UC5
Hertsmere Children's Manual
Equality and Diversity
Issue 4

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Introduction

Hertsmere Leisure Children's Centres and Nurseries welcome all and any family regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, physical, sensory or mental ability, age, social class, religious belief, sexual orientation, and individual needs. Staff will work together as a team to ensure each family has equal opportunities within Hertsmere Leisure Children's Centres and Nurseries.

In addition, Centre Staff have a responsibility to actively reinforce the values set out by Hertsmere Leisure. This policy encompasses adults as well as children. All adults will be welcomed to the settings in whatever capacity e.g. parent, carer, visitor and volunteer and nobody will be discriminated against, with inclusion of all being central to our vision.

Equal Opportunity

The child care settings aim to:

- Ensure that the existences of all Hertsmere Leisure Children's Centres are widely known in all local communities.
- Provide a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- Include and value the contribution of all staff, families, volunteers and outside agencies to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- Improve 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 Centre, promoted by staff.

We are strongly committed to encourage children to:

- Learn about various cultures.

- Celebrate different cultures festivals.
- Play with a wide range of multicultural activities and toys.
- Interact and respect each other's cultural and innate differences.
- Develop to their full potential in order that the achievement gap is narrowed.

We will expect all parents / carers to:

- Respect all child care setting users. Ground rules for families are on display at all our sessions, one of the rules focuses on equality and diversity.
- Refrain from making discriminatory remarks.

Admissions

The Children's Centres are open to all members of the community, with the aim that those families accessing our centres, reflects the community make up. The following steps are taken to achieve this:-

- We advertise our service widely.
- We reflect the diversity of families of our communities in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We base our admissions policy on a fair system.
- We ensure all staff, parents, volunteers, and outside agencies have access to our equal opportunities policy.
- We do not discriminate against a child and / or person or prevent entry to our Children's Centres and Nurseries, on the basis of colour, ethnicity, religion or social background, such as being a member of a travelling community or an asylum seeker, or a child with special educational needs or delayed personal development.
- We do not discriminate against a child and / or person with a disability or refuse a child and / or person entry to our setting because of any disability.
- We develop a plan to ensure that children / people with disabilities can participate successfully in the services offered by Hertsmere Leisure Children's Centres and in the curriculum offered in Starjumps Nurseries.
- All Hertsmere Leisure staff will encourage all children to develop a well grounded sense of their own value and worth and that of others.
- Be flexible about attendance patterns so as to accommodate the needs of the individual children and families.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff, parents, volunteers and outside agencies. Displaying of openly racist insignia, distribution of racist material, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on or around the premises and will be dealt with in the strongest manner.

- Consult with families about opening times and any major changes occurring in order to avoid excluding anyone.
- Monitor gender and ethnic background of children joining Hertsmere Leisure Children's Centres and Nurseries to ensure no accidental discrimination is taking place.
- Where appropriate the provision of a crèche is offered to parents in order that they can access adult learning sessions.

Staff will also encourage the children to care for themselves, each other, the setting, and the environment by doing the following:-

- The development of good relationships between children and adults.
- Recognising strengths and areas which need to be developed.
- Appreciating what each child is capable of or achieves.
- Being proud of each other and oneself.
- Celebrating all achievements.
- Showing respect for the setting's equipment and environment.
- Gaining knowledge and understanding of the environment and its inhabitants.

Employment

- Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria.
- Applicants are welcome from all backgrounds and posts are open to all.
- We may use the exemption clauses of the Race Relations Act and the Sex discrimination Act where this is necessary to enable the service to best meet the needs of the community.
- The applicant who best meets the criteria is offered the post, subject to references and checks by the Criminal Records Bureau. This ensures fairness in the selection process.
- All job descriptions include a commitment to equality and diversity as part of their specifications.
- We monitor our application process to ensure that it is fair and accessible and work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by our imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable.

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices.
- We will review our practices on an annual basis to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Valuing Diversity in the Community

- We value the diversity of family lifestyles and we will endeavour to work with all families, in order to promote community cohesion.
- For people who speak languages in addition to English we will endeavour to develop means to ensure their full inclusion.
- Service development is based on the needs of the individual Children's Centre communities. Services are delivered for the main Children's Centres as well as community venues. All venues undergo accessibility checklist in order to assess their suitability.

Starjumps Nursery – Curriculum

The curriculum offered in Starjumps Nursery encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different form themselves. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking. Staff will plan and organise for the different needs of children enabling the development of their skills and knowledge to their full potential.

We do this by:

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves;
- Ensuring that children have equality of access to learning;
- Recognising the different learning styles of children, making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities;
- Positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resource;
- Avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual materials;
- Celebrating a wide range of festivals;
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
- Helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;
- Ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities;

- Ensuring that children learning English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning;
- Ensuring that children speaking languages other than English are supported in the maintenance and development of their home languages.
- Staff will plan and organise for the different needs of children enabling the development of their skills and knowledge to their full potential.

Starjumps Nursery - Valuing Diversity in the Family

- We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
- We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life to the setting.
- We encourage parents / carers to take part in the life of the setting and to contribute fully.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion.
- We offer a flexible payment system for families of differing means and offer information regarding sources of financial support.

Food

- We work in partnership with parents to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met.
- We help children to learn about a range of food and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating and to respect the differences among them.

Please refer to **Special Educational Needs/Additional Needs/Disabilities**, **Local-Multi Agency Information Sharing, Food & Drink, Parent/Carer Partnership, Customer Communication** and **Behaviour Management** procedures.

Review:

This procedure is reviewed every two years.

Internal Forms:

- Risk assessments
- Relevant Site Specific Work Instructions
- Registration Forms
- Customer Comment Cards
- Ground rules for sessions
- Accessibility Checklist.

Sources of Information

- Health & Safety Manual
- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- Children Act 1989
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995