

Supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)



Policy statement

All children have a right to access education, and we all have a responsibility of removing any barriers and supporting them. We aim to develop an inclusive yet proactive approach in identifying and supporting children and families where there is a special educational need and disability to ensure they make progress from their individual starting points. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo) is responsible for coordination of care. The names of the setting SENDCo's are displayed on the notice board.

SENDCo's responsibilities are to:

- Discuss any initial concerns with team members
- Observe and assess the child concerned
- Confidentially discuss concerns with parents
- Create, review and monitor all support plans involving parents and practitioners
- Ensure that interventions for children are being carried out in a timely and effective way and removing barriers when this is not happening successfully
- Be responsible for managing all referrals including Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) requests, with parental involvement, and ensuring all paperwork and information is kept up to date
- Advise and train their colleagues using their specialist knowledge and skill
- Contact and work with relevant professionals relating to a child and signposting families to other sources of support
- Be able to identify SEN and disabilities, applying a graduated approach to identify and meet children's needs
- To identify any staff training needs

Related strategies and policies we adhere to:

- Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Early years inspection handbook
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act

We are aware that some children have disabilities/additional needs, and we are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the setting. We are committed to making sure that all children can access our services, are made to feel welcome, and that our activities promote their welfare and development in partnership with parents/carers and other relevant parties. We also believe that children with disabilities/additional needs have a right to play, learn and be able to develop to their full potential alongside other children. The setting will do all it can to ensure children with disabilities/additional needs have access to the same facilities, activities and play.

Definition of a child with SEND is if :

- they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age

As a setting we aim to remove access barriers such as having a disabled toilet, access ramps and an inclusive admissions policy. We work closely with all parents and carers to inform, involve and support them. We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum for all children including those with special educational needs. We monitor and review our policy, practice and provision and, if necessary make adjustments.

Method

Identification and assessment

We recognise that there are children in our care who will need specific and additional support to access the curriculum. This may have already been identified by their parents or other professionals before the child starts. If we become aware that a child is likely to need additional support we allow an observational period, during which they can settle in. The aim of this time is to enable the team guided by the SENDCo to establish what support may be needed, and at what times during the day. If we feel a child may need additional support we will discuss this with parents and agree on any interventions required.

For some children with additional needs, certain times of the day, busyness of a session or length of a session can significantly impact on their ability to cope, thrive and learn. Equally, if a child requires an enhanced adult ratio, as a setting we need to ensure that we can provide that effectively and consistently.

We follow the graduated approach:

Assess – Once an initial concern is identified this will be discussed with the settings SENDCo. Further observations will be carried out by the SENDCo, deciding if the child needs support and how they may be supported.

Plan – Any concerns will be confidentially discussed with the child's parents allowing them to share their thoughts and feelings. How and when additional support will be offered will be discussed and a support plan put together.

Do – Agreed actions will be carried out following a support plan.

Review – Reflect on what has worked well and what needs improving. We may have to make session amendments or reduce session hours if we feel it is in the child's best interests.

Ongoing support

We appreciate this process can be daunting and upsetting for parents and we endeavour to support them through each step of the process.

Support plans are reviewed regularly (usually within 6-8 weeks) by the setting SENDCo to see if progress has been made and if adaptations are required. This will be done in collaboration with parents.

There will be times when the setting and the child may require additional professional support. This may be to help aid a diagnosis or to obtain more knowledge on how to best support the child. We will involve parents explaining why we think a referral may be necessary and gaining their consent. This would only be superseded if there was a safeguarding risk.

Settings can request support from the Early Years and childcare Services (EYCS) through an Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) referral.

An Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment can be requested by parents, carers, teachers or any other professional involved with a child or young person. This may be required if there are concerns about the progress a child is making within the setting, even with support. These requests are sent to the local authority who then consider whether the assessment is necessary based on the information provided. If the assessment is not agreed, further information about options for next steps will be provided.

Following initial assessment and discussions with parents, there are strategies that can be used to support children to develop their communication and language skills such as the Wellcomm Screening Tool. If these strategies are followed consistently and there is still no progress a referral to the speech and language therapy service can be made.

To support transitions to school information will be shared by us with the receiving setting or school.

The Local Offer

The Local Offer is part of Suffolk Infolink. It provides clear, accessible and accurate information about the services available for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The website pulls together information about education, health and care services, as well as leisure activities and support groups.

Policy reviewed on: 6th December 2024

Reviewed by: Sandra Butler, Manager

Next Review Due: 6th December 2025