**Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy**

It is the policy of Cairdeas childcare centre to value the ability, individuality and cultural background of all children in providing each child with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential as active learners within an inclusive ethos.

This policy was written considering the following acts: Childcare Act, 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016; Disability Act 2005; Equal Status Acts 2000-2012; UNCRC; Children First Act 2015. Also, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and guidelines for Early Childhood Education, DCYA, 2016. And Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), 2016.

At Cairdeas we achieve care and inclusion in education by continually reviewing an anti-bias approach by working in partnership with families, children, the early childhood team and Our AIM support co-ordinator. We aim to ensure that the education and care provided is fully inclusive of all children, families and agencies that attend and use our service.

**Our Ethos**

We will ensure an inclusive culture, recognising that every child is an individual and has their own learning style. We believe that all children are unique, but share many similarities, thus promoting equality and diversity throughout Cairdeas. We will promote and nurture the identity of each child attending Cairdeas and ensure their emotional and physical wellbeing is of paramount importance at all times.

**Inclusion** refers to a process involving a programme, curriculum or education environment where each child is welcomed as individuals and included on equal terms, can feel they belong, and can progress to his/her full potential in all areas of development.

An inclusive Early Years’ experience will ensure that all children with additional needs can fully participate in Early Years’ education and have the opportunity to reach their full potential. If further additional support are deemed necessary, Cairdeas will work together in conjunction with the child, the parents, keys workers, our AIM support Co-ordinator, Dolores Darby and outside agencies to develop a child-centred model of supports which will ensure that all children with additional needs can access and meaningfully participate in the Early Years Education.

**Our Core Principles**

Cairdeas actively seeks to support learning and participation that does not hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. This means the equality of opportunity must be a reality for all children attending the service. This is achieved by using a child-centred equality and diversity approach to create an inclusive learning environment.

Core principles of this strategy are:

* Work in partnership with parents
* Support children’s ability, identity, cultural background and sense of belonging
* Support children to become respectful of difference
* Foster each child’s critical thinking in order to confront bias and discrimination
* Implement a curriculum that meets the individual needs and emerging interest of the child under *Síolta: The National Quality Framework (2006)* and *Aistear: The National Curriculum Framework (2009).*
* Respond to children’s diverse and individual learning needs and styles through an emerging curriculum
* Support continual development for all early years educators, to ensure that they are trained in an equality and diversity approach to providing care and education to all.

**Early years educators work to ensure the following:**

* Children feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
* Children know they belong and are valued as unique individuals
* All children’s cultural backgrounds are respected and valued
* Children feel strong and confident about their identity
* Children are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success
* Children use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds
* Children have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles.
* Children are encouraged to participate fully, having particular regard for and being cognisant of children with a variety of abilities.
* If a child uses an aid or assistive technology to communicate, that the device is used solely for this purpose.

**Responsibilities of management and early years educators**

In Cairdeas all families and children are encouraged to participate, accessing learning experiences through our play based emergent curriculum.

**Admissions Policy**

Please see our Admissions Policy, included in our handbook for parents which contains all policies and procedures for the admissions to/enrolment in Cairdeas.

**Working in partnership with parents**

As children and families are the most knowledgeable about their background, culture, language, and physical and developmental needs, Cairdeas will ensure that families are consulted when developing and implementing policy.

An effective diversity and equality approach will ensure that ability and diversity are recognised and celebrated, and that discrimination, inequality and exclusion are addressed.

**Dealing with discriminatory incidents**

* The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
* All children need to know that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable
* Discuss with the children in a democratic and sensitive manner that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable
* When an incident occurs (hurtful remarks made by one child to another), both children learn from the incident. (we use a positive behaviour management approach throughout the service).
* Always determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so be careful not to make assumptions.
* Some issues may be brought into the early years service by the child, arising from comments made by adults outside the setting. Recognise when it is an adult issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing this.
* An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussion, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling out children in the group.
* By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings. It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. Be mindful that early years educators are role models for the children and the service. Children will do as we do (see the éist manual – Murray and O’Doherty (2010)).

**Actions to be followed if the policy is not implemented**

 If you, as a staff member or a parent, feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow our Complaints Policy and Procedure to make a complaint.

**Monitoring and reviewing the policy**

The above policy will be re-evaluated at regular intervals throughout the year. We at Cairdeas value your input. If you have any queries in relation to the policy, please contact the

AIM support co-ordinator: **Dolores Darby.** Manager**: Marie Callaghan.**

November 22