



# Special educational needs and disabilities (SEN/D) policy

Written in accordance with:

**The Early Years Statutory framework 2025 update –**

## **Special educational needs**

**3.76** Early years providers must have arrangements in place to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Maintained schools, academies and maintained nursery schools are required to identify a member of staff to act as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and other providers (in group provision) are expected to identify a SENCO. Maintained schools, academies and maintained nursery schools and all providers who are funded by the local authority to deliver early education places are required to have regard to the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice. Other providers may find it helpful to familiarise themselves with the early years section of the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice. Special educational needs and disability code of practice 0-25 years.

## **Acting on concerns**

**1.13** Throughout the early years, if a provider is worried about a child's progress in any prime area, practitioners must discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners must consider whether a child needs any additional support, including whether they may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support.

At Little Squirrels we are committed to ensuring that the needs of all children are met in accordance with equality and inclusion. We believe that all children have the right to receive the same quality care and educational learning opportunities, which will allow them to achieve the best possible outcomes. We provide an inclusive learning environment where all children are supported and our teaching approach is tailored to their individual needs and developmental stage. Ensuring all children have a 'voice' is another thing we are passionate about, allowing them to take the lead in their learning journey with us, where possible.

We provide equal opportunities for all children by:

- ♥ Accepting children into the setting regardless of their special educational needs, ensuring that they are settled into the nursery gradually and effectively.
- ♥ Children will be treated equally and their needs will be met in accordance with their age and stage of development.
- ♥ Children with SEN/D will be offered full access to our curriculum & early years education the same as their peers.
- ♥ We ensure the children's needs are being respected within the setting.
  - ♥ The views & voice of the child will always be a priority.
- ♥ We will take steps to ensure that the children with a medical condition get the support required to meet their needs while at nursery.
- ♥ We will ensure that the children with any SEN/D get the opportunity to engage in activities alongside their peers.
  - ♥ No one experiences any discrimination in any form.
  - ♥ Stereotypes are challenged by staff.
- ♥ Children are allocated appropriate levels of support to ensure that their potential is met.
  - ♥ Supporting transitions and tailoring them to their needs

### The definition of SEN/D

SEND stands for special educational needs and disabilities.

Special educational needs are when a child has a need that affects their ability to learn. It can be when a child has a difficulty in learning, or a disability that prevents or hinders a child from making use of the facilities in the nursery environment and requires a special educational provision.

Practitioners at Little Squirrels are also to be aware that all settings have vulnerable learners:

- Summer born children
- English as an additional language
- Special educational needs
  - Looked after child

- Boys
  - 2 year old funded children
    - Medical need
  - Pattern of poor attendance
  - Involvement of social care
    - Gypsy Roma traveller
    - Premature births
- Children of lone parents (service families, parents who work away for long periods e.g oil rigs, or parent in prison)

To support children that are identified as a 'vulnerable learner,' and needing support we would follow the same steps as 'graduated approach' with the assess, plan, do, review cycle to support the child and their individual needs. Things that are different in this process may be:

- Following up on any absences and checking that children are healthy and safe.
- Informing parents about the available different support services and how to reach them.
- Follow our safeguarding policy and reporting any concerns. (please refer to our safeguarding policy).
  - Work closely with outside agencies involved with the child.

### Areas of SEN/D

**Communication & Interaction-** Children and young people with speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others.

This may be because they:

- Have difficulty saying what they want to
- Do not understand what is being said to them
- Do not understand or use social rules of communication

**Cognition and learning-** Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation.

Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication or where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

**Social, emotional, and mental health-** Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which may display in different ways, such as challenging behaviour that is consistent and disruptive, self-harm, anxiety, or depression.

We have our own setting approach to how we deal with challenging/disruptive behaviour – please see our behaviour policy.

**Sensory and/or physical needs-** Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning.

### SENDco

Our Special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinators are:

Katrina Nunn and Rebekah Foran

- ♥ There will always be a designated SENDco to manage and support the provision of children with SEND.
- ♥ It is the managers and SENDco's responsibility to ensure that all staff have regard to relevant legislations, regulations, and policies.
- ♥ The SENDco will be suitably trained with adequate knowledge and experience of working with children that have SEND.

### Role of the SENDco

- ♥ Work with the manager to ensure that all practitioners have relevant knowledge and training relevant to working with children with SEND.
- ♥ Ensure that practitioners in the setting understand their roles and responsibilities when working with children with SEND.
  - ♥ Support staff with identifying children with SEND
  - ♥ Ensure all staff are aware and understand the settings SEND policy.
  - ♥ Support staff with understanding the gradual approach cycle.
- ♥ To respond quickly to causes of concern, delays & gaps in children's development by following the gradual approach.
- ♥ Assess children's specific needs using early support documents in all areas of learning, to identify their difficulties.
  - ♥ Plan activities with children's key people to narrow the gaps in the children's development.
  - ♥ Work closely with parents/carers about their children's development and needs.
    - ♥ Include parents in all plans and actions that will be put in place for their child; ensuring consent is always received.
- ♥ Be a point of contact for parents/carers when they need support or have questions.

- ♥ Liaise with other early years educators, such as split nursery setting, schools, health and social care providers and professionals.
- ♥ Liaise with external agencies and professionals beyond the setting, which may include; seeking advice and sharing information.
- ♥ To meet the requirements of record keeping while evidencing what is in place to support the needs of children.

### **Role of the key person within SEN**

All children have a designated key person. The key person's role is to support the needs of any key child with a special educational need or disability is to:

- ♥ Have regard to the legislations, regulations & policy related to working with children with SEND.
- ♥ Respond to causes of concern; identifying and responding to special educational needs and disabilities.
- ♥ Raise concerns about their key children with the nursery SENDco regarding any delays in their development.
- ♥ Know what the settings approach is when supporting and identifying children that require support with their learning and development.
  - ♥ Carry out initial assessments on their key children.
- ♥ Lead the engagement with their key children and the children's parents; with the support of the SENDco)
- ♥ Meet the requirements for record keeping which evidences: development tracking, activity plans, parent meetings, observations, and evaluations (Assess, plan, do, review)

The nursery SENDco will support staff fully when staff approach her with concerns, relating to special educational needs or disability.

The manager will ensure that staff have allocated paperwork time to plan effectively for children with SEND.

### **A graduated approach – Assess, plan, do review – Our whole setting approach**

In line with the SEND code of practice Little Squirrels follows the graduated approach – Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle. By using the graduated approach it enables us to effectively tailor our practice to the individual needs of the children. The graduated approach is led by the nursery SENDco. Initial assessments are made by children's key people. Key people and the SENDco will work together closely at this stage to ensure detailed and informative observations are made for evidencing the child's specific needs and delays.

How this is done:

1. **Assess** – Detailed observations are made on all children by their key people, to assess where they are in their development. Staff use their knowledge of child development and where there is a cause for concern will use below documents to make initial assessments:

- ♥ Every child a talker tracking sheet – for communication and language.
- ♥ Early support documents in all areas – Physical, Communication, Personal, social and emotional development & Thinking.
  - ♥ Learning checkpoints from EYFS.

Practitioners will gather information & evidence in the 'assessment' process. Understand what the specific area of concern is; ready to make plans for the next steps. This initial assessment should be reviewed regularly to ensure that support is matched to need. Where there is little or no improvement in the child's progress, more specialist assessment may be called for from specialist teachers or from health, social services, or other agencies beyond the setting.

2. **Plan** – This is where the SENDco and key person will decide what steps need to be put into place to support the child most effectively. Staff will do this by also always working closely with the parents.

This could include:

- ♥ Activities planned to help the child meet their next steps in development.
- ♥ Individual, provision map- a document that displays children's targets and how staff are going to carry out these targets.
- ♥ A referral to an outside agency if the child's developmental delay is more than 6 months.
- ♥ Contact professional services for advice and support, for example – child's health visitor or the inclusion team.
- ♥ An individual support plan – stating strategies that work well for the children and how the setting can support them.

Everything in this stage will again be communicated with the child's parents and they can give their input to what plans they would like put in place for their children.

3. **Do** – This is where the strategies above are put into place and are carried out by the child's key person, with support from SENDco. This will be done by:
  - ♥ Ensuring the environment is suitable and the child is able to concentrate during focus activities. This may mean staff split the group to create a suitable environment.
  - ♥ Activities carried out will not make the child feel 'singled out' or 'isolated.'
  - ♥ The staff will plan time into each week to ensure that they are following the steps & activities from the 'plan' stage.

- ♥ Staff will record activity observations they have carried out, recording how the activity.
  - ♥ Communicating with parents how well the activities are going.
4. Review- This is where the key person will review the impact that the activities have had on the child's development and the effectiveness of the support that has been put into place.
- This is done by:
- ♥ Ensuring the review is done by the agreed date (every 6-8 weeks)
  - ♥ A parent meeting should be arranged to include parent in the review.
  - ♥ The review will be done by the child's key person, SENDco & parents.
  - ♥ All plans will be updated and adjusted to show the next steps and how the nursery will support the child with the new plans put into place.
    - ♥ This graduated approach will be led the nursery SENDco.

Where a child continues to make little or no progress, or if a child is not developing expected, the nursery will call up on external professional support & agencies, to advise and assist further.

### Individual provision maps (IPM'S)

Individual provision maps will be put into place to support the children's development at nursery following an external agency report. It is a document that clearly states what outcomes we are working towards with the individual child and what exactly we will be doing at nursery to achieve the outcomes, as well as looking at the child's strengths and what is working well for the child. Any targets made will be 'SMART,' which stands for:

**S-Specific**

**M-Measurable**

**A-Achievable**

**R-Relevant**

**T-Time bound**

These make the targets set achievable and allow staff to record the outcomes clearly.

The provision maps will be developed by the nursery SENDco alongside the key people and parents.

These provision maps are used for children that require extra support to help them meet their learning outcomes and for children with targets from external agencies.

They will be reviewed every 6-8 weeks by the child's key person and support from the SENDco. Parents will be contribute their views and ideas on our termly review sheet.

### Individual support plan.

Individual support plans (ISP'S) are put into place when a child requires extra support throughout their day at nursery and looks more at the provision that needs to be put into place throughout the day to support the child.

It will document the support the child needs throughout their day at nursery and what strategies need to be put into place and used by all staff, to ensure the child's individual needs are met.

This will be carried out by key people, the SENDco & communicated with parents, so they can also contribute to the plan.

These need to be reviewed every 6-8 weeks, to evaluate how well the strategies are working. Practitioners will reflect on their practice and the evaluate the child's behaviour and response the strategies place.

### 2-year-old check assessment

Little Squirrels will complete a child's 2-year-old assessment around the time that the health visitor will do their review. The integrated review is available to children between 24 and 30 months old. It brings together the assessments given to 2-year-olds through the Department of Health's Healthy Child Programme and the Department for Education's early years progress check. We will send out a questionnaire to the child's parent to go through our assessment to discuss any strengths and any areas for support, parents can also raise any concerns they have. We will then give the parent a copy for them to give to the health visitor – we will gain permission from the parent if we need to contact the health visitor for any reason.

Our summary will:

- ♥ Highlight areas in which a child is progressing well.
- ♥ Highlight areas in which some additional support might be needed.
- ♥ Focus particularly on any areas where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay, which may indicate a special educational need or disability.
- ♥ Describe the activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns. This plan should involve parents and carers and other professionals (for example, the provider's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or health professionals) as appropriate.

*EYFS statutory framework - 2.10 Practitioners should encourage parents and/or carers to share information from the progress check with other relevant professionals, including their health visitor and the staff of any new provision the child may move to. Practitioners*

*must agree with parents and/or carers when will be the most useful point to provide a summary. Where possible, the progress check and the Healthy Child Programme health and development review at age two (when health visitors gather information on a child's health and development) should inform each other and support integrated working. This will allow health and education professionals to identify strengths as well as any developmental delay and any particular support from which they think the child/family might benefit. Providers must have the consent of parents and/or carers to share information directly with other relevant professionals.*

### **Educational health care plan**

If a child has very complex needs that meet the requirements for an EHCP, we will request the need for an educational health care plan to the local authority.

The local authority's inclusion team and SEN services will request information about the child's progress and developmental levels. Informative information will need to be shared for the assessment stage and an initial family conversation meeting will need to be held.

This ensures a good insight to the child's needs are being communicated and will be reflected in the report.

Documents that will need to be shared in the EHCP are:

- ♥ Family conversation (family views)– this includes medical history.
- ♥ Individual provision maps – interventions that have been done at current setting.
  - ♥ Records of regular reviews and their outcomes.
  - ♥ Tracking documents
- ♥ Any assessments made; this includes from professional outside agencies.
  - ♥ Views of the child
- ♥ Any involvement from other services and professionals.

All information shared, will be consented from parents first. Parents will be kept informed and closely on board throughout the whole process.

For more information about Educational Health Care Plans, please visit:

[Children with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\): Extra help- GOV.UK](#)

In early years EHCP reviews will take place every 6 months and this will be led by the SENCo and include parents and any relevant agencies.

### **Parent partnership**

Little Squirrels value parents as the first educators in their children's lives. We recognise that parents hold key information and have knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child's needs and the best ways to support them. We believe that good parent partnership is vital to support children to reach their full potential.

How we achieve good parent partnership:

- ♥ Parents will always be made aware of and informed of any concerns or delays in their child's development at the earliest stages.
  - ♥ Parents are treated as partners in their child's education.
- ♥ The SENDco & key person will have a good relationship with families and use good communication at all times, so parents feel they can talk to them with confidence.
- ♥ Information shared with parents will be full, accurate and always in the best interest of the child.
- ♥ The SENDco & practitioners will invite parents in and give many opportunities for parental involvement to contribute their knowledge of their child's learning & development.

*5.37 Code of practice: Where a setting identifies a child as having SEN they must work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs.*

### **Specialist Agencies**

We may require additional support from outside agencies or professionals. This may be when we feel a child needs additional help with their development, or if a child continues to make less than expected progress. Specialist agencies will advise us the best way to support and understand the child's individual needs, the best strategies to support the child, any extra equipment that may be needed, intervention programmes and any further steps they think we need to make to fully support the child with their developmental delay.

Professional agencies we may liaise with:

- ♥ Speech and language therapist – a referral may be made to speech and language if a child shows a significant delay in communication and language, (more than 6 months) in their development. This will be necessary if the graduated approach has been carried out and there are still delays in the child's development.
- ♥ Early years notification – Support from our area SENCO may be required if we feel the child needs more specialists support with their learning and development.
- ♥ Health Visitor – We may contact the child's health visitor if we feel it is an area they can support us and the child's family with. For example, health needs.

We will always ensure consent is gained by the child's parents/carers before we make a referral or share information.

It is the nursery SENDco's responsibility to contact professional agencies & ensure a communication diary is kept when contact is made, with a date, summary, and signature.

## Positive Behaviour & Understanding Children

Little Squirrels uses effective positive behaviour management strategies to promote the welfare and enjoyment of all children attending the Nursery. We aim to enable all children to develop confidence, self-esteem and a positive attitude towards their own learning and towards others. We aim to ensure that all practitioners work in an environment where there is mutual respect, and where there is a good understanding of the developmental needs of children. We recognise that there may be different expectations for children's behaviour at home and at nursery. We therefore work closely with parents/carers to explain the ways in which we promote positive behaviour, and the ways we can work together to promote the same message to children.

Where there is a concern with a child's behaviour, the first thing we do is try to understand what is happening by:

- Use of Behaviour diaries/charts to help us determine potential triggers/patterns
- Support plans/coping plans to pick apart what works well for the child – this will be shared with all practitioners.
- Early support documents to track areas of development to determine what specifically the child needs support with, that could be affecting their behaviour.
  - Observations.
- Meeting with parents to explore strategies, home behaviour & if there is anything going on in the child's life which could be a contributing factor to the child's behaviour.

By trying to understand the child, it will help to put plans in place to move forward and fully support the child with what they need specifically.

For more information, please read our 'Positive behaviour management policy'.

## Medical Needs

If a child has medical needs that will require us to give them medicine daily we will ensure that:

- We follow our administering medication policy
- Practitioners will have required training to meet the medical needs of the child
- If we think the child's medical needs require an EHCP we will follow this process.
- Risk assessments will be made for children that have complex needs in liaison with health care professionals.

Please refer to our administering medication policy for more details.

*3.54 Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription<sup>48</sup>) must only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer. Providers must keep a written record each time a medicine is*

*administered to a child and inform the child's parents and/or carers on the same day the medicine has been taken, or as soon as reasonably practicable.*

### **Local Offer**

Local authorities must publish a local offer of information about what provision is available to children and their families in the local area. This information is across all areas, education, health, and social care.

The local offer includes a description of the provision that the local authority expects to be available from providers of all relevant early years education.

It also includes:

- ♥ Services that assist and provide support to young children with medical conditions.
  - ♥ Childcare for disabled children and children with SEN.
    - ♥ Information, advice, and support services.
  - ♥ Support groups who can support parent/carers of disabled children.
- ♥ Learning support services, sensory support services or specialist teachers.
  - ♥ Support available to parents to support their children at home.
- ♥ The local authority arrangements for providing top-up funding for children with high needs.
  - ♥ The arrangements for EHCP needs and assessments and plans.

For more information on our local offer from Worcestershire county council, please visit:

[SEND Local Offer | Worcestershire County Council](#)

### **Inclusion Funding**

When a child receives additional support for their SEN/D, we are entitled to inclusion funding from the local authority, to help us support the child's learning and development in the setting. How much funding we receive is dependent on the severity of the child's individual needs.

Funding is only claimed if parents give consent for the setting to do so. This is done of the NEF parental consent form.

Inclusion funding will be used to:

- Support the inclusion of named children with SEN/D
  - Support interventions to be put into place
    - Used for resources or training.

[Further information for parents and carers | Worcestershire County Council](#)

## Transitions to school

We understand that when a child does have additional needs or a disability that requires extra support, it can be daunting for parents thinking about their transition to school. We ensure that all children have an excellent transition to school. Information sharing is vital when we are thinking about children's transition to school. This ensures that the supporting teacher/s have as much information as possible to meet the needs of the child when they start school.

We do this by:

- Working in partnership with the schools
  - This is usually with an initial meeting
  - Reports by child's key person with all relevant information
  - A joint parent meeting with the school
  - Any funding requirements such as SEN or EHCP done in good timing to ensure schools receive funding to support the child.
  - All interventions shares & strategies that work well for the child.
    - Specialist agency reports shared.
      - Passport to play
      - Transition toolkit
    - Extra school visits (if required)
    - Teacher visits to our setting
- ♥ Ensuring the child's key person fills out a detailed report about the child. Ensuring this includes the child's personality, preferences, favourite activities, and strengths as well as their delays and extra needs.
- ♥ Provision in our setting that prepares children for school transition.

## Complaints

Our intention is to work in partnership with parents and ensure we are following best practice alongside our own policies, the Early years statutory framework and relevant legislations.

In the first instance, a parent who is unhappy about any aspect about the provision or care of their child with a SEN/D, parents should communicate with their child's key person, the SEND/co or Manger.

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing and request a meeting with the nursery manager & SENDco. We would like to hope that we could come to an agreement on how to move forward and resolve the issues discussed, however if you are still unhappy and would like to make a formal complaint, this can be done and practitioners will give you the appropriate paper work to do this.

If you would like further information about making a formal complaint please visit: [SENDIASS guidance for resolving disagreements or making a complaint | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Policy updated by Katrina Nunn and Rebekah Foran February 2026