

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The U. N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) states:

“It is the State’s obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights”.

Policy Statement of Intent

Omagh Early Years is an Equal opportunities employer. We will promote a good and harmonious working environment in which our employees, parents, children and users of the centre will be treated with dignity and respect. Omagh Early Years Centre is committed to promoting equality of opportunity by providing activities, which are open to all children and their families and to adults committed to their welfare. We will not discriminate unlawfully against or harass any person on the grounds of-

Sex	Pregnancy or maternity	Gender reassignment
Marital or Civil partnership status	Religious or similar belief	Political opinion
Racial group	Sexual orientation	Disability
Age		

We aim to ensure that all individuals who wish to work in Omagh Early years Centre as staff or volunteers have an equal opportunity to do so. We provide equal opportunities through a wide range of policies and procedures which are reflected in the practice of Omagh Early Years Centre.

Employees Rights

Our employees have a right to work in a good and harmonious environment that is free from discrimination and harassment and to complain about such behaviour should it occur.

We have established an internal grievance procedure to deal with such complaints. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Our internal grievance procedure does not replace the right of aggrieved employees to also pursue complaints to an Industrial Tribunal or the Fair Employment Tribunal.

Employees who make complaints of discrimination and harassment, and others who give evidence or information in connection with such complaints, will not be victimised (i.e. they will not be discriminated against or harassed in retaliation for their actions). Victimisation is also discrimination contrary to the equality laws and this policy.

Employees’ Responsibilities

Omagh Early Years employees must comply with this policy. They must treat each other with dignity and respect. They must not themselves commit any acts of unlawful

discrimination or harassment against any other person. Such behaviour will not be permitted or condoned. We will treat it as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment.

All our employees should discourage discrimination and harassment by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting co-workers who suffer such treatment. Any employee who is aware of any incident of discrimination and harassment should alert the Centre Manager or Quality of Care Manager to enable us to deal with it.

Employer's responsibilities

We will continually make good faith efforts to implement this policy. This responsibility will be carried out by both the Centre manager and the Quality of Care Manager. We will-

- provide all employees and managers with a copy of this policy and explain it to them.
- ensure that all complaints of discrimination or harassment are dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially and in accordance with our internal grievance procedure.
- set a good example by treating employees with fairness, dignity and respect.
- be alert to unacceptable behaviour and will take appropriate action to stop it.
- monitor all incidents of discrimination and harassment and review the effectiveness of this policy periodically.

Our Responsibilities to children.

All children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognized, valued and nurtured. Activities and the use of play equipment will offer children opportunities to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination. Opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Resources

Resources and materials that positively and accurately reflect cultural and racial diversity will be provided within the Centre. These materials will help children to develop self-respect and respect for others by avoiding stereotypes.

Boys and girls will have equal opportunities and will be actively encouraged to use all activities.

As we aim to show an awareness of and respect for all major events in the lives of children and families we will acknowledge a range of festivals which are celebrated by families from our local community and in the wider society. If a parent has any concerns regarding this they should discuss the issues with the Room Leader, Quality of Care Manager or Centre Manager.

The Centre will make every effort to ensure that all parents/carers are invited to attend information meetings and the Annual General Meeting to ensure equal access of information and involvement.

Monitoring and review

We are registered with the Equality Commission for the purposes of the *Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998*. As such we are obliged to monitor the community background and sex of our job applicants and workforce. We are also obliged to review the composition of our workforce and our employment policies and practices every three years and, where appropriate, to consider taking affirmative action to promote fair participation between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities. In addition, we will also monitor and review our job applicants and workforce in relation equality characteristics.

Other Key Policies

Grievance Policy
Disciplinary Policy
Special Needs Policy
Admissions Policy
Confidentiality Policy
Partnership with Parents Policy