**Inclusion Policy**

This policy applies to the inclusion of disabled children within settings.

**Rationale**

‘From the very earliest age, disabled children should have the right to play and learn with other children, enjoying all the aspects of life and friendships that other children do’ – *The Inclusion Charter, Centre for Studies on Inclusion*.

**Aims**

To ensure that all children are fully included within the setting, with specific regard to the differing needs that a disabled child and their family might have.

To provide a structure and supportive framework for staff to reference when a disabled child and their family approach, attend and settle in at the setting.

To provide disabled children and their families with a set of clear expectations that evidences our commitment to their inclusion.

**Information**

The term ‘disabled child’ within this policy refers to children with disabilities or additional/special needs. The definition of a disability is ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’ We include within this children with physical and sensory impairments, learning difficulties and people who experience mental or emotional distress.

**Policy**

**Overview**As supporting disabled children is an intrinsic part of supporting all children within this setting, information relating to disabled children and their families is contained within all other relevant policies.

In particular, we reference you to our Behaviour Management Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Child Protection Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, EYFS Policy, and Administration of Medication Policy.

**Being proactive**

It is important to us that we are prepared for disabled children to attend our setting, both as part of our ethos and as part of our duties under the Equalities Act 2010.

To do this we will:

* Identify a member of staff as the lead worker for disabled children. This individual will be trained appropriately to promote inclusive practice in the scheme (see role below).
* Support children and staff to value the differences in individuals and address any discriminatory language or behaviour.
* Ensure staff take suitable training.
* Ensure we keep up to date with new legal and policy requirements.

The Operations team’s responsibilities will include:

* Ensuring that all management, staff and volunteers are aware of all legislation, regulations and other guidance on working with disabled children
* Identifying staff training requirements to meet the needs of disabled children attending the setting
* Meeting with the disabled child and their parent/carers at the point of entry to plan a successful entry to the setting
* Ensuring that disabled children are considered when activities are being planned and prepared.
* Monitoring and evaluating delivery.
* Liaising with other agencies and seeking advice and support where necessary

We will welcome disabled children to the setting with a realistic but ‘can do’ attitude: this means that we will be honest about what we need to find out to ensure we can provide appropriate support for the child and we will work with the parents and child to gain the info we need.

We recognise that there is extra information we may need to share and gather from the family of a disabled child and the child themselves to ensure that we can meet the child’s needs. To address this, when the staff are aware that a disabled child would like to attend the setting (through a completed Registration form or initial direct contact), we will arrange to have a meeting with the parents/carers and child as appropriate. The purpose of the meeting is to share information about the setting and gather information from the parent/carers about the individual needs of the child and how we can support them.

We will consider the following areas: **Communication, access requirements, personal care requirements, medical requirements, specific likes and dislikes, key strategies to support the child, any safety concerns, and what resources and equipment may be necessary.**

To ensure we have covered the above areas, we may complete a Play Support Plan with the parent/ carer and child or request for them to complete one for us.

We will offer a free introductory visit as appropriate. This is a chance for the parent/ carer and child to visit the setting and spend some time getting to know the environment, team and other children; and for the staff to get to know the child and consider what adjustments, if any, the setting may need to make.

**Extra staff support**

We recognise that some disabled children need extra staff support to meet their needs. We will consider what, if any, extra support a child has in other environments, whilst understanding that a child’s behaviour and needs change in different environments e.g. a child’s behaviour in school will be different to within a play setting, therefore the child may need a different level of support within our setting.

It may be that support is only necessary for a short time to settle into the setting’s routines or to cover certain aspects of the day. We will work with parents, the child and other agencies to assess this.

We will respect the child’s choice in whom they would like to support them as much as is possible eg in planning staff rota and in providing training for staff members.

**Settling In – continuing to develop positive relationships with the child and family.**

We recognise that the importance of building positive relationships with the child and family. We also recognise that disabled children can often be left out, lack confidence and may not always tell playworkers if they have a problem, for fear of isolating themselves further. Staff will be extra vigilant in ensuring all children are included, supported and encouraged to talk to play staff if they have any problems. All children will be encouraged to share and to invite others to join in games and other activities; our aim is that all opportunities are open to all children and that disabled children are encouraged to take full involvement in a range of activities, including those involving an appropriate level of risk and challenge.

**Funding for Inclusion**

To fund any additional staff support, resources or staff training to enable a disabled children to attend, we will first look to our budget and consider what we can afford as part of our commitment to welcome all children.

If we are unable to fully fund this area or if it impacts on the settings financial sustainability, we will investigate appropriate agencies that may support us and apply for funding from them e.g. the Inclusive Play Project and BAND Access to Childcare Fund can support with additional staffing.

**Reviewed: September 2024**