Merry Go Round Toy & Leisure Library

Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy statement

We will ensure that our toy library is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all members. We recognise that children and their families come from diverse backgrounds. All families have needs and values that arise from their individual, social, economic, ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds and situations.

Children grow up in diverse family structures that include two parent and one parent families; some children have two parents of the same sex. Some children have close links with extended families of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins; while others may be more removed from close kin, or may live with other relatives or foster carers. Some children have needs that arise from a disability, or may have parents that are affected by disability. Some children come from families who experience social exclusion or severe hardship; some have to face discrimination and prejudice because of their ethnicity, the languages they speak, their religious or belief background, their gender or their impairment.

We understand that these factors affect the well-being of children and can impact on their learning and attainment. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children and families. We aim to:

- provide a secure and accessible environment in which all children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles, diverse family structures, diverse socio-economic, ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people;
- improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity;
- challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions;
- make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the toy library; and
- foster good relations between all communities.
Procedures

The toy library is open and accessible to all members of the community.

- We advertise our service widely.
- We reflect the diversity of our society in our publicity and promotional materials.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.
- We provide information in other languages wherever possible.
- We ensure that members are made aware of our Equality and Diversity Policy via our website and that a copy is available on request.
- We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to the toy library, on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act (2010). These are:
  - disability;
  - race;
  - gender reassignment;
  - religion or belief;
  - sex;
  - sexual orientation;
  - age;
  - pregnancy and maternity; and
  - marriage and civil partnership.
- We do not discriminate against people with a disability or refuse entry to our toy library for reasons relating to their disability.
- We make adjustments to ensure that disabled children can participate successfully in the services offered by the toy library.
- We take action against any discriminatory behaviour by our staff, volunteers or members whether by:
  - direct discrimination – someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic e.g. preventing families of some racial groups from using the service;
  - indirect discrimination - someone is affected unfavourably by a general policy.
  - association – discriminating against someone who is associated with a person with a protected characteristic e.g. behaving unfavourably to someone who is married to a person from a different cultural background; or
  - perception – discrimination on the basis that it is thought someone has a protected characteristic e.g. making assumptions about someone's sexual orientation because of their mannerisms or how they speak.
- Displaying of openly discriminatory and possibly offensive materials, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable on, or around, our premises and will be dealt with immediately and discreetly by asking the
adult to stop using the unacceptable behaviour and inviting them to read and to act in accordance with the relevant policy statement and procedure. Failure to comply may lead to the adult being excluded from the premises.

**Employment**
- We advertise posts 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 in relevant legislation 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 suitability checks. This ensures fairness in the selection process.
- All our job descriptions include a commitment to promoting equality, and recognising and respecting 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 our staff and volunteers to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices.
- We review our practices regularly to ensure that we are fully implementing our policy for Equality and Diversity and that our strategies meet our overall aims to promote equality, inclusion and to value diversity.

The toy library environment is as accessible as possible for all members. If access to the toy library is found to treat disabled children or adults less favourably, then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults. We do this by:
- undertaking an access audit to establish if the toy library is accessible to all disabled children and adults;
- providing resources to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical and sensory impairments;
- positively reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources;
- avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of books or other visual materials;
- creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;

**Valuing diversity in families**
- We welcome the diversity of family lifestyles and work with all families.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop means to encourage their full inclusion.
- We take positive action to encourage disadvantaged and under-represented groups to use the toy library.
Legal framework

The Equality Act (2010)
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)

This policy was adopted by Merry Go Round Toy Libraries
On 10th February 2014
Date to be reviewed
Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory Laura Kerslake
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) Chair Person