

## Inclusion Policy

### Sample Policy Statement

**Named Service** recognises and respects the rights of all adults and children in our service. We value the ability, individuality and cultural background of all children by providing each child with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential as active learner within an inclusive ethos/culture. We aim to actively promote equality of access and participation and eliminate discrimination on grounds of, gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Travelling Community. This policy represents the agreed principles and commitment for inclusion, in line with Early Childhood Care and Education National Inclusion Charter.

### Principle

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2011, the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2012, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 29 & 30), the Disability Act 2005 and the Special Needs Legislation – EPSEN Act 2004.

### Rationale

**Named Service** is committed to working in partnership with parents to support children's ability, identity, cultural background and sense of belonging. We will support families in their parenting role and respecting their values and beliefs about childrearing. We will support children to become respectful of difference and foster each child's critical thinking in order to confront bias and discrimination. We will implement a curriculum that meets the individual needs and emerging interests of the child under *Síolta, The National Quality Framework (2006)* and *Aistear: The National Curriculum Framework (2009)* and respond to children's diverse and individual learning needs and styles through an emerging curriculum.

We will respond appropriately and sensitively to any additional needs a child may experience.

Additional needs may include any change introduced into the child's life, such as a new sibling, moving house, absent parent/s, or a situation that may call for a long-term care plan, such as asthma, allergies, disability, development delay and medical conditions.

We will support continual development for all early childhood practitioners so as to ensure they are trained in an equality and diversity approach to providing care and education to all.

We will ensure fair and equal opportunities for all potential and existing employees in line with our Recruitment Policy.

### Sample Procedure

All children attending **Named Service** are supported to:

- Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- Know they belong and are valued as unique individuals
- Feel strong and confident about their identity
- Know their cultural backgrounds are respected and valued
- Learn in groups that allow them all to experience success
- Engage with materials and experiences that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, gender and ability (visitors, books, music, musical instrument, cooking activities, craft, clothing, multicultural dolls, multicultural jigsaws, games, play equipment, posters and other props.
- Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- Participate fully, having particular regard for and being cognisant of children with a variety of disabilities
- Respect the purpose for which other children's aids or assistive technology are intended.

Families attending the centre are supported to

- Consult with the service about the care of each child to minimise conflict between the service's philosophy and family values.
- Be involved in policy and procedure development to ensure cultural sensitivities are included.
- Access information about the service and the policies and procedures by translating information into their home language if necessary.
- Participate in the service's programme and to introduce their culture's food, art, music, language, celebrations and dress to the other children in the service.

Early years educators will promote equality, diversity and inclusion. They will:

- Remove assumptions, judgements and expectations about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all families and the team.
- Regard all individuals equally, showing sensitivity and providing equal opportunities for all children of all background.
- Actively intervene in situations when bias is shown and encourage children to challenge bias
- Demonstrate positive attitudes when making changes to accommodate all children. Work as a team with parents and other professionals to develop, carry out and review plans for children with additional support needs.
- Adhere to the National Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter.

#### Dealing with Discriminatory Incidents:

- The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
- All children will be informed that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- When an incident occurs (hurtful remark made by one child to another) both children learn from the incident. The response to the incident will reference the rules of the service as appropriate.
- Staff will endeavour to determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so staff will be careful not to make assumptions.
- Some issues may be brought into the early childhood service by the child, arising from comments made by adults outside the service. Staff will recognise when it is an adult issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child's parents or guardians.
- An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussions, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling children out in the group.
- By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings.
- It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. All staff will be mindful that early childhood practitioners are role models for the children and the early childhood service. Children will do as we do. (The *éist* manual- Ar an mBealach, 2010, Pavee Point)

The Inclusion Co-ordinator within our service is \_\_\_\_\_.

More information on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion is included in the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2016).

If you, as a staff member or a parent, feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow **Named Service's** Complaints Policy.

**This policy links with our -**

- Admissions policy
- Child Protection policy
- Staff training policy
- Supervision policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Complaints policy
- Partnership with Parents
- Recruitment policy
- Students and Volunteers

**Person Responsible:** \_\_\_\_\_

**This policy was adopted by (NAME OF SERVICE) on Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **On behalf of Management**  
**(Manager, Owner, Chairperson)**

**Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note this is a guide to a policy and procedure. It is not meant to be directly copied and it is highly recommended that all members develop documents specific to their service and needs. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other essentials required.*