05 Promoting inclusion, equality and valuing diversity policy

This policy was adopted by Billy & Boo Preschools on 01st September 2026.

All early years providers must meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Providers must eliminate unlawful discrimination, including direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination by association or perception, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination arising from disability. They must also make reasonable adjustments to ensure accessibility and inclusion. This duty is anticipatory, requiring providers to consider and address potential barriers in advance.

Providers must advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations, and promote inclusion for people with the protected characteristics of:

- Disability
- Race (including ethnicity)
- Religion or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership (in relation to employment)

Providers also have obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015, updated 2023) which highlights the need to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

Aim

Billy & Boo Preschools actively promotes inclusion, equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity. We are committed to embedding a culture of inclusion, equality and diversity in everything we do, ensuring that everyone feels respected, valued and welcomed, and has equitable opportunities to develop and thrive.

Objectives

We support the Early Childhood Forum definition of inclusion:

"Inclusion is the process of identifying, understanding and breaking down the barriers to participation and belonging."

We apply this principle to children, families, visitors and staff by identifying and removing barriers that may affect participation, wellbeing and belonging.

We recognise and challenge unlawful behaviour, including direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination by association or perception, harassment and victimisation. We also acknowledge the additional inequalities that may be experienced by those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

We do not tolerate prejudice, discrimination or xenophobic behaviour towards any individual or group, whether from within or outside the UK.

Through training and professional development, we support staff to understand:

- The causes and impact of discrimination.
- The long-term effects of discrimination on children and adults.
- Their responsibility to provide accessible, inclusive practice.
- The importance of supporting positive identity, confidence and self-esteem.

Our Practice

Billy & Boo Preschools promotes inclusion and equality by:

Partnership with families

- Encouraging families to share information about themselves, their culture, what is important to them and any barriers they may experience.
- Offering flexible opportunities for families to contribute and participate and reducing communication barriers.
- Respecting different cultural perspectives and parenting practices while working in partnership with parents and carers.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals to ensure children with additional needs and disabilities are supported, and that practice is developmentally appropriate and inclusive.

Training and professional development for staff

- Recognising colleagues lived experience and encouraging them to share their own experiences and knowledge.
- Accessing training and supporting staff to work confidently within a culturally diverse community and to challenge practices that are not in a child's best interests.
- Using induction, supervision, and reflective practice to review inclusive practice, challenge assumptions, and agree on actions to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

- Using recruitment practices that aim to ensure a workforce that reflects cultural and linguistic diversity, includes individuals with disabilities, and is representative of all genders

Creating an inclusive environment and removing barriers to access

- Recognising and valuing the multiple factors that shape individual identity, including culture, ethnicity, language, religion, belief, gender, disability, family structure, socio-economic background and life experiences.
- Welcoming all children and families and not discriminating against any group or individual with regard to admissions, attendance, participation or access to support.
- Identifying, removing or minimising barriers to participation wherever possible, through regular accessibility audits completed using 01.1b Access audit form and reviewing any adjustments made with families and staff regularly
- Challenging stereotypes and supporting positive self-esteem and self-concept by ensuring that children and families can see themselves positively reflected in the environment and resources.
- Promoting bilingualism, multilingualism and alternative communication methods.

Inclusive, play based curriculum and resources

- Creating an accessible, developmentally appropriate environment and play based experiences that reflect and celebrate the diversity of children, families and communities.
- Embedding actively anti-racist practice by challenging stereotypes, avoiding tokenism, and ensuring that representations of race and culture are accurate, respectful and celebratory.
- Planning for each child or young person as an individual, taking account of their interests, abilities, communication, home language(s), culture, family structure and lived experience.
- Overcoming gender stereotypes by promoting gender-equal play, using inclusive language, and auditing resources for bias.
- Supporting children to develop a positive self-image and a sense of belonging through personal, social and emotional development experiences, and through respectful conversations about similarity and differences in age-appropriate ways.
- Reviewing resources regularly and removing or adapting any materials that promote bias, stereotypes, or exclusion.

Responding to discrimination, bias and exclusion

- Not tolerating discriminatory behaviour, language, harassment, or victimisation from anyone, including staff, parents, visitors and external agencies within our setting or services.
- Addressing discriminatory behaviour from children in a sensitive, age-appropriate manner.
- Supporting children, families and staff involved in understanding the impact of what has happened, repairing relationships, and feeling safe and included.
- Using equality and anti-discrimination legislation to support children, families and staff who may experience prejudice or discrimination.

Monitoring, reviewing and working to continuously improve

- Regularly monitoring and reviewing our practice and environment through audits, action plans and evaluation processes to ensure equality, accessibility and inclusion remain embedded in all aspects of provision.
- Seeking regular feedback from children, parents/carers and staff to understand whether people feel respected, valued and welcomed and whether any barriers to access remain.

Legal Framework

- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Equality Act 2010

05.1 Promoting inclusion, equality and valuing diversity

We actively promote inclusion, equality of opportunity and value diversity. All early years setting have legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Those in receipt of public funding also have public equality duties to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, foster good relations with individuals and groups with protected characteristics namely disability, race (ethnicity), religion and belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership. Settings also have obligations under the Prevent Duty (2015 updated 2023) which highlights the need to foster equality and prevent children from being drawn into harm and radicalisation.

Promoting identity, positive self-concept and self-esteem for all children through treating each child as an individual and with equal concern, ensuring each child's developmental and emotional needs are recognised and met.

- Promoting inclusive practice to ensure every child is welcomed and valued.
- Discussing aspects of family/child identity with parents when settling in a new child.
- Maintaining a positive non-judgemental attitude and use of language with children to talk about topics such as family composition/background, eye and skin colour, hair texture, sex, gender, physical attributes and languages spoken (including signing).
- Becoming knowledgeable about different cultures, and individual subjective perceptions of these and being able to reflect them imaginatively and creatively in the setting to create pride, interest and positive self-identity.
- Discussing similarities and differences positively without bias and judgement.
- Celebrating festivals, holy days and special days authentically through involving parents, staff or the wider community to provide a positive experience for all.

- Providing books with positive images of children and families from all backgrounds and abilities. Avoiding caricatures or cartoon-like depictions, and ensuring individual differences are portrayed with sensitive accuracy. The central characters in individual stories should provide a positive, broad representation of diversity e.g. disability, ethnicity, sex and gender, age and social backgrounds. Individual storylines should contain a range of situations which are easily identifiable by children such as those that include disabled children/adults, different ethnic groups, mixed heritage families, gender diversity, single sex/same and different sex families, multi-generational households and cultural diversity.
- Providing visual materials, such as posters and pictures that provide non-stereotypical images of people, places and cultures and roles that are within children's range of experience. This includes photographs taken by staff of the local and wider community, of parents and families and local events.
- Using textiles, prints, sculptures or carvings from diverse cultures in displays.
- Providing artefacts from a range of cultures, particularly for use in all areas of the setting, not just in the home corner.
- Ensuring toys, learning materials and resources reflect diversity and provide relevant materials for exploring aspects of difference, such as skin tone paints and pens.
- Developing a range of activities through which children can explore aspects of their identity, explore similarities, differences and develop empathy including:
    - self-portraits, photograph albums and displays showing a range of families
    - books about 'me' or my family
    - persona doll stories which sympathetically and authentically represent diversity
    - food activities, such as tasting and cooking, creating real menu additions
    - activities about real celebrations such as new babies, weddings, cultural and religious events
    - use of textiles and secular artefacts in the room, and to handle and explore, that demonstrate valuing of the cultures from which they come
    - creating textiles such as tie dying, batik and creative use of textiles
    - provide mirrors at different heights for babies and other non-ambulant children
    - developing a music area with a variety of musical instruments for babies and children to use to create a range of music.
    - creating an art and mark making area with a variety of materials from other countries such as wood blocks for printing, Chinese calligraphy brushes etc.
    - home corner play which encourages all children to equally participate and provides domestic articles from diverse cultures
    - 'dressing up' materials which promote non-gendered roles and enable children to explore different gender identities/gender neutrality
    - providing dolls that sensitively and accurately portray difference such as disability and ethnicity

- use of a variety of music to play to children of different genres and cultural styles with a variety of musical instruments for children to access
- a language and literacy area with a variety of books, some with dual language texts and signs, involving parents in the translation where possible
- tapes with stories read in English and other languages
- examples of writing in other scripts from everyday sources such as papers and magazines, packaging etc. children's names written on cards in English as well as in their home language script where appropriate
- labels for children's paintings or other work are made with their name in English and home language script (parents can help with this)
- conversations with young children which explore unfamiliar objects and subjects to help foster an understanding of diversity and identity such as spectacles or hearing aids, religious and cultural practices

- Record keeping that refers to children's emerging bilingual skills or their use of sign language as achievements in positive terms.
- Record keeping that refers to children's differing abilities and identities in positive terms.
- Records that show the relevant involvement of all children, especially children with special educational needs and disabilities, those using English as an additional language and those who are 'more abled' in the planning of their care and education.

Fostering positive attitudes and challenging discrimination.

- Young children are learning how to grow up in a diverse world and develop appropriate attitudes. This can be difficult, and they may make mistakes and pick up inappropriate attitudes or just get the 'wrong idea' that may underlie attitudes of 'pre-prejudice' towards specific individuals/groups. Where children make remarks or behave in a discriminatory or prejudice way or make inappropriate comments that arise from not knowing facts, staff should explain why these actions are not acceptable and provide appropriate information and intervention to reinforce children's understanding and learning.
- Where children make overtly prejudice or discriminatory remarks they are dealt with as above, and the issue is raised with the parents.
- When children wish to explore aspects of their identity such as ethnicity or gender, they should be listened to in an understanding and non-judgemental way.
- Parents are expected to abide by the policy for inclusion, diversity and equality and to support their child in the aims of the setting.

Implementing an equality strategy to foster a 'can do' approach

- Every setting should have an equality strategy in place outlining their vision on equality alongside a timetabled list of actions summarising how they build equality into the provision and how this is monitored and evaluated.
- An equality check and access audit are completed to ensure that there are no barriers to inclusion of any child, families and visitors to the setting.
- Early years settings in receipt of nursery education funding are covered by the public sector equality duty. These bodies must have regard of the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled persons, and publish information to show their compliance with the duty.

Promoting dynamic and balanced mixed gender, culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse staff teams who work constructively together in providing for diverse communities.

- It is recognised that members of staff in diverse teams bring a range of views and opinions to the setting regarding a range of issues to do with the job. It is important that a range of views and perspectives are shared and respected in staff meetings and that decisions are made on which way of looking at the situation will result in the best outcomes for the child.
- Staff views are sought where these offer individuals, social and/or cultural insight, although staff should not be put in an uncomfortable position of being an ‘expert’ or ‘ambassador’.
- Staff respect similarities and differences between each other and users such as ability, disability, religious and personal beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment etc. Staff do not discriminate or harass individuals on the grounds of these or encourage any other member of staff to do so; evidence of such will be dealt with by management immediately.
- Members of staff make the best use of different perspectives in the team to find solutions to difficult problems that arise in socially/culturally complex situations.
- Members of staff support each other to highlight similarities and respect differences.
- Members of staff of both sexes carry out all tasks according to their job description; there are no jobs that are designated men’s or women’s jobs.
- Staff are sensitive to the fact that male workers are under-represented in the early years workforce so may be more likely to experience inequality and discrimination.
- Staff should be aware that male workers may be more vulnerable to allegations. Therefore, work practices should be developed to minimise this. These practices are valuable for all staff.
- Where staff may feel threatened, or under attack, from discriminatory behaviour, staff and managers follow procedure 01.12 Threats and abuse towards staff and volunteers.

- There is an ethos wherein staff, parents and children are free to express themselves and speak their own languages in ways that enhance the culture of the setting.

Ensuring that barriers to equality and inclusion are identified and removed or minimised wherever possible.

- Barriers may include:
  - lack of understanding - where the language spoken at the setting is not that which is spoken at a child's home
  - perceived barriers – affordability where parents are not aware of financial support available or assume that a service is not available to them. Perceived barriers may also be physical barriers for those children or parents with a disability or additional needs where they assume, they will not be able to access the service
  - physical barriers – where there are environmental features which stop a disabled child or disabled parent accessing the setting such as stairs
  - negative attitudes – stereotypes and prejudices or commitment by staff and managers to the time and energy required to identify and remove barriers to accessibility
  - unconscious and conscious bias of staff towards some families such as those from other backgrounds, disabled parents, same sex parents and families with specific religious beliefs
  - gendered views of staff which limit children's aspirations and choices
  - misconceptions such as disabled children should not attend settings during a pandemic due to heightened risk
  - lack of effective Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the homes of families who are vulnerable or at risk and therefore unable to keep in close contact with the childcare provider
- Staff are aware of the different barriers to inclusion and equality and consider the wider implications for children and their families.

Supporting children to become considerate adults

- Children's social and emotional development is shaped by early experiences and relationships and incorporates elements of equality and British and Universal values. The EYFS supports children's earliest skills in an age appropriate way to become social citizens, namely listen and attend to instructions; know the difference between right and wrong; recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others; make and maintain friendships; develop empathy and consideration of

other people; take turns in play and conversation; risk taking behaviours, rules and boundaries; not to hurt/upset other people with words and actions; consequences of hurtful/discriminatory behaviour and regulating behaviour.

British values

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are further clarified here based on *Fundamental British values in the Early Years* (https://foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Fundamental-British-Values-in-the-Early-Years-2017.pdf)

Democracy: making decisions together

- For self-confidence and self-awareness (PSED), educators encourage children to see the bigger picture, children know their views count, value each other's views and values and talk about feelings e.g. when they do or do not need help.
- Supporting the decisions children make and providing activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration. Children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds, where questions are valued and prejudice attitudes less likely.

Rule of law: understanding rules matter (PSED)

- Educators ensure children understand their and others' behaviour and consequence.
- Educators collaborate with children to create rules and codes of behaviour, e.g. rules about tidying up and ensure all children understand that rules apply to everyone.

Individual liberty: freedom for all (PSED & UW)

- Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, exploring facets of their own identity, talking about their experiences and learning. Educators encourage a range of experiences, allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example in a small group discuss what they feel about transferring into Reception Class.

Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated (PSED & UW)

- Staff create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community.

- Children should acquire tolerance, appreciation and respect for their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between themselves, others and among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions.
- Staff encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other's opinions.
- Staff promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural/racial stereotyping.

It is not acceptable to:

- actively promote intolerance of other faiths, cultures and races
- fail to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregate girls and boys
- isolate children from their wider community
- fail to challenge behaviours (whether of staff, children, or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs