



## 24: Equalities

**Jesters is committed to taking positive and proactive steps to ensure that we provide a safe and caring environment, free from discrimination, for everyone in our community.**

Jester's equal opportunities procedures aim to help everyone involved in Jesters to counteract and eliminate both direct and indirect discrimination in decision making, employment practices and service provision and to ensure that our services strive to achieve equality of opportunity for all.

The introduction of the Equality Act in 2010 was aimed at strengthening, streamlining and simplifying equality legislation by reforming, harmonising and replacing all of the previous antidiscrimination law; including the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), The Race Relation Act (1976) and the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). The Equality Act applies to anyone who like Jesters is an employer. It is hoped that the change in law will help to support a more holistic approach to inclusion.

The term 'inclusion' is commonly used to describe the integration of disabled people into society and disabled children into education and care. However Jesters, reflecting wider guidance uses the term in a wider context; to mean equal inclusion of all children and adults into all aspects of our service provision.

Jesters aims to provide a welcoming and caring environment that promotes and reflects cultural and social diversity and is equally accessible to all. Jesters will challenge any offensive behaviour, actions or language with regards to the key equality strands or protected characteristics as stated by **Equalities Act 2010**; disability, gender/sex, gender identity/re-assignment, race (ethnicity), sexual orientation, religion & belief as well as pregnancy/maternity, age, marriage/civil partnership. Jesters ensures that we work in accordance with the Every Child Matters Policy and support the principles of the unique child and indeed unique family.

The principles of inclusion apply to every child attending our setting. Every child should:

- ✓ Have the right to participate equally in activities
- ✓ Be able to communicate in their preferred format.
- ✓ Have their needs known and met.
- ✓ Feel safe and know they belong.
- ✓ Be valued as a unique individual.
- ✓ Feel strong and confident about their identity.

Jesters recognises that achieving the objectives of our equal opportunities policy relies on the active involvement of parents/carers, as set out in the Partnership with Parents and Carers policy. As such, Jesters will both welcome and encourage parents and carers to get involved in the overall organisation of Jesters, and to comment on the effectiveness of its policies and procedures.

Jesters will facilitate regular opportunities for consultation with parents/carers about the service that Jesters provides, as a means of monitoring the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy.

### **Equalities Procedures**

To realise our objective of creating an environment free from discrimination and welcoming to all, Jesters will:

- Ensure that its services are open and available to all parents/carers and children in the local community.
- Ensure that issues of disability, gender/sex, gender identity/re-assignment, race (ethnicity), sexual orientation, religion & belief do not inhibit a child from accessing Jester's services.
- Treat all children and their parents/carers with equal concern and value.
- Have regard for promoting understanding, respect and awareness of diversity and equal opportunities issues in planning and implementing the Club's programme of activities, including a range of multi-cultural activities and resources.
- Help all children to celebrate and express their cultural and religious identity by providing a wide range of appropriate resources and activities.
- Ensure that Jester's recruitment policies and procedures are open, safe, fair and non-discriminatory.
- Endeavour to recruit a staff team that reflects the make-up of Jester's local community.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of, and understand, the Equal Opportunities policy as it relates to all aspects of its work.
- Encourage and support staff to act as positive role models to children by displaying and promoting tolerant and respectful behaviour, language and attitudes and challenging any discriminatory incident, according to the provisions set out in the Staff Disciplinary Procedures, the Behaviour Management, and Dealing with Racial Harassment policies.
- Treat seriously any member of staff found to be acting, or have been acting, in a discriminatory way, according to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Procedures policy.

- Work to fulfil all the legal requirements of the **Equalities Act 2010** to further enhance service provision.

The Equality Named Co-ordinator (**ENCO**) – Sophie Dudley - will promote, co-ordinate and monitor equality of opportunity for children and their families in Jesters. Specifically she will:

- ✓ Support the implementation of a Single Equality Scheme within the club.
- ✓ Carry out access audits or equality impact checks
- ✓ Monitor anti-discriminatory policy, procedure and practice.
- ✓ Advise staff and parents on relevant equality matters and oversee that staff receive appropriate training; the Equal Opportunities policy is consistent with current legislation and guidance.; take appropriate action wherever discriminatory behaviour, language or attitudes become apparent.

All Jester's policies and procedures will be kept under review to ensure they do not operate in a discriminatory manner or in anyway against its commitment to equal opportunities.

### **Fundamental British Values**

At Jesters we recognise the Fundamental British Values

- Democracy
- Rule of law
- Individual liberty {self confidence, self awareness, people and communities}
- Mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths

The Fundamental British Values run alongside The Prevent Duty which came into place in July 2015 from the Counter Terrorism and Security Act. This provides a framework to recognise and protect children, families and employees from terrorism.

## **0-25 SEND Code of Practice**

Local authorities have a duty to publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place, information about provision they expect to be available in their area across Education, Health and Social Care for Children and Young People who have Special Educational Needs (SEN) or are disabled, including those who do not have EHC plans.

The Local Offer has two key purposes:

- To provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it, and
- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and young people and those with SEN and their parents, as well as service providers in its development and review.

Local authorities and their partner bodies and agencies, including Early Years Settings like Jesters, must co-operate with each other in the development and review of the Local Offer. This is essential so that the Local Offer provides a comprehensive, transparent and accessible picture of the range of services available.

Some children need support for SEN and disabilities at home or in informal settings before, or as well as, the support they receive from an early years provider. Provision for children who need such support should form part of the local joint commissioning arrangements and be included in the Local Offer.

Jesters will co-operate with the Local Authority to help it fulfil its duty to publish in the Local Offer an authority-wide description of the special educational provision it expects to be available in Early Years Settings including its own.

We will:

- actively promote equality of opportunity for children with special educational needs or disabilities,
- remove barriers to participation,
- make reasonable adjustments to prevent disadvantage and
- ensure that any children that we have with medical conditions, receive the support they need.

In its role as an Early Years provider, Jesters will be proactive and take part in the regular review of the Local Offer in order to identify gaps in provision and ensure that the Local Offer is responsive to the needs of its local children, young people and their families.