



“A Confident Start in a Caring Environment”



HOME FARM CHILDREN'S NURSERY LTD (HFCN)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY (including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

Last updated:	June 2025
Next review:	June 2026
Ratified By:	HFCN Board

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY (including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

This is a Statutory Policy

Introduction

Equality legislation exists to protect people and also to try to advance equality.

The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to protected characteristics:

- Age (for staff only, regarding direct discrimination for services and public functions)
- Marriage and civil partnership (for staff only, regarding direct discrimination)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including nurseries.

HFCN Nurseries are committed to creating a working environment that ensures fair and equal treatment of all employees, visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors. We are also committed to ensuring that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children. We recognise that children and their families come from a wide range of backgrounds with diverse needs, beliefs and values.

All employees, visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors must abide by this policy. Those with specific responsibilities for recruitment, selection, training, appraisal and promotion should be especially mindful of the policy. Failure to comply with this policy may result in an enquiry and subsequent disciplinary action.

HFCN embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole HFCN community: children, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies.

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of opportunity and diversity in the areas of recruitment, development and promotion.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our settings.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, sexual orientation, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

- To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of HFCN life.

Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our HFCN community.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared Humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values; aspirations and needs.
- Valuing difference and diversity.
- Social cohesion within our settings.
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement.
- Personal and cultural identity.

Our vision statement about Equality

HFCN nurseries seek to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met where possible.

Policy Statement

We will ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children, particularly those that arise from their ethnic heritage, social and economic background, gender, ability or disability. Our setting is committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children and families.

We aim to:

- provide non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people.
- provide a secure and accessible environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued.
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity.
- include our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity.
- make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities in the setting.

We are committed to making our settings accessible for all children and their families and will make reasonably necessary adjustments wherever possible to meet their individual needs.

Admissions

We provide information in clear concise language whether in written or spoken form.

Our setting is open to all members of the community and we base our admissions policy on a fair system.

Employment

Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against the explicit and fair criteria. Information about how staff are recruited and employed and that no one would be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, race, culture, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation and marital status.

We welcome applicants from all backgrounds and posts are open to all. Job descriptions include a commitment to promote equality and recognising and respecting diversity as part of their specifications. The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Disclosure Barring Service. This ensures fairness in the selection process.

Training

We seek training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practise so enabling all children to flourish.

All staff have equal access to training opportunities.

The Management Team monitors staff to ensure they are implanting our agreed policy and ethos. Where staff demonstrate a lack of awareness and understanding, additional support is given. If, however, the behaviour persists, disciplinary policy and procedures will be considered.

Curriculum

The curriculum offered in our settings encourages children to develop positive attitudes of themselves as well as people who are different to them. We encourage children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of respect and positive attitudes towards diversity and difference.

HFCN ensures that all children have equal access to learning. When required, adjustments are made to the environment and resources to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical, and sensory impairments.

HFCN promotes equality by providing materials and resources that reflect diversity positively and avoid stereotyping.

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At our nurseries, we recognise that all children have different learning styles and through observations will identify the uniqueness of the child and will provide an appropriate environment and resources to meet their individual needs and interests.

We ensure that any child learning English as an additional language, has full access to the curriculum and is supported in their learning e.g. speech and language therapy team.

Monitoring and Reviewing

To ensure our policies and procedures remain effective, we monitor regularly and review annually, to ensure our strategies meet our overall aims in promoting equality, inclusion and valuing diversity.

Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs

Policy statement

We provide an environment in which all children, including those with special educational needs, are supported to reach their full potential. We work in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies in meeting individual children's needs. We have regard for the DfE codes of Practice for Special Educational Needs and work proactively with parents to ensure a two-way process for sharing information to meet the child's needs.

Procedures

- We designate a member of staff to be the special educational needs co-ordinator and give his or her name to parents/carers.
- We ensure that the provision for children with SEND is the responsibility of all staff members. Our inclusive admissions practice ensures equality of access and opportunity.
- We use the graduated response system for identifying, assessing and responding to children's special educational needs.
- We inform parents at all stages of assessment, planning provision and review of their child's education.
- We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum for all children with special educational needs and disabilities
- We liaise with other professionals involved with children and their families including transfer arrangements to other settings and schools.
- We have systems in place for supporting children through the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process (including Target and Personalised Plans).
- We provide resources (human and financial) to implement our SEND policy and provide in-house training for practitioners.
- We raise awareness of any specialism the setting has to offer e.g. Makaton trained staff and following the 'Every Child A Talker' programme.
- We ensure the effectiveness of our SEND provision by collecting information from a range of sources which includes Individual Educational Plans, reviews, staff and management meetings, parent/carer and/or external agency views, inspections and complaints. This information is collected, evaluated and reviewed.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff from discrimination. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with others.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice-based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

All incidents will be recorded (log available in the Nursery office). This information will be used to identify trends and patterns, enabling us to implement appropriate responses and support for victims and their families.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the safeguarding policy.

Equality Objectives

Using the views of students, parents, carers, staff and community and analysis of the information as outlined above we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty.

Useful documentation/websites:

Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Direct.gov website includes information about SEN and links to other helpful websites:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SpecialEducationalNeeds/index.htm