



Equalities and Diversity Policy

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Date Written: 28 July 2025 **Next Review Due:** July 2026

Our Values

At Young Friends, inclusion is not a display — it's a daily practice. It lives in our language, curriculum, interactions, and beliefs. We don't rely on shop-bought toys or themed multicultural corners. Instead, we build an environment where identity is respected, challenge is welcomed, and everyone belongs.

- **Sustainability** – Equity means every child gets what they need to thrive
- **Respect** – Each person's culture, identity and needs are honoured
- **Authenticity** – Diversity is lived, not laminated
- **Supportive Leadership** – Inclusion is guided, not assumed
- **Community** – All children, families and staff contribute to a setting rooted in fairness and care

Policy Statement

We are committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity and ensuring inclusion for every child, family and team member at Young Friends — regardless of background, identity or need.

This policy outlines how we actively uphold this across all areas of provision, using respectful practice, meaningful curriculum content, and intelligent pedagogy.

Legal Framework

We meet our duties under:

- The **Equality Act 2010**
- The **Children and Families Act 2014**
- The **SEND Code of Practice 2015** •
- The **EYFS Statutory Framework 2024**

We protect against discrimination on the grounds of:

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity

Inclusion in Our Loose Parts, Nature-Led Curriculum

We do not rely on structured role-play or pre-made small world toys to 'teach' diversity. Instead, we create a responsive, respectful environment where:



Books are our springboard

- We use high-quality, diverse children's literature as conversation starters

- Books are selected to reflect a wide range of family structures, cultures, appearances and experiences
- Children see themselves in the stories — and learn about others

✳️ **Our team lead the dialogue**

- Intelligent, observant practitioners spot opportunities to model inclusive language
- Staff confidently respond to questions, challenge stereotypes, and normalise difference
- We trust adults — not toys — to bring the world to life and promote inclusivity

✳️ **Open-ended resources create space for imagination**

- Loose parts offer no 'gendered' rules or cultural limitations
- Children are free to represent, explore, and invent from their own lives
- Staff extend play with sensitivity to identity and inclusion

✳️ **We don't do tokenistic festivals**

- We **do not** celebrate festivals as a tick-box approach or because they are culturally dominant
- We celebrate only festivals that **our children and families actually observe** or that the children have shown an interest in
 - Instead, we focus on the **seasons** — winter, spring, summer, and autumn — which every child can connect to
 - This ensures no child feels excluded by events like Christmas and Easter
 - We do not celebrate commercial events like Halloween
 - We do not celebrate mother or fathers day so as to include children with all types of families

Respectful Relationships and Conversations

We actively encourage inclusive attitudes through our day-to-day culture:

- Children are supported to **listen to each other, talk to each other, and treat each other with kindness**
- Staff **model respectful conversation**, empathy and curiosity about others
- Differences are discussed calmly, and always with positivity and with the aim of understanding
- Respect for identity is taught and expected

Working with Families

- We listen to families about what matters to them
- Pronouns, names, home languages and identities are respected
- We adapt food, sleep, and play practices where needed
- Concerns or questions about inclusion are always welcomed

Supporting Children with SEND

We provide fully inclusive, individualised support in line with our SEND Policy:

- Key person relationships support emotional security
- The environment is adapted to allow everyone to participate
- We work with external professionals where helpful
- Every child is viewed as capable and unique

Anti-Discriminatory Practice

- Staff challenge bias gently but clearly
- Children are never told to "just be kind" — they are taught **what respect looks like**
- Staff hold each other accountable for inclusive language and conduct

- Discriminatory views or behaviour from adults are not tolerated in our setting

Leadership, Monitoring and Training

- Equalities are considered in staffing, training and supervision
- Team reflection happens regularly in supervision and meetings
- Staff receive regular inclusion and anti-bias training
- All staff are expected to reflect, adapt and grow

Linked Policies

- SEND Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships
- Safeguarding
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Curriculum Statement
- Supervision and Staff Development

Authorisation Signed:

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