EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Applies to *all children, families, employees, volunteers, students, visitors and professionals involved with Dots & Tots Day Nursery.*

Policy Statement

Dots & Tots Day Nursery is committed to an inclusive, welcoming environment in which every child, family and member of staff is valued, respected and treated fairly. We celebrate difference and do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or exclusion. Our practice promotes equality of opportunity while recognising that individuals may need different forms of support to access the same opportunities.

We welcome children and families regardless of disability or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), English as an Additional Language (EAL), race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sex, family structure, deprivation or other individual characteristics. We consider the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and our duties under the EYFS and relevant SEND legislation.

Admissions, Access and Equal Opportunities

Admissions and participation are managed fairly and without unlawful discrimination. We listen to families, consider individual circumstances and make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and other people where required. We do not assume that children from a particular background have the same experiences, abilities or needs.

No child will be excluded from ordinary nursery experiences solely because they have SEND, use an alternative means of communication, speak another language or experience disadvantage. Where an activity presents a particular barrier, staff will plan proportionate adaptations and discuss individual arrangements with parents and relevant professionals.

Accessible Buildings and Outdoor Spaces

Our main nursery rooms and children's garden spaces have been designed to be accessible. Hallways and doorways are wheelchair friendly, and an accessible toilet with a grab rail is available. Staff will keep routes clear, review accessibility as children's needs change and consider individual evacuation and personal care arrangements where necessary.

We recognise that physical access alone does not ensure inclusion. Furniture, activities, resources, routines and communication will be adapted wherever practicable to enable meaningful participation.

Communication, EAL and Visual Support

Pictures and visual prompts are provided in areas such as handwashing stations to help children understand routines. These support children with EAL, children with SEND and younger children who benefit from visual information. Picture cards are also used during circle times and group activities so children who find verbal communication difficult can make choices, refer to familiar images and participate.

Staff use objects of reference alongside pictures, gestures, spoken language, now and next cards and other appropriate communication approaches to support understanding of instructions, expectations, routines and transitions. Practitioners observe each child's responses and adapt communication to their developmental stage

and preferences. We value home languages and work with families to understand useful words, routines and communication strategies.

SEND Support and Specialist Partnerships

Dots & Tots has a qualified and experienced Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), who works with practitioners and families to identify needs early, coordinate graduated support, plan appropriate strategies and review progress. Families are involved in decisions about their child's support, and children's views are sought through age-appropriate communication.

We work with a child clinical psychologist who can offer specialist advice and guidance where appropriate and with parental consent. We also work with West Northamptonshire's Inclusion Support Service (ISST), where available, for advice on inclusion, assessments and suitable interventions. Information is shared with external professionals in line with consent, safeguarding requirements, information sharing policy and data protection obligations.

Sensory Room and Individualised Provision

Our dedicated sensory room is available to all children and is especially suited to children with SEND who may benefit from tailored sensory experiences, quieter spaces, reduced stimulation or support with emotional regulation. Its use is planned around individual needs rather than a diagnosis, and it is not used to segregate children from their peers.

Practitioners support children to access the sensory room safely and meaningfully, balancing opportunities for exploration and regulation with full participation in the wider nursery environment.

Additional Funding and Removing Barriers

Where children meet the relevant eligibility criteria, the nursery will work with families and the local authority to seek appropriate additional support, including Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Disability Access Fund (DAF) and West Northamptonshire targeted SEND funding, where available. Eligibility and award decisions rest with the relevant funding bodies.

Funding will be used in accordance with its conditions to improve access, strengthen provision and support children's outcomes, including appropriate resources, adaptations or targeted support. Staff will not assume that funding is a prerequisite for making reasonable adjustments or providing inclusive everyday practice.

Curriculum, Cultural Capital and Enrichment

Our play-based EYFS curriculum values the knowledge, cultures, interests and experiences children bring from home. We provide additional opportunities to discover new interests and experiences without making assumptions about what families can or cannot offer.

Children can explore animals and animal care, outdoor play, construction, cooking and practical real-life experiences, including opportunities that extend beyond routine activities. Our local parks, community spaces and partnerships with local organisations further widen children's experiences and connections with the community.

We aim to make these experiences available to every child, including those who may not have access to a garden, particular activities or community opportunities outside nursery. Staff plan adaptations, appropriate supervision

and accessible participation so that SEND, EAL or financial circumstances do not unnecessarily limit involvement. These opportunities help develop curiosity, confidence, belonging and cultural capital.

Respecting Families, Identity and Belonging

Books, displays, resources, celebrations and everyday conversations will reflect a diverse range of cultures, abilities, languages, family structures and experiences. Staff challenge stereotypes respectfully, use inclusive language and respond promptly to discriminatory behaviour or remarks.

We build trusting relationships with parents and carers, listen to their views and seek practical solutions when communication, financial or other barriers may affect participation. Confidential information about children and families is handled sensitively and only shared where appropriate.

Staff Practice, Recruitment and Training

Recruitment, employment, development and promotion decisions will be fair and based on relevant requirements, with reasonable adjustments considered for disabled applicants and employees. All staff are expected to model respectful behaviour and promote inclusion throughout nursery life.

Induction, supervision and ongoing training will support staff understanding of equality, anti-discriminatory practice, SEND, EAL, inclusive communication and the importance of recognising unconscious bias. Staff must raise concerns about discrimination or exclusion with management promptly; concerns will be investigated and addressed in line with relevant procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Registered Provider / Nominated Individual – ensures appropriate oversight, resources and compliance with equality and inclusion duties.

Nursery Manager – leads implementation, supports reasonable adjustments, responds to concerns and monitors inclusive practice.

SENCo – coordinates SEND support, works with families and professionals and advises practitioners on adaptations and additional funding.

All practitioners – provide inclusive learning and care, use appropriate communication aids, challenge discrimination and identify barriers to participation.

Monitoring and Review

The Nursery Manager and SENCo will monitor inclusion through observations, parent feedback, staff supervision, accessibility reviews and the effectiveness of individual support. Any concerns, barriers and discriminatory incidents will be recorded and addressed appropriately.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if legislation, guidance or nursery arrangements change.

Policy Created: October 2026

Policy Review Date: October 2027

Version: 1.0

Signed

Christie Patton

Company Owner