

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY- March 2015

At Toots we aim to provide a setting that is welcoming towards everyone and educate our children to appreciate individual life styles, embracing both similarities and differences. We make every effort to ensure that our equal opportunities policy is user-friendly and that all legal requirements and regulations are met; thereby ensuring that everybody entering our premises feels at ease and is happy to be here. The equal opportunities practices laid out in this policy extend across all areas of nursery life. We expect our staff to act as positive role models for the children; parents/visitors must also adhere to our standards.

### **Nursery environment.**

We try to make sure that the nursery environment is welcoming and people enjoy their experiences here. Displays, toys, books and activities are designed to reflect a wide range of different backgrounds and situations. Staff will plan activities to meet the children's individual requirements and ensure that they are adapted to include all children. Staff will try to understand the children's home environment and socialisation in order to help children settle into the nursery. We find the best ways of communicating with families who may use different languages. All children have an allocated key person who will follow their progress and ensure that they are placed in the best room for their ability and continued development. Staff work with parents to ensure that the children's individual needs are met- physical, social, emotional and intellectual, providing suitable learning and developmental challenges for the children. All observations/assessments are carried out in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### **Respect for individuals.**

At Toots we treat everybody courteously. Respect, sensitivity and consideration must be shown at all times to adults and children alike, taking into account people's individuality and right to feel at ease and happy. Obvious considerations are: **Religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnic differences, family situations, special needs.**

Respect is shown through example and any instances of discriminatory behaviour by the children will be dealt with appropriately either through discussion or re-direction of play and activities. Staff will treat the child making the remarks sensitively and explain how their comments/ behaviour could upset the other child. Staff will use their judgement when dealing with incidents; this may be either on an individual or group basis according to the circumstances surrounding the remark eg; if a child or children discriminate against any particular child it may be appropriate to discuss this during circle time, enabling the staff to guide all the children to increase their understanding. Any ongoing discriminatory behaviour by a particular child will be discussed with his/her parents and a plan of action agreed. If parents discriminate in any way this will be discussed in line with our policies. If staff or students make discriminatory remarks they will be subject to re-training or face disciplinary procedures.

Every effort will be made to accommodate specific individual requirements within the nursery's daily routine taking mental, physical and spiritual needs into consideration. This may take the form of providing special equipment, spending time to help children acquire specific skills including language, covering cultural topics or responding to life events.

### **Child placements.**

Places will be allocated on a non- discriminatory basis. Siblings will be given priority due to the young ages of the children, and once sibling places have been allocated those at the top of the waiting list will be offered the next available place.

Parents must agree to our policies and procedures and be able to meet the financial commitment they undertake. We accept the 3 year old Education Grant, 2 year Education Grant and Childcare vouchers.

### **Cultural Differences and English as a second language**

Toots is in a highly multi-cultural area and we embrace people from many different ethnic origins. Our staff team reflects a range of cultures and additional languages enabling us to be more supportive of the different cultures represented amongst the children. If parents do not have a good grasp of English we ask relatives and staff to translate and have been able to do the same for staff with limited English.

We work in partnership with parents to ensure their wishes are met wherever practical and to ensure continuity of care. We encourage parents to share aspects of their cultures with us where appropriate to enhance the children and staff's understanding of different cultural influences and practice, adjusting nursery life to accommodate their child's needs; very important when settling a new child.

In order to enable all staff to feel comfortable in their working environment we actively re-inforce that staff speak to each other in English the majority of the time. They may speak with children in their native tongue where appropriate. We use books in different languages and songs to visually/verbally reflect different cultures.

### **Special Educational/Medical Needs**

We happily accept children with special educational/medical needs having assessed that our environment, practices and staff ratios will be able to meet their needs. We access all available resources to assist our children including specialist services. Please refer to separate special needs policy.

### **Family structure & Sexual orientation:**

Children come from different types of families including one parent families, same sex parents and extended families. Children are given freedom of choice in relation to play and often experiment with different roles, especially during imaginative play. Should any areas of concern arise from their comments, these will be addressed. We carefully select books and materials to reflect different family lifestyles and avoid stereotypical teaching; encouraging children to take part in all aspects of the curriculum. Children are taught the importance of individuality and respect. They are given freedom of expression particularly in group discussions. We recognize that occasionally our children are brought up within same sex relationships and will consult with parents as to how they would like this to be addressed in the children's work.

### **Recruitment**

We advertise for staff in different ways, dependent upon the vacancy. These include: locally and nationally in newspapers, professional magazines, via the internet and through the local job centre. Our aim is purely to enable suitable candidates to apply and our recruitment procedure is designed to select staff in line with safeguarding requirements.

Staff recruitment meets with current legislation. The most suitable candidate will be offered the job. Selection will be based upon the candidate's knowledge, availability and ability to do the job. Candidates will not be discriminated against due to their colour, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical appearance or special needs. We require a clear DBS check combined with good references prior to commencing work. Candidates who require a work permit will be expected to produce their passport and all other relevant home office documentation and provide details of their solicitor before commencement of employment.

### **Staff Requirements**

We expect staff to work as a team in-line with management's requirements. Staff undergo regular supervision to assess performance, concerns and to identify areas of interest/training requirements. We endeavour to accommodate all reasonable requests however the needs of the business are paramount.