



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Equal Opportunities Policy

We are committed to the principal of equal opportunities in employment, and in the operation of the Playgroup we fully support this policy. The aim of this policy is to communicate our commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity.

We recognize that discrimination in the workplace and in the Playgroup, in any form, is unacceptable. We have therefore adopted this Equal Opportunities policy to ensure that all job applicants, employees, and service users are treated fairly and without favour or prejudice. In all situations people will be judged solely on merit or ability.

The following principles are the key points of the policy. Any breach of this by an employee may lead to disciplinary action, possibly including dismissal.

It is our aim to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of; gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, disability, race, age, religious belief or political opinion.

Our commitment extends to:

- 1 Promoting equality of opportunity and an harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect and occurrences of unlawful direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation are prevented
- 2 Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the relevant legislation
- 3 Complying with our own Equal Opportunities policy and associated policies
- 4 Taking lawful and affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- 5 Regarding all breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure

We all have responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Staff and services users are expected to abide by it and help create an equality environment.

Affirmative Action

Where appropriate, lawful positive action measures may be taken in certain circumstances, for example, where there is under-representation of a particular group. This may include encouragement in advertisements, the provision of training or other measures.

The Grievance or Harassment Procedures are available to any individual who believes that they have been discriminated against and we urge those individuals to pursue their rights through this channel.



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2.2 Equality Commission (NI) Guidance on Emblems in the Workplace

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has provided the following general guidance which we request you adhere to in order to promote respect and dignity in the workplace.

There are some emblems and symbols that, through their history and associations, and whether intended or not, have come to have a significance that has the potential to make those of a different identity feel uncomfortable or unwelcome.

In this category are likely to fall a variety of symbols and emblems with the potential to cause disharmony, and especially those that have been directly linked to community conflict in Northern Ireland and/or to local politics. Therefore, we ask that you do not wear or display any of the following in the Playgroup:

- 1 Any football shirts, e.g. Rangers and Celtic
- 2 Badges and insignia linked to paramilitary or political organizations e.g. buttonholes, or tattoos (these should be covered up if possible)
- 3 Badges and insignia, e.g. Easter Lilies, Orange symbols
- 4 Posters, pictures, portraits, displays, tracts, emblems, screensavers, ringtones etc. linked to the above or that contain or incorporate emblems more closely associated with one or other of the communities
- 5 Religious tracts and emblems

This list is not exhaustive but indicative of the types of emblems that have been problematic in the past.

There are many ways in which we convey our religious or political identity to others. In this category would fall emblems that may be associated primarily with one religion or community but are not directly linked to community conflict. Such marks of identity are unlikely to be regarded as creating an intimidating or hostile working environment. Therefore we permit the following when worn with decorum and at the appropriate time:

- 1 Marks of religious observance, insignia associated with organizations attached primarily to one religion, community or culture (e.g. crosses, crucifixes, ashes, kip pot, turbans, Muslim veils, pioneer pins, Christian Union badge, fáinnes, dreadlocks)
- 2 Marks of remembrance, celebration or commemoration (e.g. poppies, shamrock)

This list is not exhaustive so if you are in any doubt, please see guidance from the Playgroup Leader.



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This policy was adapted at a meeting of our playgroup held on the 1st September 2025.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

This policy was reviewed by the Ballygawley Early Years Management Committee on:

Date: 20/04/2026

Signed:
(on behalf of the Management Committee)

Name and Position: Iona Devine, Chairperson

Reviewed on:

Date: Signed:..... Position:.....

Date: Signed:..... Position:.....

Date: Signed:..... Position:.....

This policy links with the following policies;

- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Data Protection policy
- Allegations Against a Staff Member policy
- Employment Policies (staff folder)
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour policy