses of the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act where this is necessary to enable the service to best meet the needs of the community.

Training

A separate 'Training Policy and Procedure' (Policy 37) covers in detail the specific detail for Seer Green Pre-School. Training opportunities for staff and volunteers are sought that enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive policies which enable children to flourish. Staff are confident and fully trained in administering relevant medicines and performing invasive care procedures when these are required. We review our practices to make sure we monitor equality, valuing diversity and inclusion.

The Curriculum

Please also refer to the separate 'Curriculum Policy' (Policy 5). All children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured. Activities and the use of play equipment offer children opportunities to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination. Appropriate opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and develop positive attitudes about themselves and to value similarities and differences between themselves and others. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking. To enable them to explore adult roles by example through the home corner, dressing up and books.

We would ensure that it was possible to communicate with any child whose communication skills were different to those of the rest of the children for example, by using Makaton, having a visual timetable and learning key words from a language other than English. Such needs would be discussed between the Pre-School Manager and the family involved at the first stage in order to put appropriate plans in place.

Our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and service users. If access to the setting is found to treat disabled children or adults less favourably then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults. We do this by:

- making children feel valued and good about themselves;
- ensuring that children have equality of access to learning;
- making adjustments to the environment and resources to accommodate a wide range of learning and physical and sensory impairments;
- making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities, e.g. recognising the different learning styles of individual children
- positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources;
- avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual materials;
- celebrating a wide range of festivals;
- creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
- differentiating the curriculum to meet children's special educational needs and disabilities;
- helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;
- ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and disabilities;
- ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning; and
- ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages.

Valuing Diversity in Families

We acknowledge that many different types of family successfully love and care for children. If required, we can operate a flexible payment system for families by special arrangement with the Operations Manager and Trustee Chairperson or Treasurer.

- We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
- We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life to the setting.
- We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the setting and to contribute fully.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion.

Food

Medical, cultural and dietary needs will be taken into consideration. Again, any particular child's needs would be discussed in advance of their start date in order to make appropriate plans and considerations. This will involve the family, Pre-School Manager, Key Person, and other staff. The Trustees will also be informed as well if necessary. We help children to learn about a range of food and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them.

Festivals

Our aim is to show respectful awareness of all the major events in the lives of the children and families in the Pre-School, and in our society as a whole, and to welcome the diversity of backgrounds from which they come.

In order to achieve this, we aim to acknowledge all the festivals which are celebrated in our area and/or by families involved in the Pre-School:

- Children will be made aware of the festivals which are being celebrated by their own families or others, and will be introduced where appropriate to the stories behind the festivals.
- Before introducing a festival with which the adults in the Pre-School are not themselves familiar, the staff will research this festival.
- Children and families who celebrate any festivals at home with which the rest of the Pre-School is not familiar, will be invited to share their festival with the rest of the group, if they themselves wish to do so.

Resources

These will be chosen to give children a balanced view of the world and an appreciation of our multi-cultural society.

Materials will be selected to help children to develop their self-respect and to respect other people by avoiding stereotypes and derogatory pictures or messages about any group of people.

Meetings

The time, place and conduct of committee meetings will ensure that all families have an equal opportunity to be involved in the running of the Pre-School.

Monitoring and Reviewing

To ensure our policy and procedures remain effective, we will monitor and review them annually to ensure our strategies meet the overall aims to promote equality, inclusion and valuing diversity. We provide a complaints procedure.

As with all the policies for Seer Green Pre-School, the Operational Plan should be referred to for the specific details of day to day operations of the Pre-School. In addition, any issues which arise in the course of a child's time with the Pre-School and that are related to a child's health and wellbeing, parent's or staff's concern, or the overall care and safety of our children, staff, parents and equipment will be dealt with in a professional and confidential manner in order to arrive at an appropriate outcome.

This policy was adopted on (date) _____

Signed on behalf of Seer Green Pre-School (Chairperson) _____

This policy was reviewed as indicated below:

2007 created

2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 reviewed and updated as required

July-Nov 2017 reviewed and updated

June-July 2018 reviewed and updated

May 2019 reviewed

June 2020 reviewed

June 2021 reviewed and updated

July 2022 reviewed

June 2023 reviewed

September 2024 reviewed and updated

UNCRC related article:

Number 14

Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and to practice religion, as long as they are not stopping other people enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of the parents to give their children information about this right.