



Friends of the Family Winchester

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Friends of the Family is committed to valuing diversity by providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families, staff and volunteers.

AIMS

We aim to:

- promote a secure environment in which all our families can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide positive non-stereotyping information, mentoring and follow best practice about gender roles, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and people with disabilities;
- improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity by participating in training and other means; and
- make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of Friends of the Family.

METHODS

Access

- We advertise our service and the values which underpin it to all appropriate referrers.
- We reflect the diversity of members of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We communicate in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We ensure that all parents and staff and volunteers are made aware of our Equality and Diversity Policy.
- We follow best practice to ensure we do not discriminate against a child or their family, staff or volunteers, or prevent access to our services, on the basis of colour, ethnicity, religion, gender or social background. Likewise, we ensure we do not discriminate against anyone with a disability.
- We develop an action plan to ensure that people with disabilities can participate successfully in the services we offer.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff, volunteers, children or their parents. Displaying of openly racist insignia, distribution of racist or otherwise offensive material, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable and will be challenged appropriately.
- We commit to report on our work on equality to our Annual General Meeting.

Staff and Volunteers

- Posts including volunteer opportunities, 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 enhanced checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and health clearance. This supports fairness in the selection process.
- All role 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.

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which enable all individuals to flourish.
- We regularly review our practices to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Activities

We offer activities that encourage children and their parents to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as about people who are different from them. It encourages them to empathise with others and to develop the skills of critical thinking.

We do this by:

- making individuals feel valued and good about themselves;
- ensuring that children and their parents have equality of access to activities and resources that reflect the diversity of the community.
- recognising that there are different learning styles and ensuring that everyone receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities;
- avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books and other materials;
- celebrating occasions that are significant to our children and their families;
- creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
- helping individuals to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;
- ensuring that the activities offered are inclusive of children and adults with special needs and those with English as an additional language.

Valuing diversity in families

- We work in partnership with all families and welcome and respect the diversity of individual family lifestyles.
- We encourage children to contribute stories of their everyday life.
- We encourage parents/carers to contribute to the activities of Friends of the Family.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to ensure their full inclusion.
- We offer families information regarding sources of financial support and offer a flexible contribution system for group sessions to reflect individual needs.

Policy reviewed and approved at Friends of the Family Trustee Meeting on 21/05/2021

Signed



Chair of Trustees

Review Date: January 2024