**Equality of Opportunities Policy**

**Statement of Intent**

Our Pre-school is committed to actively promoting equality of opportunity and valuing diversity. We aim to meet the needs of all children and families, and ensure that every child is included and not disadvantaged because of their ethnic heritage, social or economic background, gender, disability or any special educational needs they may have.

**Procedures**

**Admissions**

We aim to ensure that families from all sections of our community have access to the Pre-school. Please refer to our admissions policy for further details.

* We advertise our service widely.
* We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
* We base our [Admissions Policy](http://step-by-step.org.uk/admissions) on a fair system.
* We ensure that all parents are made aware of our Equality of Opportunities Policy.
* We develop an action plan to ensure those children and their families with disabilities or special educational needs can participate successfully in the services offered by the Pre-school and in the curriculum offered.

### Employment

* Posts are advertised widely and all applicants are judged on fair criteria.
* The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the DBS. This ensures fairness in the selection process.
* All job descriptions include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their specifications.
* We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.
* Our job description includes a statement on our commitment to equality of opportunities.
* Interview questions are open-ended and provide opportunity for self-expression and individuality.

**Training**

* We have a commitment to staff training. All staff are made aware of training opportunities and given equal chance to attend.
* All staff undergo regular training to ensure the policy is consistently applied.
* Staff are fully trained in administering relevant medications when needed.

**Learning Environment**

* We understand that some children may need extra support to express their feelings and come to terms with them.
* We encourage the children to contribute to keeping the environment clean and tidy.
* We ensure that children have an opportunity to go outside on a daily basis all year round and can move freely between the inside and outside environments.
* We help children to understand how to behave outdoors and inside by talking about personal safety, risks and safety of others.
* We create an indoor environment that is reassuring and comforting for all children.
* Our environment supports every child’s learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.
* We gain information on the individual needs of children by constantly observing, assessing and liaising with their parents. The information gathered is used to plan appropriate activities.
* We carry out a 2 year developmental check on children who join our setting before their 3rd birthday in accordance with the EYFS.
* Our resources reflect positive images of a diverse and inclusive society. Examples are – dolls with different skin and hair tones, books, small world and role play toys depicting people with disabilities.

### Valuing Diversity

* We welcome the diversity of family life and work with all families.
* Where necessary we make reasonable adjustments to the environment and resources indoors and out, to meet their individual needs (refer to Disability Discrimination Act 2005).
* We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life into the Pre-school. For example each child has the opportunity to take home a soft toy to share their home life experiences with and record this in a diary which is discussed with the group on their return.
* We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the Pre-school and to contribute fully.
* For families who have a first language other than English, we value the contribution their culture and language offer. For example where possible we sing songs and listen to music in different languages and we have books available with dual text. Key words in the family’s home language are obtained during the settling in procedure and kept within the child’s file for reference.
* We develop awareness of all festivals throughout the year especially those celebrated by children currently attending.
* We challenge inappropriate attitudes and practices by offering relevant support and training in the first instance. Where behaviour fails to improve the disciplinary procedure will be applied. Please refer to disciplinary policy for further information.
* When recruiting staff 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.
* We monitor our job vacancy application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.

### Food

* We work in partnership with parents to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of all children are met. We aim to offer a snack menu which is varied as well as nutritionally balanced. Seasonal produce is selected and we aim to incorporate a vast range of foods in the children’s diets.
* We help children to learn about a range of food from different cultures through planned activities.
* All children have the opportunity to access refreshments independently according to need through the Pre-School Café. Fresh drinking water is made available to the children at all times.

**Meetings**

* All families are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting where they will have the opportunity to be involved in the running of the Pre-school by joining the committee.
* Information about committee meetings is communicated in a variety of ways — both written and verbal.
* We try to arrange committee meetings at various times and venues to ensure everyone can be involved in our setting.
* We liaise with parents at mutually convenient times to share information i.e. at induction meetings, 2 yr old progress check and progress meetings with their child’s key person
* Staff representatives liaise with the Early Years Childcare Service Inclusion Team, attend network meetings and share information and advice to all staff.

Please refer to the Parental Involvement Policy for further information.

**Monitoring, Reviewing and Recording**

* To ensure this policy remains effective and relevant, the whole staff team will discuss and review annually during a staff meeting, or as required according to changes in legislation or best practice.
* We have a complaints procedure and all complaints of discrimination are recorded by the manager or chair of committee. Please refer to complaints policy for further information.

**Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs**

* We designate a member of staff to be Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCO). Pre-School SENCO is:

**Sarah Gowers**

**Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) (ref. SEN Code of Practice 2015)**

* 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.
* A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
* has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
* has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions
* For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.
* A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition in paragraph xiv. above when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014).

**Provision**

Provision for children with SEND is the responsibility of all members of the setting. However, specific responsibilities are:

Role of the nominated SENDCO:

* Provide parents with information on sources of independent advice and support.
* Liaise with other professionals.
* Attend SENDCO briefing sessions to keep up-to-date with relevant best practice and legislation.
* Use the graduated response system for identifying, assessing and responding to children’s special educational needs. (APDR)
* Liaise with Bucks County Council Inclusion Officer, by phone, initially when needed
* Work alongside parents and children with the support of the County Inclusion Team to write relevant Assess, Plan, Do Review sheets (APDRs)
* Supervise staff in implementing APDRs with their key children
* To liaise and share information with the Foundation Stage teacher in feeder schools to assist the transition process.
* Ensure that relevant background information about individual children with SEND is collected, recorded and updated.
* Ensure children’s SEN support plan’s are regularly reviewed with the child’s key person and updated to extend and support the child’s ongoing development.
* Ensure that all Preschool practitioners are aware of how to identify and support a child with any SEN. This includes keeping staff training up to date and relevant to the children in their care.

All Staff Must:

* Ensure that our physical environment is as far as possible suitable for children with disabilities. Make adjustments to the environment which are reasonable to suit those with a variety of needs.
* Work closely with parents of children with SEND to create and maintain a positive partnership.
* Ensure that parents are informed at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their children’s education.
* Ensure that children with SEND are appropriately involved at all stages of the graduated response, taking into account their levels of ability.
* Use the settings SEND Observation forms for keeping records of the assessment for children with SEND and review these regularly with the settings SENDCO.
* Ensure tracking sheets are kept up to date to support outside agencies with any ongoing assessments.
* Where possible, access additional resources to help implement APDRs.

The committee has responsibility for overall management of all aspects of provision for children with SEND. The chairperson works closely with the SENDCO team to ensure the policy is being implemented.

**Graduated Response**

Whilst we recognise that children develop at different rates, it may occasionally be necessary to present some children with different opportunities or use alternative approaches to support their learning. We adopt a graduated response in order to provide specific help to individual children.

Once we have identified a child as having SEND, we intervene through SEN support using a graduated approach. If the child does not make satisfactory progress over an agreed timeframe, (and only with the consent of their parent), the SENCO seeks support and advice from external agencies.

If a child is identified as having SEND needs and parents refuse permission for support from Pre-school or outside agencies the Pre-school manager can telephone first response for advice and may report under safeguarding concerns (failure to thrive). This would be a last resort should all other avenues of support fail to achieve a positive outcome.

**Achieving Positive Behaviour**

Pre-Schools designated Behaviour Management Officer is - **Sarah Gowers**

* Threatening or abusive behaviour or any expression of prejudice or discriminating behaviour towards or between staff or families will not be tolerated.
* It is everyone’s responsibility to challenge and report all such incidents to the manager or committee chairperson. These will be recorded in our incident book.
* All incidents of racial discrimination are a serious offence and will be responded to accordingly.
* Our curriculum includes working on valuing differences and understanding the effects of our behaviour on others. We have positive expectations that children are kind, respectful, care for resources, care for belongings and care for living things.
* We endeavor to keep up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on handling children’s behaviour.
* We check that all staff have relevant in-service training on handling children’s behaviour.
* We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the Pre-school’s rules for achieving positive behaviour.
* We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
* We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any conflict by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children’s ages and stages of development — for example distraction, praise and reward.
* We expect all members of the pre-school — children, parents, staff, volunteers and students — to keep to the rules, requiring these to be applied consistently.
* We praise and endorse desirable behaviour.
* We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for undesirable behaviour.
* We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and we require staff to be aware of — and respect — those used by members of the pre-school.
* We never use physical punishment.
* We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children. We emphasise it is the behaviour NOT the individual that is undesirable.
* We only use physical restraint, such as holding, to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property. Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our pre-school leader and are recorded in our Incident Log. A parent is informed on the same day and signs the Incident Book to indicate that he/she has been informed.
* Any injuries or accidents (eg. Bites) are always recorded and reported to parents. This is done sensitively with regard to confidentiality. Please see our confidentiality policy for details.
* We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children’s behaviour.
* We work in partnership with children’s parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children’s behaviour. We work with parents to address recurring unacceptable behaviour, using objective observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.
* If a child’s behaviour is persistently challenging and presents a significant and consistent risk to themselves or others, we may discuss with parents/carers the possibility of keeping the child at home for a short period. This will allow time for staff and parents/carers to make reasonable adjustments to manage the child’s behaviour in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act. We will consult Bucks Inclusion Team before taking this action. We will consider fully the views of the parents/carers and child on developing approaches and strategies to manage the child’s behaviour and plan for the child’s return to our setting.

This policy was adopted by West Wycombe Pre-School in December 2010. Policies are updated when necessary and reviewed on a yearly basis.

Reviewed and amended July 2025

**Legal Framework**

We have regard for the following legislation:

Children’s Act 2006

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015

Equalities Act 2015

EYFS Welfare Requirements 2017

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