

## Children Who Have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

At Little Learners we are committed to the inclusion of all children. All children have the right to be cared for and educated to achieve the best possible outcomes, to share opportunities and experiences and develop and learn alongside their peers. We provide a positive and welcoming environment where children are supported according to their individual needs.

We recognise that some children may have additional needs that may require particular help, intervention and support. These needs may be short-lived for a particular time in the child's life or may require longer-term or lifelong support. At all times we will work alongside each child's parents and any relevant professionals to share information, identify needs and help the child and their family access the support they need.

In accordance with our admissions policy, we are committed to providing a childcare place, wherever possible, for children who may have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities according to their individual circumstances, and our ability to make any reasonable adjustments in order to provide the necessary standard of care. All children will be given a full settling in period when joining the nursery according to their individual needs.

Where we believe a child may have special educational needs and/or a disability that has not previously been acknowledged, we will work closely with the child's parents and any relevant professionals to establish the child's needs and to secure any action that may be required. We recognise that children with disabilities may not have SEN but may need the nursery to make reasonable adjustments to enable them to make full use of the nursery's facilities.

Where we have emerging concerns about a child and/or where a child has identified additional needs or a disability, we will find out as much as possible about the needs of the child and any support the child or family may need to ensure the child makes the best progress in their learning and development. We do this by:

- liaising with the child's parents
- observing each child's development and monitoring such observations regularly
- making a referral to the Early Years team, following local procedures
- liaising with any other relevant professionals engaged with the child and their family
- seeking specialist help or support, as required
- researching relevant publications/sources of help
- reading any reports that have been prepared
- attending any assessment or review meetings with the local authority/professionals.

### Legal framework and definitions

The relevant legislation underpinning this policy includes:

- Special Educational Needs and disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015)
- The Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3
- The Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014



- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

We use the definitions set out in the law to describe SEN and disabilities:

- A child has special education needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.
- A learning difficulty or disability means that a child of compulsory school age has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other children of the same age; and/or has a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the sort of facilities generally provided for others of the same age.
- For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children of the same age. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.
- A child under compulsory school age has SEN if he or she is likely to have a learning difficulty or disability when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.
- A disability is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. 'Long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and those with SEN. Where a disabled child requires special educational provision they are also covered by the SEN definition.

## Aims

Little Learners has regard to the statutory guidance set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015). We have clear arrangements in place to support children with SEN and disabilities. We aim to:

- Recognise each child's individual needs through gathering information from parents and others involved with the child on admission and through our procedures for observation and assessment.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and/or disabilities and have regard to the guidance given in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015.
- Plan, provide or help parents to obtain any additional help or support for any needs not being met by the universal service provided by the nursery.
- Include all children and their families in our provision, making reasonable adjustments where needed.
- Provide well-informed and suitably trained practitioners to help support parents and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Identify any emerging concerns that might suggest a child has special educational needs and/or disabilities at the earliest opportunity and plan for those needs through a range of strategies.



- Share any information received and assessments made by the nursery with parents and support parents in seeking any help they or the child may need.
- Seek any additional help needed including requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment where our own actions are not helping the child to make progress.
- Work in partnership with parents and other agencies in order to meet the individual children's needs, including health services and the local authority, and seek advice, support and training where required.
- Monitor and review our practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments and seek specialist equipment and services if needed.
- Ensure that all children are treated as individuals/equals and are encouraged to take part in every aspect of the nursery day according to their individual needs and abilities.
- Ensure that gifted and talented children who learn more quickly are also supported.
- Encourage children to value and respect others.
- Challenge inappropriate attitudes and practices.
- Promote positive images and role models during play experiences of those with additional needs wherever possible.
- Celebrate diversity in all aspects of play and learning.

## Methods

We will:

- Develop and maintain a core team of staff who are experienced in the care of children with additional needs. Staff will be provided with specific training to help them make any special educational provision needed and meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015.
- Identify a member of staff to be our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and share their name with parents (see below for an explanation of their role).
- Provide a statement showing how we provide for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and share this with staff, parents and other professionals.
- Ensure that the provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is the responsibility of all members of staff in the nursery.
- Ensure that our inclusive admissions practice includes equality of access and opportunity.
- Ensure that our physical environment is, as far as possible, suitable for children and adults with disabilities.
- Work closely with parents to create and maintain a positive partnership which supports their child(ren).
- Provide differentiated activities to meet all individual needs and abilities to give a broad and balanced early learning environment for all children including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Ensure that parents are consulted with and kept informed at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their child's care and education, including seeking any specialist advice.
- Ensure that children's views are sought and listened to.

- Use a graduated approach (see explanation below) to identify, assess and respond to children who have emerging difficulties, suggesting they may have special educational needs or a disability that requires a different approach.
- When planning interventions and support, agree the outcomes and the expected impact on progress and a date for review.
- Hold review meetings with parents at the agreed times and agree any changes or adjustments to support.
- Liaise with other professionals involved with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families, including transfer arrangements to other settings and schools. We aim to work closely with the next school or care setting and meet with them to discuss the child's needs to ensure information exchange and continuity of care.
- Provide parents with information on sources of independent advice and support.
- Keep records of the assessment, planning, provision and review for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Provide resources, in so far as we can (human and financial), to implement this policy
- Ensure the privacy of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities when intimate care is being provided.
- Provide in-service training for practitioners and volunteers.
- Raise awareness of any specialism the setting has to offer, e.g. Makaton trained staff.
- Ensure the effectiveness of our special educational needs and/or disability provision by collecting information from a range of sources e.g. assessment information, targeted plans and outcomes, staff and management meetings, parental and external agencies' views, inspections and complaints. This information is collated, evaluated and reviewed annually.
- Provide a complaints procedure and make available to all parents in a format that meets their needs e.g. braille, audio, large print, additional languages.
- Monitor and review our policy annually.

### **The role of the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)**

The role of the SENCO is to provide a lead for staff in relation to special education needs and/or disabilities and to make sure procedures are followed, appropriate records kept and parents are involved. The child's key person will normally remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis and for planning and delivering an individualised programme. The particular responsibilities of our SENCO are:

- Ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with special educational needs and/or disability and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting needs.
- Advising and supporting colleagues.
- Ensuring parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting.
- Liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the setting.

## Graduated approach

In line with requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, we take a graduated approach to working with children with emerging concerns and their families. This approach includes:

- An analysis of the child's needs including whether we should seek more specialist help from health, social services or other agencies.
- An agreement about the interventions and support needed and the expected impact on progress and a date for review.
- Implementation of the interventions or programmes agreed, including assessing the child's response to the action taken.
- A review of the effectiveness of the support and its impact on the child's progress by the key person, SENCO, the child's parent(s) and the views of the child, including any agreed changes to outcomes and support.
- Revisiting this cycle of action in increasing detail and frequency including seeking further specialist help to secure good progress until the SENCO, key person, the child's parent(s) and any other professionals involved agree intervention is no longer needed or decide to request an education, health and care needs assessment (see below).

## Action we take if we cannot meet the needs of a child

We will consider taking appropriate action if we cannot meet the needs of a child. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Meeting with parents to discuss the child's progress, and concerns
- Provide advice and support to the parents
- Alter attendance patterns e.g. shorter days, part-time attendance
- Consider alternative childcare options, in partnership with parents and the Local Authority
- In the event we cannot meet the needs of the child, and after exploring and implementing all appropriate options in conjunction with parents and the Local Authority, we will give notice to the parents that we cannot continue to provide childcare.

## Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment and Plan

If the help given through the graduated approach is not sufficient to enable the child to make satisfactory progress, we may request, in consultation with the parents and any external agencies already involved, an assessment of the child's needs by the local authority. This is called an Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment. The assessment will decide whether a child needs an EHC assessment plan. This plan sets out in detail the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child who has SEN or a disability. The local authority will consult with parents and let them know the outcome of the assessment.



## Early help assessment

If we believe a child and their family would benefit from support from more than one agency, for example where a child may have difficulties linked to poor housing or difficult domestic circumstances, we may request or carry out an inter-agency assessment to get early help for the family. This early help assessment aims to ensure that early help services are co-ordinated and not delivered in a disjointed way.

## Early Support

Where children have disabilities we may seek additional help and resources through the Early Support Programme which co-ordinates health, education and social care support for the parents and carers of disabled children from birth to adulthood. There is more information on the Council for Disabled Children website: <http://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/earlysupport>

This policy meets the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the EYFS 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

Date policy last reviewed/updated	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	Reviewed by	Julia Ward, Head of Support Services
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