

# Equality of opportunity

## 1.13 Supporting children with Special Educational Needs

### Policy statement

We provide an environment that celebrates all children, valuing their individual developmental journey, recognising children who are neurodiverse or with diagnosed special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and that they are all supported to reach their full potential.

The term SEND support defines arrangements for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We are required and are very proud to offer appropriate support and intervention and to promote equality of opportunity for children that we care for. We understand that children develop and learn at different rates and we recognise neurodiversity and individuality. Children's SEND generally falls within the following four broad areas of need and support:

- communication and interaction
  - cognition and learning
  - social, emotional and mental health
  - sensory and/or physical needs
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- We have regard for the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) (DfE and DoH 2015).
  - We ensure our provision is inclusive to all children with special educational needs.
  - We support parents and children with special educational needs (SEN).
  - We identify the specific needs of children with special educational needs and meet those needs through a range of SEN strategies, and by starting TAFs if relevant.
  - We work in partnership with parents and other agencies in meeting individual children's needs.
  - We monitor and review our policy, practice and provision and if necessary, make adjustments.

### Procedures

- We designate a member of staff to be the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and give her name to parents. Our SENCO is:

**Andrea Parker**

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- We ensure that the provision for children with special educational needs is the responsibility of all members of the setting, and we run SEN forums to ensure inclusion support staff are knowledgeable.
- The SENCO works closely with the Pre-School Leader and other colleagues and has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs and for co-ordinating provision for children who are neurodivergent or with SEND. The Pre-School Leader has overall responsibility and perspective on our SEND offers and leads SEN leadership meetings half termly.
- We ensure that our inclusive admissions practice ensures equality of access and opportunity.
- We use the graduated response system for identifying, assessing and responding to children's special educational needs.
- We work closely with parents of children with special educational needs to create and maintain a positive partnership.
- We ensure that parents are informed at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their children's education.
- We provide parents with information on sources of independent advice and support, and on any outside agencies that work with their children.
- The SENCO and all relevant staff meet regularly, usually once every half term, to review and plan strategies to support SEN children.
- We obtain consent from parents before we share information or obtain advice from other professionals.
- We liaise with other professionals involved with children with special educational needs and their families, including transition arrangements to other settings and schools.
- We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum for all children with special educational needs.
- We use a system of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing individual educational plans (IIPs) for children with special educational needs.
- We ensure that children with special educational needs are appropriately involved at all stages of the graduated response, taking into account their levels of ability.
- We have systems in place for supporting children with SEN at pre-school. We can apply for additional funding to support their individual needs.
- In some cases where required, we draw up an Education Health and Care Plan which is in addition to SEN funding shown above.
- We use a system for keeping records of the assessment, planning, provision and review for children with special educational needs.
- We provide resources (human and financial) to implement our Special Educational Needs Policy and fundraise to offer extra resources.
- We provide in-service training for parents, practitioners and volunteers as required.

- We ensure the effectiveness of our special educational needs provision by collecting information from a range of sources e.g. Individual Education Plan reviews, staff and management meetings, parental and external agency's views, inspections and complaints.
- We provide a complaints procedure.
- We monitor and review our policy annually.

## **Graduated approach**

### **Initial identification and support (identifying special educational needs)**

- Ongoing formative assessment forms part of a continuous process for observing, assessing, planning and reviewing children's progress.
- Children identified as having difficulty with one or more area of development should be given support by applying some simple strategies and resources.
- For most children application of some simple differentiation approaches will be enough to build confidence and help the child develop.
- If despite applying differentiated strategies a child continues to struggle and is showing significantly more difficulty with learning than their peers or has a disability which requires specific adjustments, then the key person should raise a concern with the setting's SENCo/setting manager and the child's parents, we have designed our own paperwork to support this process.

### **Observation and assessment of children's SEN**

Where a child appears to be behind expected levels, or their progress gives cause for concern, educators should consider all the information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting.

- Information can be collated from formal checks such as the progress check at age two, observations from parents and observation and assessment by the setting of the child's progress.
- When specialist advice has been sought externally, this is used to help determine whether or not a child has a special educational need (SEN).
- The child's key person and SENCo/Manager use this information to support the child who has a special educational need or any delay.
- If a child does need additional support, intervention work or more specialised advice and strategies the information is shared with parents. Once parents have been informed, they should be fully engaged in the process, contributing their insights to all future actions for their child, usually with TAF meetings or SEND meetings with key staff at Pre-School.

## **Planning intervention**

- Everyone involved with the child should be given an opportunity to share their views. Parents should be encouraged to share their thoughts on the child's difficulties and be involved in the decision as to what will happen next.
- A first intervention option may be to carry on with applying differentiated support and to review the child's progress at an agreed date. If the child's needs are more complex, then the decision maybe to go straight ahead and prepare SEN support: Action plan with detailed evidence-based interventions being applied straight away and simultaneously external referrals made.
- If relevant, then the child should be appropriately included in development of the action plan but only at a level which reflects their stage of comprehension.
- SEN support: Our Action Plan and IIP described below, ensures that children that are identified, or suspected of having a SEN will receive the right level of support and encouragement with their learning and development as early as possible.

## **Involving the child**

- The SEND Code of Practice supports the rights of children to be involved in decisions about their education.
- Inclusion of children with SEND helps build self-confidence and trust in others.
- Ascertaining children's views may not be easy, a range of strategies will be needed.
- Accurate assessment helps identify children's strengths and possible barriers to learning.
- The key person and setting manager/SENCo work in partnership with parents and other agencies to involve the child wherever appropriate.
- Children are involved at appropriate stages of the assessment and to their level of ability.
- Establishing effective communication is essential for the child's involvement.

## **SEND – individual support/inclusion plans**

- Our IIP shows what support is required to help achieve outcomes for the child It identifies strengths, barriers to learning and what we can do to support inclusions, a differentiated curriculum with high aspirations.
- A review date (at least termly) should be agreed with the parents so that the child's progress can be reviewed against expected outcomes and next steps agreed.

- A copy of the plan is stored in the child's file so that any other member of staff or an inspector looking at the file will see how the child is progressing and what interventions have been or are being applied.
- If a child requires specific medical interventions during their time in the setting, a health care plan form should also be completed and integrated into the general plans to ensure the child's medical needs are known and safely met.
- The action plan should provide an accessible summary of the child's needs, which can be used if further assessment is required including a statutory Education Health and Care (EHC) Assessment, and development of an EHC plan.

### **Drawing up a SEND individual support/inclusion plan:-**

If external agencies are already involved at this stage, then they should also be invited to help decide on what appropriate interventions are needed to help meet outcomes for the child. The SENCo/setting manager should take the lead in coordinating further actions including preparation of the action plan and setting short-term targets.

- Where there are significant emerging concerns (or an identified special educational need or disability) targeted action plans are formulated that relate to a clear set of expected outcomes and stretching targets.
- SEN support: our IIP's highlight areas in which a child is progressing well; areas in which some additional support might be needed and any areas where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay (which may indicate a special educational need or disability). It describes the activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns.
- Planned intervention should be based on the best possible evidence and have the required impact on progress with longer-term goals covering all aspects of learning and development and shorter-term targets meeting goals.
- The plan should focus on the needs of the child, the true characteristics, preferences, and aspirations of the child and involvement of the parents with a clear set of targets and expected outcomes for the child. Effective planning at this stage should help parents and children express their needs, wishes, and goals:
  - focus on the child as an individual.
  - be easy for children to understand and use clear ordinary language and images, rather than professional jargon
  - highlight the child strengths and capacities

- enable the child, and those who know them best, to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future
- tailor support to the needs of the individual
- organise assessments to minimise demands on families
- bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach
- If the child fails to make progress and multi-agency support is sought, then it is at this point that Early Help/TAF assessment should be considered.

### **Record keeping**

If a child has or is suspected of having a neurodivergent pathway or developmental delay, a dated record should be kept of:

- the initial cause for concern and the source of this information, (the progress check at age two and/or outcomes of previous interventions) and key worker observations.
- the initial discussion with parents raising the possibility of the child's SEN
- the views of the parents and other relevant persons including, wherever possible, the child's views;
- the procedures followed with regard to the Code of Practice to meet the child's SEND e.g. SEN action plan, referrals to external agencies and for statutory assessment
- evidence of the child's progress and any identified barriers to learning
- advice from other relevant professionals; and all subsequent meetings with parents and other persons and any subsequent referrals

Records may include

- observation and monitoring sheets
- expressions of concern
- risk assessments
- access audits
- health care plans (including guidelines for administering medication)
- IIP's
- meetings with parents and other agencies
- additional information from and to outside agencies
- agreements with parents

- guidelines for the use of children's individual equipment; Early help TAF referrals
- referral to the local authority identifying a child's special educational needs and request for statutory Education, Health, Care (EHC) needs assessment; and a copy of an EHC plan

### **Seeking additional funding/enhanced/top up**

If the child's needs cannot be met from within the setting's core funding, then it will be at this point that the evidence collated will be used to apply for top up/enhanced funding from the local authority's inclusion fund. If a new or existing child is disabled, then the setting should check if the family is in receipt or have applied for Disability Living Allowance. If so, the setting will be able to apply to their local authority for the local Disability Access Fund.

### **Statutory education, health and care (EHC) assessment and plan**

#### **Statutory assessment**

- If a child has not made progress, then the next steps may be for the child to undergo an Education, Health and Care Assessment.
- If a child is under compulsory school age, the local authority will conduct an EHC needs assessment if they consider that the child's needs cannot be met within the resources normally available to the early years setting.
- Children aged under age two are eligible where an assessment has indicated that the child is likely to have SEN which requires an EHC plan when they reach compulsory school age.
- When a child's needs appear to be sufficiently complex, or the evidence suggest specialist intervention then the local authority is likely to conclude that an EHC plan is necessary
- The local authority should fully involve the parent and must seek advice from the setting in making decisions about undertaking an EHC assessment and preparing an EHC plan.
- Settings should prepare by collating information about the child's SEND including:
  - documentation on the child's progress in the setting
  - interventions and support provided to date
  - evidence of external agency assessment, support and recommendations
  - parental views and wishes (and where appropriate those of the child)

The information will then be submitted to the local authority to allow them to accurately assess the child in the context of the support already given.

- The local authority must inform the child's parents of their decision within six weeks of receiving a request for an assessment and give its reasons for their decision. If the local

authority decides to conduct an assessment, it must ensure the child's parents are fully included right from the beginning and are invited to contribute their views. If the local authority subsequently decides not to conduct an assessment it must then inform the parents of their right to appeal that decision, of the requirement for them to consider mediation should they wish to appeal.

- If the local authority decides that a statutory EHC plan is not necessary, it must notify the parents and inform the provider, giving the reasons for the decision. This notification must take place within 16 weeks of the initial request or of the child having otherwise been brought to the local authority's attention.
- If the decision following an assessment is to compile an EHC plan the local authority should consult collaboratively with the parents in the preparation of the plan ensuring that their views and their child's preferences are taken into account and that plans describe positively what the child can do and has achieved to date.
- Plans are evidenced based and focus on short term outcomes and long-term aspirations for the child including family and community support. Parents have the right to request a particular provision for their child to be named within their EHC plan.
- If an early years setting is named, we would liaise with the local authority about funding the provision to ensure we can meet the child's needs inline with their EHC Plan. They cannot force a setting to take a child and can only name the provision in the EHC if the setting agrees.
- Local authorities should consider reviewing an EHC plan for a child under age five at least every three to six months. Such reviews would complement the duty to carry out a review at least annually but may be streamlined and not necessarily require the attendance of the full range of professionals, depending on the needs of the child. The child's parents must be fully consulted on any proposed changes to the EHC plan and made aware of their right to appeal to the Tribunal.

### **External intervention and support**

Where external agency intervention has been identified to help support a child with SEND then this intervention should be recommended in writing by a suitably reliable source such as a speech and language therapist, paediatrician or educational psychologist.

### **Further guidance**

[SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (DfE and DoH 2015)

[Ready, Steady, SENCO](#) (Alliance 2018)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Cullompton Pre-School	name of setting
Held on	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2010	(date)
Date to be reviewed	December 2011	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee	Emma Jones	
Name of signatory	Emma Jones	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chairperson	

This policy has an annual review period and, as such, will be reviewed and signed off at a management committee meeting of Cullompton Pre-School each year, as shown below.

Previously reviewed on:-	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	by	Sarah Lush Chairperson
Previously reviewed on:-	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	by	Sarah Lush Chairperson
Previously reviewed on:-	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	by	Alex Fox Chairperson
Previously reviewed on:-	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	by	Jack Madge Chairperson
Previously reviewed on:-	5 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	By	James Shere

Reviewed by Staff on:	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 (AP/AJ)
Reviewed by Committee on:	17th December 2024 (Sarah Rosario)
Date of next review:	December 2026
Signed on behalf of the Management Committee:	Sarah Rosario
Name of Signatory (printed):	Sarah Rosario
Role of Signatory (e.g. Chairperson)	Secretary