



## Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Policy

Enquiries to:	Centre Manager
Applies to:	Children, teachers, and families at the centre
Date Developed:	May 2021
Review Date:	May 2021
Approved Date:	
Next Review Date:	May 2022

**References;** *ECE Regulations, Licensing Criteria for ECE centre's, 2008, HS9 – HS11, (sleep), Vulnerable Children's Act 2014.*

### Introduction

This policy is designed to ensure Lower Hutt City Childcare Centre staff and applicants are treated fairly, valued and have a discrimination-free workplace, and that our children can enjoy an environment where they will learn to respect and celebrate differences.

All policies and practices that involve employees or prospective employees including recruitment and selection, training and development and employment agreements will reflect Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) principles. This will ensure that all skills, qualifications and abilities that employees and applicants have are valued and that decisions are not influenced by irrelevant factors.

### Principles

LHCCC will:

- Uphold the principles of te tiriti o Waitangi
- Endeavour to provide an environment free of harassment and bullying
- Encourage the use of inclusive language –ie non-sexist and non-racist
- Identify and eliminate any discriminatory practices
- Work to create an environment which encourages and supports the full participation of staff
- Aim to attract and retain a diverse staff.

### Legal responsibilities

The provision of Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) is a legal requirement for all chartered early childhood services as a Charter Obligation under The Education Act 1989. LHCCC is also legally required to comply with the Human Rights Act 1993. It prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of:

- Sex or gender identification
- Age
- Marital status
- Religious belief
- Ethical belief
- Colour
- Race
- Ethnic or national origin
- Disability
- Political opinion

- Employment status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation.

Direct discrimination is where personal characteristics that have no relevance to the job are brought into an employment decision. Indirect discrimination occurs where policies or practices appear to be fair, but favour the characteristics of a particular group over another.

Lower Hutt City Childcare Centre human resources policies and practices will support te tiriti o Waitangi and the need for Maori and Pakeha to work in partnership. New Zealand's bi-cultural heritage will be taken into account.

### **EEO target groups**

In New Zealand certain groups are found to be more at risk of employment –related discrimination. These groups, sometimes known as EEO target groups are:

- Maori
- Women
- Pacific Islands people and other ethnic minority groups
- people with disabilities.

Others that can also face discrimination are:

- People with family responsibilities
- Older employees
- Gay and lesbian staff.

Men are not specifically recognised in New Zealand legislation as an EEO target group but they are clearly under represented in the early childhood education sector and could potentially face similar difficulties to those in EEO groups.

People may identify with a number of EEO groups.

### **What's EEO all about?**

**EEO is all about getting the best possible person for the job and providing an environment where everyone is able to participate and compete equitably, to develop to their full potential and be rewarded fairly for their contribution regardless of their differences.**

Most employers appoint or promote on merit - that is ensuring that the person with the best possible qualifications and experience gets the job. While EEO does not involve setting quotas, it does ensure that merit does not focus only on obvious skills. It recognises that target groups may have other skills valuable to employment that should also count. These can include experience and skills gained outside the paid workforce including raising children and voluntary work, speaking more than one language and the ability to adapt and cope with a disability.

People from identified target groups will not have an unfair advantage over others but they won't be unfairly disadvantaged either.

EEO will benefit the centre by:

- Encouraging the full use of all the talents and skills of LHCCC employees. This provides a better service to children, parents and the community.
- Increasing the chances of getting the best possible person for the job. This should reduce the possibility of hiring the wrong person to begin with.
- Improving the working environment. When people feel valued and recognised, their morale is higher and they work better.
- Helping to avoid unlawful practices that could involve costly lawsuits.
- Showing parents and the wider community that LHCCC is responsive and responsible at working towards eliminating discrimination and keeping up with changing social values.

**Practical ways LHCCEC can put EEO principles into practice**

- Recognise cultural differences and family and whanau commitments eg extended bereavement or Tangihanga leave.
- Respect and celebrate diversity in day-to-day practices and activities.
- Encourage all employees to take advantage of training, development and career opportunities where appropriate.
- Encourage all employees to take part in education on Maori perspectives and values, te reo Maori and on the cultural heritage of New Zealand including the Treaty of Waitangi.
- Encourage employees to learn more about their own culture and develop support networks.
- Discourage sexist and stereotypical attitudes, language and behaviour.
- Recognise skills that employees have including fluency in their language, interpreting skills and knowledge of their own culture.
- Provide opportunities for employees to upgrade their level of spoken and written English where required.
- Encourage staff with disabilities (and staff who are members of any EEO “target group”) to suggest any aids, equipment or alterations to the workplace or work practices that would make their work easier or improve their performance.
- For employees to have the opportunity to upgrade their level of written and spoken English and other languages where required.

**Guiding principles:**

- As a good employer this Centre values the diverse talents of its employees and will continuously strive towards excellence in providing equal employment opportunities
- EEO best practise response recognises that all employees regardless of gender or ethnicity, should receive the same developmental opportunities
- The principles and practices of equal employment opportunities are a core value, contributing to integrity and high performance
- The Centre will seek to identify and take practical steps to eliminate such barriers to ensure everyone is treated fairly in employment, and has the opportunity to perform to their highest ability.
- The Centre is fully committed to ensuring equality in employment and will not tolerate or practice any form of discrimination, whether the discrimination be direct or indirect.

Board of Trustees consulted		Kiaoko consulted	Yes/No
Parents consulted	Yes/No		
Approved by:	Designation:	Date:	Next Review