



Ashbridge
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL & NURSERY

DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Approved by: SMT

Approved date: December 2021

Review date: December 2023

Accessibility: Available on the website and as a paper copy on request

Scope: Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery, Ashbridge-on-Ribble Nursery, Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm, The Fledglings Nursery

Introduction

At Ashbridge we strive to make our service fully inclusive in meeting the needs of children and staff members and are committed to anti-discriminatory practice. This policy should be used in conjunction with the Safer Recruitment Policy in relation to staff and Admissions Policy in relation to children and families.

This policy has been developed in line with current legislation and guidance including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- Independent School Standards
- Early Years Foundation Stage requirements
- ACAS guidance

We aim to:

- provide a secure and accessible environment in which all our children and staff members can flourish
- promote equality and be free from discrimination and stereotyping
- make inclusion a thread that runs through all of our practices and activities
- recognise, celebrate and value the cultural and ethnic diversity of all families, our staff and visitors
- promote positive images and information relating to gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and those with a disability or additional needs.

Our accessibility plan details how we intend to increase and improve the provision, environment and delivery of information for people with disabilities; both physical and mental. Time frames are set and the plan is reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team.

STAFF, INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

We ensure that staff applying for positions at Ashbridge, requesting a change in working hours or applying for a promotion, are not discriminated against on any grounds; including age, disability, gender identity or reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. We take reasonable steps to help members of staff or applicants with a disability or other circumstance to carry out their duties effectively, although, as detailed in the Safer Recruitment Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, all employees must be mentally and physically fit to carry out their role.

Whilst we recognise that the term 'disability' covers a wide range of both physical and mental impairments, there are some conditions that are not considered to be an impairment or disability. Appendix 1 states conditions and other areas not covered by the Equality Act. Staff members with any of the conditions or behaviours listed in Appendix 1 are not protected by the Equality Act or the guidance set out in this policy.

Recruitment

- Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and open criteria.
- Applicants are welcomed from all backgrounds.
- All job descriptions include a commitment to promoting equality and recognising and respecting diversity.
- We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.
- Our application form allows applicants to give information regarding special arrangements needed to cater for any disability they may have.

Employment

- Reasonable adjustments will be made for any employee with a disability to allow them to carry out their role effectively.
- Adjustments will be reasonable but not excessive, and the safety of the children in our care will be considered at all times when considering if an employee is able to carry out their role with reasonable adjustments made.
- Whilst requests for changes in working hours are always considered carefully, they may be rejected if there is a relevant business reason to do so.

Team Training and Development

- We seek out training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all children to flourish.
- We regularly monitor and review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for promoting equality, valuing diversity and inclusion.

CHILDREN, INCLUDING CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE PUPILS

We ensure that families wishing to enrol their child in school or nursery are not discriminated against on any grounds, including; disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. We take reasonable steps to help pupils with a disability or other circumstance to fully participate in school or nursery life, including making adjustments to policies including the behaviour policy. As stated in our Admissions Policy however, we may not be able to offer a place in circumstances where, even with reasonable adjustments being made, we feel that we are unable to meet a child's needs.

Whilst we recognise that the term 'disability' covers a wide range of both physical and mental impairments, there are some conditions that are not considered to be an impairment or disability. Appendix 1 states conditions and other areas not covered by the Equality Act. Children with any of the conditions or behaviours listed in Appendix 1 are not protected by the Equality Act or the guidance set out in this policy, although we will work with families to try and manage and/or avoid these behaviours wherever possible.

Admissions & Communication

We welcome applications for placement from all members of the community and our Admissions Policy reflects this.

- We advertise our service widely.
- We reflect the diversity of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We do not discriminate against a child or their family, regarding admission to our setting on the basis of disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or social or economic background.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We aim to provide information in a person's home language should they require it.
- We ensure that all parents are made aware of our policies through our website and Parent Handbook.
- We do not discriminate against a child with special educational needs or a disability and where appropriate, we develop individual plans to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children can participate successfully in all that is offered.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff or parents.
- We operate a complaints procedure which is communicated effectively.

Curriculum and Practices

The curriculum offered in the setting encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves and others and throughout all schemes of work we promote equality of opportunity. We do not discriminate in any way, paying particular attention to ensuring boys and girls receive the same opportunities. Our environment is as accessible as possible for all children, parents and visitors. We make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of those who are disabled.

We encourage and develop an understanding of diversity and equality by:

- Making children feel valued and helping to develop their self-confidence.
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance.
- Positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources.
- Promoting diversity in the selection of books or other visual materials.
- Celebrating a wide range of festivals and cultural events.
- Helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable.
- Helping children to learn about a range of food, cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them.
- Welcoming the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
- Encouraging children to contribute experiences and stories of their everyday life.
- Ensuring each setting has a designated Equality Named Co-Ordinator (ENCO).

We ensure our curriculum fully meets the needs of all children in our care by:

- Ensuring that children have equality of access to learning differentiating the curriculum to meet children's special educational needs.
- 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 individuals.
- Ensuring that the curriculum offered is, wherever reasonable, inclusive of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities.
- Ensuring that children with English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning by putting a strong emphasis on Communication and Language development and providing individual intervention where necessary.
- Ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages by, where possible, providing children access to adults who speak the home language, including members of the child's own family, particularly at transition times.

APPENDIX 1

The following are not considered to be disabilities:

- hayfever (unless aggravating other relevant conditions)
- a tendency to set fire
- a tendency to steal
- a tendency to partake in physical or sexual abuse of others
- exhibitionism

- voyeurism

Other areas not covered by the Equality Act:

- tattoos
- piercings
- addictions to alcohol, nicotine and other substances