



# Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of:

*East Craigs Playgroup*

Academic Year 2022/23

Signed: Caroline Wilkinson

Designation: Manager

## 1. Statement of Purpose

The Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting welcomes and respects all children, parents, staff, professionals and other members of the local community and will not discriminate against them on the grounds of their race or ethnicity, their disability, their gender or sexual orientation, their age or religion. Our aim is to be inclusive and to celebrate positively the rich diversity in society. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Throughout this guidance the term 'parents' is used to include all main caregivers.

## 2 Complying with the Law

### 2.1

The [Equality Act 2010](#) makes it illegal to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their race or ethnicity, their disability, gender or sexual orientation, their age or religion. We will exercise due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This will include both direct and indirect discrimination, described as follows.

- It is unlawful to discriminate against people who have 'protected characteristics' – i.e. treating someone less favourably because of certain attributes of who they are. This is known as **direct discrimination**. The protected characteristics outlined in the legislation cover: age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex. You do not have to have a protected characteristic to be discriminated against. If someone thinks you have a characteristic and treats you less favourably, that is **direct discrimination by perception**.
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs when an organisation's practices, policies or procedures have the effect of disadvantaging people who share certain protected characteristics. This may not be unlawful if an employer can show that there is an 'objective justification' for it. This involves demonstrating a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

More information about what constitutes direct and indirect discrimination, as well as examples, can found on the [ACAS website](#).

There is further information and supportive resources and materials, on [Education Scotland](#)'s website.

### 2.2

Behaviour that does not comply with the Act will be challenged and in the case of staff could lead to disciplinary procedures being invoked. Anyone who feels that they have been discriminated against as outlined in the Act may raise a grievance or make a complaint through the appropriate procedures. Please note, if your setting is affiliated to a Local Authority then they may have reporting systems in place for incidents that breach the Act and you should note this here in the policy.

## 3. Children

### 3.1

Within the setting's guidelines and procedures all children will have equality of opportunity, including consideration for a place on the waiting list and subsequent enrolment in the ELC

setting. Where there are barriers to access or learning for children due to disability, learning difficulties or language, solutions will be sought, and appropriate support put in place. A child's home language will always be respected and encouraged. All children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued, and nurtured. We will support and build on the child's preferred learning style and match the pace of learning to their individual needs.

We will follow the underpinning ethos of [Getting it right for every child](#) (GIRFEC), as a foundation for children's equality and equity.

### 3.2

Activities and use of play equipment will be open to all children, giving them the opportunity to develop in an environment that is free from prejudice, gender stereotyping and discrimination. Opportunities to experience other cultures, languages and celebrations will be included in the curriculum. We will encourage children to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others. Snacks will respect religious requirements.

## 4. Parents

### 4.1

The setting will encourage the involvement of parents by making them welcome and by respecting the differences in families, their language and culture, and by supporting them to contribute in whatever way they can. **We will ensure that systems are in place to allow all parents with a physical disability to access the service.** Where language, hearing or speech impairment present barriers we will encourage a family member or friend to also attend playgroup visits alongside the parents to enable better communication whilst respecting the main caregiver as such. We will use a variety of communication approaches to reach all parents (see below). We will be sensitive to any parent with limited reading skills that impact on form filling and understanding written communications and will support them in a manner that preserves their dignity.

Having a GIRFEC approach also means that the respects of parents' rights are considered under the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (ECHR).

### 4.2

When communicating with parents we will be aware that some have limited reading skills and others may not have English as their home language. English speaking parents who have a home language that is not English may be asked to pass non-confidential information to others who share their home language, or to act as interpreters in suitable situations. The time, place and way meetings are conducted will ensure that all families are enabled to attend, contribute, and have equal opportunity to be involved in the running of the setting. We will ensure that our service is widely advertised through various media and venues to allow all potential service users access to this information.

## 5. Staff

Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training, and any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination. All job applicants and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the grounds listed above. Wherever possible, advertisements and job application packs will be written

in other languages as well as in English, if necessary, for a particular community. Age positive practices will be adopted by management. Recruitment, training, promotions and retirement of staff will not be done based on age unless it can be objectively justified. We will be proactive in seeking to minimise any restrictions or limitations staff may experience due to disability. We will put appropriate support mechanisms in place and where possible will make any necessary access adaptations.

Further guidance and information around staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion can be accessed through [ACAS](#).

### **Monitoring of this Policy**

It will be the responsibility of Caroline Wilkinson (*Manager*) to ensure that all staff, including new or temporary staff, are familiar with this policy and to monitor that it is being implemented. This policy should also be brought to the attention of all parents, visiting professionals and any other individuals accessing the setting. The responsibility of all to adhere to the policy should be highlighted. Monitoring and evaluation of the policy will be achieved through both formal and informal observation of staff practice and curriculum monitoring. We will carry out regular consultations with service users to ensure this guidance is being adhered to.

### **See also:**

Additional Support Needs Policy  
Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy  
Duty of Candour Complaints Policy  
Curriculum Policy  
Outings Policy  
Participation Policy  
Safe Recruitment Policy  
Staff Development Policy  
Whistleblowing Policy

### **Links to national policy**

When reviewing your policy, please reflect on the 'Health & Social Care Standards: My support, my life'.

Visit: [www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-standards-support-life/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-standards-support-life/)

### **Find out more:**

<https://beta.gov.scot/policies/early-education-and-care/early-learning-and-childcare/>

[Equality and Equity Toolkit \(education.gov.scot\)](http://equalityandequitytoolkit.education.gov.scot/)

[Equality and Equity Toolkit | Learning resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](http://equalityandequitytoolkit.education.gov.scot/)

[www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality)

<https://archive.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1841> (Age Discrimination)