



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Statement of intent

At Cherish Childcare we are committed to equality of opportunity, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice. We want every child and family to feel seen, valued, respected and able to participate fully in nursery life.

We recognise that children and families have different identities, experiences, cultures, languages, family structures, abilities and needs. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or unfair treatment and will take appropriate action where these occur.

This policy is implemented alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers and our safeguarding, SEND, behaviour, admissions, recruitment and other relevant nursery procedures.

Our aims

- create a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child can flourish and develop a strong sense of belonging;
- ensure children and families are treated fairly, respectfully and without discrimination;
- recognise and celebrate the diversity of our nursery community in meaningful, age-appropriate ways;
- challenge stereotypes, bias and discriminatory language or behaviour;
- remove or reduce barriers to participation wherever reasonably practicable;
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and adults where required;
- support children with SEND through early identification, appropriate provision and partnership working;
- support children who are learning English as an additional language while valuing and encouraging their home languages;
- provide staff with appropriate knowledge, training and support to deliver inclusive practice; and
- review our environment, curriculum, resources and procedures so that inclusion remains embedded in everyday practice.

Legal and statutory framework

Cherish Childcare has regard to relevant equality, SEND and early years legislation and statutory guidance, including:

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- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, applicable from 1 September 2026; and
- Equality Act 2010 Code of Practice for services, public functions and associations, where relevant.

Access to Cherish Childcare

Cherish Childcare welcomes children and families from all backgrounds. Admissions, information and communication are managed in a way that aims to be fair and accessible.

- Promotional materials and displays aim to reflect the diversity of children, families and communities.
- Information is provided clearly and, where needed, explained verbally or in an alternative accessible format.
- We discuss individual access needs with families before admission and throughout the child's placement.
- Where a child or adult has a disability, we consider reasonable adjustments to the environment, routines, resources and access arrangements.
- Where the physical premises create a barrier that is outside the nursery's direct control, management will discuss possible adjustments with the family and, where required, the premises owner/landlord.
- We do not refuse or disadvantage a child simply because they have additional needs; we consider what reasonable support, training, planning or professional involvement is required to meet their needs safely.

Employment and recruitment

Recruitment and employment decisions are based on the requirements of the role, suitability to work with children, safer recruitment requirements and the applicant's ability to meet the person specification.

- Vacancies are advertised using clear, non-discriminatory wording.
- Candidates are assessed against consistent role-related criteria.
- Recruitment decisions are not based on protected characteristics unless a lawful occupational requirement applies.

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- Reasonable adjustments are considered for applicants and employees with disabilities.
- Recruitment records are reviewed by management to check that the same selection criteria and safeguarding checks have been applied consistently.
- Concerns about discriminatory recruitment or employment practice can be raised with the manager and will be considered promptly.

Training and staff development

Equality, diversity and inclusion form part of staff induction and ongoing professional development. Staff are expected to understand their responsibilities and to reflect inclusive practice in their interactions, planning and decision-making.

- Relevant learning is reinforced through induction, supervision, staff meetings, training days, online learning and discussion of practice.
- Management keeps training records and identifies further training where staff confidence, legislation, children's needs or practice indicate this is required.
- Staff are supported to recognise unconscious bias, stereotypes and discriminatory practice and to challenge these appropriately.
- Where a child requires specialist care or medication, relevant staff will receive appropriate training before the nursery relies on them to meet that child's needs independently.

Inclusive curriculum and everyday practice

Our curriculum and daily experiences are planned so that children can recognise themselves and their families while also developing curiosity, respect and understanding of people whose lives and experiences may be different from their own.

- We observe children's interests, development and individual circumstances and use this information to plan meaningful experiences.
- Children have equal access to learning opportunities, with adaptations where needed to support participation.
- Resources, books, images, role-play materials and displays include a range of cultures, ethnicities, skin tones, languages, disabilities, family structures, genders and experiences.
- Resources are selected to challenge stereotypes rather than reinforce them.
- Cultural and religious festivals may be explored where they are meaningful to children and families, rather than as isolated or tokenistic activities.

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- Children are supported to develop empathy, kindness, mutual respect and age-appropriate understanding of difference.
- Discriminatory comments, exclusion or stereotyping are addressed calmly and appropriately, with staff modelling respectful language and behaviour.
- Children who are learning English as an additional language are supported through visual cues, gestures, repetition, familiar routines, key words and partnership with families, while their home language and identity are valued.

Valuing diversity in families

- We welcome and respect different family structures and do not make assumptions about children's home lives.
- Families are encouraged to share information about their culture, language, traditions, routines, faith, interests and experiences where they wish to do so.
- Parents and carers are invited to contribute to nursery experiences, celebrations, resources and planning where appropriate.
- Where families have limited English, we use clear language, visual information, translation tools, support from appropriate interpreters or trusted family communication methods where suitable and safe.
- Important information is explained verbally where needed to check understanding.
- Financial arrangements and any available flexibility are explained through the nursery's Fees and Funding information rather than being used as a measure of a family's inclusion or participation.

SEND and inclusion

Cherish Childcare is committed to identifying and responding to children's special educational needs and disabilities as early as possible. We use a graduated approach so that support is matched to the child's strengths, needs and progress.

Graduated approach

Where a child may need additional support, practitioners and the SENCO will work with the family to assess the child's needs, plan appropriate support, put that support into practice and review its impact. This cycle of assess, plan, do and review is repeated and strengthened where necessary.

- The child's strengths, interests, development, communication and lived experience remain central to planning.
- Parents and carers are involved in discussions and decisions about additional support.

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- The environment, routines, communication, resources and learning experiences are adapted where appropriate.
- Reasonable adjustments are made to support access and participation.
- Additional strategies, targeted support or individual plans are introduced where needed and reviewed for impact.
- Staff receive guidance or training where a child's specific needs require additional knowledge or skills.

Working with other professionals

Where further advice or assessment would benefit the child, Cherish Childcare may work with relevant professionals and services such as the Area SENCO, health visiting team, speech and language therapy, educational psychology or other specialist services.

Parents/carers will normally be involved and their consent obtained before referrals are made, unless there is a safeguarding reason or another lawful basis for sharing information without consent. Information is shared securely and only where necessary.

Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan or is undergoing statutory assessment, the nursery will contribute relevant evidence, work with professionals and implement agreed provision within the setting's role and available resources.

Food and dietary inclusion

We work closely with parents and carers to understand children's dietary, cultural, religious and medical needs. Food arrangements are made safely and inclusively, with medical allergies and intolerances managed in accordance with the nursery's food/allergy and medication procedures.

Where appropriate, mealtimes are used positively to introduce children to a range of foods and conversations about different traditions and family experiences without labelling one culture or diet as the norm.

Responding to discrimination

Any discriminatory incident involving a child, parent, visitor, member of staff, student or volunteer will be taken seriously. Staff will respond in a way that protects those affected, challenges the behaviour appropriately and supports learning and understanding.

Serious or repeated concerns will be reported to management, recorded where appropriate and addressed through the relevant safeguarding, complaints, staff conduct or disciplinary procedures.

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Monitoring and review

Management monitors the effectiveness of this policy through observations of practice, supervision, staff meetings, training records, feedback from families, review of resources and curriculum experiences, complaints or concerns, and the experiences and progress of children.

Staff contribute by reflecting on practice, raising barriers or concerns, suggesting improvements and discussing inclusion through supervision and team meetings. Parents and carers are encouraged to provide feedback about accessibility, inclusion and their family's experience.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner where there are relevant changes to the EYFS, equality or SEND requirements, nursery practice or the needs of the children and families attending.

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