



Equality & Diversity Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide diversity and equality to all in employment, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, religion or belief, marital status and social class. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Selection for employment, promotion, training or other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency and quality of the service we deliver to young people at The Beeches.

This policy is designed to be linked with our policies on bullying, complaints, sanctions, child protection, disciplinary and grievance procedures.

The Law

This policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation which includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970 (Equal Value Amendment 1984)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Children's Homes Regulations SI 2001(3967)
- Children Act 1989
- Care Standards Act 2000(CSA)

The Beeches is committed to delivering a professional and appropriate service to the young people in their care providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families. Our premises are accessible by steps at the front and ramps at both front and back entrances. We have bedrooms and bathrooms/toilets available on the ground floor to ensure that our environment and services are accessible to all.

The staff recognise the importance in the role they play promoting understanding of the principles of equality and freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, home language, family background, gender or disability and/or learning difficulty.

The Beeches is committed to providing a positive environment free from prejudice, discrimination and fear, in which all children and their families feel accepted, respected and valued.

Our philosophy supports the concept that the wellbeing of any child, regardless of their ethnicity and cultural upbringing, depends on how they are valued by those around them and the opportunities they have to fulfil their potential.

(Good Parenting, Good Outcomes' ed. Jackson & Kilroe HMSO 1995)

A sense of wellbeing and feeling good about who you are is vital to positive self image. Racial and cultural identity is an important part of this self concept. It may be particularly difficult for the children we support at The Beeches to maintain positive self images as a result of life events leaving them feeling powerless.

The stigma of having a label already creates images for young people that are negative and derogatory. Our young people are 'LAC' children and are only able to access services because of their label. It is essential that staff develop with our young people a wide range of coping mechanisms that will enable them to develop positive self images. This includes appropriate books, films, pictures, publications and literature that reflect the wide range of diversity of the young people accommodated here. Young people must be encouraged to participate in appropriate cultural and religious events/festivals/services to maintain links with their own peers and community. We plan opportunities that build on and extend our children's knowledge, experiences, interests and skills to develop their self-esteem and confidence. All staff share the responsibility of ensuring that we provide a fully inclusive service for children and their parents/families/carers and relevant professionals. The culture at The Beeches is one of participation and achievement which are valued, recognised and celebrated. Our task is to enable our children to become successful and confident adults within realistic expectations for each individual child.

Admissions

We never discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our care, on the basis of race, religion, home language, family background, gender or disability. We gather full and accurate information about all children using our service to ensure that we can meet their care needs successfully. Our aim is to provide a safe and secure environment in which all our children can flourish and reach their full potential. We respect each child's personal learning journey of learning and development. Staff recognise the many potential difficulties faced by our children and their day to day experiences in the home are designed to give them the opportunity to explore and reflect on their life history, whilst encouraging each child to recognise their own unique qualities and characteristics. We work with professionals from outside agencies, both statutory and non-statutory, health and social care to provide a multi-agency network of support that delivers the best care available for each child.

Discriminatory Behaviour

We take all incidents of discrimination very seriously whether it concerns staff or children. We aim to challenge overt prejudice and discrimination when it occurs in a way that is sensitive and constructive. All staff must be mindful of the negative stereotypical remarks or statements that may have been the experience of the children in our care and fully support any child who encounters discrimination or harassment. Our bullying policy and practice within the Beeches gives a clear sense of what behaviours are acceptable and what are not. This includes verbal and physical bullying, name calling and offensive language.

Any concerns of discrimination should be reported to the Head of Education and appropriate action will be taken and response given. Actions will be implemented and monitored as appropriate. A report will be produced detailing the incident and recording any actions or outcome, including any disciplinary procedures taken.