Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Prepared	September 2026	**Review due**	September 2027 or sooner
Policy lead	Emma Johnson	**Role**	Manager
Safeguarding lead	Sarah Simmonds	**Role**	Deputy Manager and DSL
Approved by	Heydays Preschool Committee	**Applies to**	Children, families, staff and visitors
Version	2.0	**Setting**	Heydays Preschool

Our commitment

Heydays is a place where every child and adult should feel safe, recognised, respected and able to belong. We promote equality of opportunity, value difference and take practical action to remove barriers to participation, learning and employment.

Inclusion means more than treating everyone in exactly the same way. We respond to individual circumstances, make reasonable adjustments, challenge discrimination and review whether our routines, curriculum and decisions work fairly in practice.

What this looks like

- Children see themselves, their families and the wider community reflected respectfully in everyday provision.
- Staff adapt environments, communication, routines and teaching so children can participate meaningfully.
- Biased, discriminatory or exclusionary language and behaviour is addressed calmly and clearly.
- Families are listened to without assumptions and can raise concerns without adverse treatment.
- Leaders examine patterns and outcomes, not only intentions, and act when a group or individual may be disadvantaged.

1 Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how Heydays promotes equality, values diversity, prevents discrimination and supports inclusion. It applies to admissions, funded and paid places, settling, curriculum, assessment, care, behaviour support, SEND, communication, events, outings, employment, training, purchasing and relationships with families and professionals.

It applies to employees, apprentices, students, volunteers, committee members, contractors, visitors, children and families. Expectations also apply to online communication, Tapestry, photographs, social media connected with the setting and events away from the premises.

The policy should be read with the SEND, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Parent Partnership, Positive Behaviour, Admissions, Complaints and Compliments, Data Protection and Confidentiality, Safer Recruitment, Staff Conduct and Health and Safety policies.

2 Legal and statutory framework

This policy reflects the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective from 1 September 2026. The EYFS seeks equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice so every child is included and supported.

It also reflects the Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, Human Rights Act 1998, Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, employment law and safeguarding duties, together with later amendments or replacement guidance.

The Equality Act protects people from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Its nine protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. How each protection applies varies between services, education and employment.

Heydays also addresses unfair barriers connected with language, family structure, care experience, socio-economic circumstances, health or other lived experience, although these are not all separate protected characteristics in law.

3 Key terms

Equality means fair access, treatment and opportunity. Fairness may require different support or adjustments so that people are not placed at a disadvantage.

Diversity means the differences within and between people, families and communities. Inclusion means changing environments, systems and practice so people can participate, contribute and belong.

Unlawful conduct may include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, failure to make reasonable adjustments, harassment and victimisation. Staff do not need to identify a legal label before reporting or responding to a concern.

4 Roles and responsibilities

Who	Responsibility
Committee	Approves the policy, provides oversight, supports fair employment and admissions practice and challenges patterns that may indicate disadvantage.
Manager - Emma Johnson	Leads implementation, ensures concerns are addressed, coordinates adjustments and training and monitors whether systems and decisions are fair in practice.
DSL - Sarah Simmonds	Leads where discrimination, harmful conduct or family circumstances create a safeguarding concern and advises on safe information sharing.
Deputy DSL - Lynne Funnell	Supports safeguarding action and acts when the DSL is unavailable.

Who	Responsibility
SENCO - Kerri Lancaster Oliver	Coordinates identification, SEN support, reasonable adjustments, family partnership and liaison with relevant professionals.
All staff	Use inclusive practice, notice and remove barriers, challenge bias, report concerns, protect confidentiality and reflect on their own assumptions.
Families and visitors	Treat others respectfully, share information that helps the setting support the child and raise concerns through the appropriate route.

5 Admissions access and participation

Admissions and waiting-list decisions use clear, consistently applied criteria and are not made on discriminatory grounds. A place is not refused or delayed because of assumptions about disability, SEND, family circumstances, language, culture or behaviour.

Where support needs may be significant, leaders work with the family and relevant professionals to understand the child, assess risk and identify reasonable adjustments, funding or specialist advice. Any decision is based on evidence, the law and the child's individual needs, not on a diagnosis or label alone.

Information, visits and settling arrangements are made accessible where reasonably possible. Physical, sensory, communication, financial and practical barriers are considered when planning sessions, events, outings and family involvement.

6 Reasonable adjustments

The duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children is anticipatory. Heydays considers in advance what disabled children may need and also responds to each child's individual circumstances. We do not wait for a formal diagnosis before considering practical support.

Adjustments may relate to routines, communication, the physical environment, equipment, seating, sensory demands, timing, staffing deployment, teaching, assessment, food, personal care or access to activities and outings. Auxiliary aids and services are considered where required.

Adjustments are planned with families and, where appropriate, the child and other professionals. They are recorded and reviewed. A health and safety concern is assessed specifically; it is not used as a general reason to exclude a disabled child from ordinary experiences.

7 SEND disability and medical needs

The SENCO and key person use the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review. Parents are involved throughout and children are supported to communicate their views in ways that suit their development and communication.

SEND and disability are related but not identical. A disabled child may not have SEN, and a child with SEN may not meet the legal definition of disability. Staff consider both the SEND framework and Equality Act duties.

Children with medical needs receive appropriate support under agreed healthcare, medicines, allergy and emergency arrangements. Support is designed to maximise safe participation and dignity. The full procedures are set out in the SEND and Medicines policies.

8 Curriculum environment and representation

Equality and diversity are woven through everyday play, relationships, routines and the curriculum rather than limited to occasional celebrations. Children encounter a wide range of people, families, cultures, disabilities, communities and ways of living through authentic books, images, music, small-world play, role play, visitors and local experiences.

Resources are reviewed for accuracy, quality, stereotypes and tokenism. Staff consider who is visible, who is absent, who has agency and what children may learn from the way people are portrayed. Damaged, demeaning or stereotyped resources are removed or used only for purposeful, age-appropriate discussion.

Children are helped to notice similarities and differences with curiosity and respect. Staff avoid assigning activities, colours, emotions, roles or expectations by sex, background or perceived ability and remain ambitious for every child.

9 Home languages communication and family culture

Home languages are recognised as part of a child's identity and learning. We invite families to share key words, names, pronunciation, songs, stories and communication information. Children may be supported to develop and use their home language in play and learning while receiving sufficient opportunities to learn English during the EYFS.

A child learning English as an additional language is not assumed to have a language delay. Where there is concern, practitioners explore the child's communication in their home language with parents or carers and seek appropriate advice.

Important information is communicated clearly and accessibly. Depending on need, this may include plain language, visuals, accessible formats, additional time, digital support or interpretation and translation arrangements. A child should not routinely be used to interpret sensitive or complex information for an adult.

We respect family culture, faith and belief while maintaining safeguarding, equality, welfare and curriculum duties. Staff ask rather than assume and agree practical arrangements wherever possible.

10 Partnership with families

Families know their children and their circumstances best. Staff listen to how identity, family relationships, culture, disability, faith, language, care experience and community affect the child and avoid treating one person as representative of a whole group.

Different family structures are acknowledged respectfully, including birth, adoptive, foster, kinship, blended, lone-parent and same-sex-parent families. Records and communication use the names and relationships given by the family, subject to legal and safeguarding requirements.

Parents and carers are involved in decisions about support and adjustments. If an agreement cannot be reached, the Manager explains the setting's reasoning, records the discussion and identifies the review or complaints route.

11 Children behaviour and challenging bias

Young children are developing their understanding of identity, difference, power and fairness. Staff respond to biased or discriminatory words and actions promptly without labelling a child as prejudiced or bad. The response protects the person affected, names why the behaviour is unfair, gives accurate language and supports repair and learning.

Staff model inclusive language and do not dismiss prejudice-related behaviour as banter, preference or a normal stage. They also avoid public shaming, forced apologies or questioning that places responsibility on the child who was affected.

Ongoing behaviour support considers communication, development, SEND, experiences and environmental triggers without excusing harm. Families are involved sensitively and strategies are reviewed under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

12 Discriminatory incidents and concerns

A discriminatory incident may involve words, images, exclusion, assumptions, harassment, damage, online conduct or unequal treatment connected with identity or perceived identity. Concerns involving children or adults are taken seriously even when intent is unclear.

Staff first ensure safety and emotional support. They report the concern to the Manager and record relevant facts, the impact, action taken and follow-up. Parents or carers are informed where appropriate, while the privacy of others is protected. Records are reviewed for repeated themes, affected groups, locations or routines.

A concern may also require action under safeguarding, complaints, whistleblowing, staff conduct or disciplinary procedures. Immediate danger or suspected abuse is managed through the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Retaliation against a person who raises or supports a concern is not accepted.

13 Employment volunteering and professional conduct

Recruitment, pay, development, allocation of work, supervision, promotion, capability and disciplinary decisions are made fairly and in line with employment law. Job requirements and selection criteria must be relevant and proportionate. Reasonable adjustments are considered for applicants, employees, apprentices and volunteers.

Staff treat colleagues, children and families with dignity. Discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying and exclusionary practice may lead to management or disciplinary action. Concerns about unsafe or discriminatory leadership decisions may be raised through the Whistleblowing Policy.

Training does not replace daily accountability. Staff are expected to reflect on assumptions, accept constructive challenge, seek advice and change practice when an unintended barrier or harmful impact is identified.

14 Information privacy and confidentiality

Information about disability, health, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or other aspects of identity is handled lawfully, respectfully and only for a clear purpose. Access is limited to people who need the information for their role. Displays, photographs, case discussion and training do not expose personal information unnecessarily.

Monitoring information is used proportionately to identify barriers and improve provision. Small numbers are handled carefully so children, families or staff cannot be identified in reports without a lawful and necessary reason.

15 Concerns and complaints

Children, families and staff are encouraged to raise concerns early with the key person, Manager or another appropriate lead. A person will not be treated adversely because they raise a concern or support someone else's complaint in good faith.

Complaints are handled under the Complaints and Compliments Policy. Written complaints about fulfilment of the EYFS are investigated, recorded and answered with the outcome within 28 days. Families may contact Ofsted if they believe Heydays is not meeting EYFS requirements. Employment concerns follow the relevant grievance or whistleblowing route.

16 Monitoring training and review

Equality, diversity and inclusion form part of induction, supervision, staff meetings, curriculum review and professional development. Leaders test understanding through discussion, observation and case reflection, not training attendance alone.

Monitoring may include admissions and waiting-list decisions, attendance and participation, reasonable adjustments, SEND support, behaviour and discriminatory incidents, complaints, family feedback, staff experience, resources and curriculum representation. Data is interpreted carefully and used to ask what may be creating a difference in experience or outcome.

This policy is reviewed at least annually and sooner after a change in law or guidance, a significant incident or complaint, feedback showing a barrier, or evidence that practice is not working fairly.

17 Setting and external contacts

Contact	Details
Setting	Heydays Preschool, c/o Four Marks Primary School, Kitwood Road, Four Marks, Alton, GU34 5AS
Email	admin@heydayspreschool.com
Manager	Emma Johnson - contact through the setting
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sarah Simmonds - contact through the setting
SENCO	Kerri Lancaster Oliver - contact through the setting
Ofsted	https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-childcare | 0300 123 4666
Equality Advisory Support Service	https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com | 0808 800 0082
Emergency services	999

18 Document approval

Approved by	Valerie Lucas	**Date**	September 2026
Signature		**Next review**	September 2027
Amendment	Version 2.0 - rewritten and updated for the September 2026 EYFS	**Date**	September 2026