



## **INCLUSION POLICY (incorporating Equal Opportunities)**

Our aim is that everyone who comes to Footprints will feel included and able to access all activities.

Footprints Pre-school Playgroup welcomes all children and their families. We aim to provide a nurturing environment in which children, families, staff and visitors are encouraged and enabled to be involved in the life of Footprints and in which all contributions are valued.

No child or adult is excluded on grounds of ability, belief, class, culture, ethnic origin, family status, gender, language, sexuality or status of residency.

Inclusion is an integral part of all our activities, helping children and adults to:

- reach their full potential
- value themselves
- value the diversity of others
- see themselves as a valued member of the Footprints community

We are committed to monitoring our practice to continue to ensure it is effective and up to date in every aspect.

**ADMISSIONS**    Footprints is open to all members of the community.

- We advertise our service widely within the community.
- We reflect the diversity of members of our community in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- All children are admitted fairly, in order of date of birth, regardless of developmental age or ability.
- We ensure that all parents are made aware of our inclusion policy.
- Our admissions policy is available on request.

**EMPLOYMENT**    Everyone who wants to work at Footprints has an equal opportunity to do so.  
(see also Recruitment Policy)

- All posts are advertised in the local community.
- We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible.
- All applications are treated fairly and applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
- The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references, Disclosure and Barring Service check and medical clearance.
- All job descriptions include a commitment to implementing the Inclusion Policy.
- The needs of disabled staff are accommodated whenever possible.

- There is an ongoing rota for updating essential staff training. Other courses which are particularly useful to the setting are shared amongst all staff. In addition, all staff can request specific training to improve their practice (where finances allow). Inclusion is considered an essential subject.
- There are opportunities to feedback the training at planning and staff meetings.
- All staff members are encouraged to be involved in the running of the setting by taking an active part in planning and staff meetings. Each member of staff has a responsibility to oversee a particular learning area. There is a rota for daily duties and all staff take turns leading e.g. story/song sessions and register. Members of staff are also encouraged to attend the Footprints committee meetings.
- Members of staff have equal opportunity to apply for any promotion which might become available.
- As far as is possible, all meetings are arranged at times when all staff can attend and everyone is encouraged to contribute.
- Time is made available during or immediately after a session for observation, planning, record keeping, other paperwork and meetings.
- Flexibility in working hours is possible as long as the session hours are covered with the required ratio of staff to children.

## **FAMILIES**    We value the contact we have with the children's families.

- Footprints welcome the diversity of family life. Members of staff show a respectful interest in each family, acknowledge their feelings and offer support where possible.
- We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers, for the best interests of their children.
- During their home visit, information is gathered about each child, their favourite activities at home, particular family names for things (e.g. toileting), anyone who will bring/collect the child, as well as names of siblings. Parents/Carers are encouraged to share their special knowledge and expertise with regard to their child's care and well being.
- On the child's first day, a telephone call is made to the parent/ carer to let them know how their child is settling in.
- At the beginning and end of each session a Footprints leader talks to the parents/carers as a group (in the waiting room) to give them a summary of the session's activities and any notices. Each child and their parent/carer is greeted by a member of staff as they enter/leave the main room. The staff give brief feedback to the parent/ carer and are available for short informal conversations. When a longer discussion is required, a meeting will be arranged for a mutually convenient time.
- Staff use names of family members/carers in conversation with them and their children.
- Children are encouraged to share stories of their everyday life.
- All the major festivals, which are celebrated in our area and/or by the families involved in Footprints, as well as a variety of festivals from other faiths, will be marked in a respectful, informative and enjoyable way.
- Information is communicated clearly in a variety of ways — written, pictorial and verbal- and in as many languages as necessary. Languages of families and children whose first language is not English, will be used e.g. in labelling, literature and where possible, some speech by staff and children at Footprints.

- Children and staff wear Footprints tee-shirts and sweatshirts to encourage a sense of belonging.
- Children's families are encouraged to share their skills, experiences and culture – for example, by bringing in photos, books, objects, etc. or talking to the children. All contributions are valued. Families also have opportunities to borrow Footprints books and other resources to share at home.
- In order to maintain the setting, Footprints has a set fee structure. However, we can offer some flexibility for families unable to meet the fees. This is assessed according to the needs of the family and the financial situation of the setting.
- Meetings are arranged at various times to ensure that all families who wish to attend may do so.
- Details of the management committee are given to every parent/carer and every one can join the committee if they wish. The chairperson ensures that the roles are shared out fairly based on the mutual consent of the individuals involved.
- Children with communication disabilities are given home/school books, personal picture books and/or visual diaries so that their families can share in what they are doing at Footprints.
- All parents/carers have equal opportunities for volunteering to help with the day to day running of Footprints (from helping during a session to washing a bag of toys). No one would be penalised in any way for not volunteering.
- Extended family and friends are invited and welcomed at Footprints special events.

## **CURRICULUM**      Our aim is for all children to be included in all activities.

- All children are respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured.
- The emotional well being of each child is essential for effective learning so every effort is made to help each child feel safe and settled and to strengthen their self-esteem.
  - ~ The child's Key Person spends time with them and their parent/carer on their home visit and their Visit Day at Footprints, beginning to build relationships, finding out their favourite activities and special interests, identifying any special needs and familiarising them with the setting and its routines.
  - ~ Children are encouraged to make their own choices as much as possible; - they can choose e.g. their activity, when they have snack during snack time, whether they play inside or out and there is free access to most of the resources – including art and craft materials.
  - ~ Children are encouraged to access activities and resources independently and to do things for themselves (e.g. dressing, toileting, washing hands, peeling fruit) as far as is possible with support being given where necessary.
  - ~ Each child is encouraged to share and celebrate their interests, skills or achievements and those of the other children.
- The special interests and learning needs of each child are identified then activities are planned to reinforce and develop their skills.
- Planning is done with inclusion in mind so the activities and equipment are modified, and/or specific support is given, to help all children access all activities.

- Children are encouraged to empathise with others and to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from themselves. The members of staff model positive, caring attitudes of mutual respect both in the setting as a whole (adult to child and adult to adult) and in specific situations (e.g. showing children how to deal with conflict and other relationship problems without hostility).
- Footprints aims to help the children learn to value diversity by showing that we value each child and adult who enters the setting and by providing a wide variety of experiences, (including visits, visitors, resources, images and celebrating a wide range of festivals) presented in a positive and enthusiastic way.
- At Footprints, discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable whether from children or adults. Any such behaviour or remarks will be sensitively but firmly challenged. We aim to be sensitive to the feelings of the victim of the incident, whilst helping the person responsible to understand and overcome their prejudice.

## **RESOURCES**      We select resources to educate, enlighten and to be enjoyed.

- The building we use is situated in a residential street with level access from the pavement. The entrance is via a concrete ramp with handrail and all rooms are on one level. We make any reasonable adjustments to improve accessibility.
- The setting environment is laid out clearly and consistently, with plenty of space to move between activities and a wide variety of well-organised and carefully chosen books, toys and other resources.
- Learning areas, resources, and facilities are labelled using a mixture of text and visual cues. Children are encouraged to select their own resources wherever possible, to strengthen their problem-solving skills, creativity, confidence and independence.
- Visual and audio as well as verbal prompts are used to signal special times e.g. snack time or tidy up time.
- MAKATON signing, visual timetables and prompts are used for information, instruction and reinforcement of verbal input both with individuals and in whole group situations (e.g. 'Good morning' time and singing).
- The resources the children use reflect the widest possible range of communities. Materials are selected for Footprints with a conscious attempt to avoid or challenge stereotypes and derogatory messages, in order to help children develop both self-respect and respect for other people as well as appreciation of the rich diversity of our world. Our book collection includes books written in languages other than English to develop awareness in the children that there are many equally valuable languages in the world.
- Each child is encouraged to access and enjoy all resources (including those which they would not usually choose), with support or modification where necessary, to maximise their opportunities for fun, learning and to increase their confidence.
- Resources are chosen with an awareness of their sensory qualities – particularly texture, sound, colour and light to stimulate all aspects of children's learning. Similarly, textures, colours and smells are added to materials to provide a variety of possibilities for investigation (e.g. spices in the play dough and colouring in the water tray).

- We use our locality as a resource, with the aim of helping the children to value their community and to see themselves as an integral part of it – benefiting from, as well contributing, to their neighbourhood. This includes, for example, exploratory walks, visits to local parks, church, libraries and railway as well as outings to shop in the newsagent's and to post letters. Local people are also valued visitors e.g. the lollipop lady.
- Wherever possible children are given access to real life resources e.g. using real tools and wood for construction, real cooking implements, a mother bringing a real baby for them to learn about or someone bringing real animals for them to touch and observe (e.g. dogs, mice, lizards). All of these improve their self-esteem and add to their appreciation of diversity in the world.
- Our children and their families are an essential resource – sharing their experiences, knowledge, skills (including their languages), special celebrations as well as books and other items of interest.

## **FOOD**      We aim to meet all our children's dietary needs

We work in partnership with parents to ensure that the medical and cultural dietary needs of children are met.

All staff and helpers are made aware of all children's special dietary needs.

We aim to provide a wide variety of snacks, with regard to:

- Food groups: e.g. fruit, bread, cheese,
- Cultural diversity: e.g. bean sprouts, hummus, chapatti, exotic fruit
- Celebration: e.g. birthday cake, fortune cookie, pancakes
- Ways of eating: e.g. fingers, bowl and spoon, wrap, dip, chopsticks
- Healthy guidelines: balance, limiting intake of fat, salt and sugar.

We encourage a positive attitude towards trying new foods and ways of eating.

The children are involved in preparing the snack and in other cooking activities, learning where food comes from, different ways it can be eaten and uses of food in various celebrations worldwide.

Snack and lunch times are seen as social occasions at Footprints, where friendships can grow through conversation/ communication and children can learn respect for each other's tastes

## **MEDICAL NEEDS**      We aim to meet our children's medical needs

- We record and administer any special diet, medication or procedure where appropriate, after discussion and written agreement from parents/carers.
- Staff will attend training sessions, as necessary, to accommodate complex medical needs and will seek ongoing support from other professionals to ensure the child's fullest possible inclusion at Footprints.
- An individual health plan and an emergency plan will be drawn up for children with complex medical needs, in consultation with the child's parents/carers and relevant agencies.

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## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We continually monitor and evaluate our performance

- Parents/carers are encouraged to keep staff informed of any concerns about their child's well-being, on an ongoing basis.
- Members of staff watch for any signs that a child is having difficulty accessing an activity, a resource or an area and they take action to improve access (e.g. providing necessary equipment) and/or support the child.
- Other problem areas can be highlighted during informal interactions with a child or during more formal 'circle time' feedback.
- Footprints has adopted a comprehensive system of making and recording observations for each child. The Key Person analyses these notes to identify activities which the child is not accessing and remedies this by taking action personally and/or bringing the issue to the planning meeting to devise the best course of action.
- There is also an after-session evaluation, during which staff discuss any access problems and how to deal with them.
- Feedback about their experiences at Footprints is encouraged from children and parents/carers, both informally (e.g. chats) and formally (e.g. termly written comments; regular questionnaire; circle time).
- Footprints welcomes visits and seeks advice from other professional agencies which help make this pre-school playgroup as accessible and inclusive as possible.
- Any concerns raised/suggestions made are dealt with promptly. (see also Complaints Procedure)
- The Inclusion Policy will be reviewed and updated annually.
- **The named person responsible for Inclusion is Anne Herat.**

For further reference:

- Children Act 1989
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- DFES Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs 2001
- Equality Act 2010

Date reviewed..... 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014

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