Early Years practice procedures

Identification, assessment and support for children with SEND

At The Enchanted Wood Day Nursery, we are committed to providing an inclusive environment were all children, regardless of their abilities or additional needs, are valued, respected and supported. We aim to ensure that every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential in a safe, nurturing, enriching environment.

- We have regard for the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014).
- We support children and their families with special educational needs and disabilities by working in partnership with the families, ensuring that we actively listen to and act on their wishes and concerns.
- We identify the specific needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities by having a clear approach for identifying, responding to and meeting those needs through a range of SEN strategies.
- We work in partnership with the local authority and other external agencies to ensure the best possible outcomes for children with SEN and their families.
- We monitor and review our policy, practice and provision and if necessary, make any adjustments.

Procedures

- We have a designated a member of staff to be the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).
- Our SENCOs are:

Chloe Arthurton and Elly Parsons

- Our SENCO works closely with the Management Team and other colleagues, they have the responsibility for overseeing SEND provision, supporting staff in implementing support and liaising with parents/carers and external professionals.

- Our SENCO has completed specific SENCO training (CERTSEY Level 3).

Identification, assessment and support for children with SEND

We have regard for the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) (DfE and DoH 2015) which states that local authorities must ensure that all early year's providers that they fund in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors are aware of the requirement on them to meet the needs of children with SEN and disabilities. When securing funded early education for two, three- and four-year-olds local authorities should promote equality and inclusion for children with disabilities or SEN; this includes removing barriers that prevent access to early education and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential.

The term SEN support defines arrangements for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We are required to offer appropriate support and intervention and to promote equality of opportunity for children that we care for. 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

Graduated Approach

Initial Identification and Support

- Ongoing assessments are part of our continuous process to observe, plan, and review 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. An ISP or Initial record of concern form can be used for this purpose.
- If challenges persist and the child displays significant learning difficulties or has a disability requiring specific adjustments, staff will consult the SENCo and the child's parents to raise a concern.

Observation and Assessment of Children's SEN

When a child appears to be behind expected levels, educators consider a broad range of information, information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting. Including parental observations, the progress check at age two, and assessments by external specialists, if involved.

- 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 use this information to decide if the child has a special educational need.

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 a one plan. (Action plan with detailed evidence-based interventions being applied straight away and simultaneously external referrals made)
- Action plans reflect the child's needs, set clear outcomes, and ensure regular reviews in partnership with parents, with adjustments made as necessary. Ensuring 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.

SEN action plan (One Planning)

- SEN support: Action plan, should show what support is required to help achieve outcomes for the child and detail the frequency of these interventions and who will apply them and with what resources.
- 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 SEN action plan (One 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 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 (One Plan): Action plan, highlights 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 and not their SEN label
    - 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.

Record keeping

If a child has or is suspected of having a SEN, 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). SEN support: Initial record of concern form can also be used for this purpose drawing information from other sources (such as ISP)
- 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 (one 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)
- SEN action plans
- 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;
- 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

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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. Such as Special education needs inclusion funding (SENIF). 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, the local authority must fund this provision. 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.

Transition Support

We ensure smooth transitions for children with SEND, both within the nursery (e.g between rooms) and to primary school. Transition plans and meetings are arranged to share information on each child's needs, ensuring staff are fully briefed, and children are prepared for these changes.

- A home visit before settling sessions helps ease the initial transition, build familiarity, gathering information and support understanding of the child's needs.
- For primary school transitions, we coordinate with schools, sharing key information and arranging a one plan meeting to aid transition.

Commitment to Training and Responsibility of All Staff

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all children, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). To uphold this commitment, every staff member, regardless of their role, is responsible for supporting the wellbeing and progress of students with SEND.

- **Ongoing Professional Development**: All staff engage in SEND training to equip them with the skills needed to recognize and meet the individual needs of each child. This training includes specific learning strategies, behaviour management, and inclusive teaching practices.
- **Embedding SEND Awareness**: SEND responsibility is a shared commitment embedded across all areas of learning. Every team member is vigilant and proactive in accommodating diverse needs, ensuring that all children have access to high-quality, inclusive practice.

SEND Training Accessed and Planned for

- Our Nursery provides a structured, ongoing training schedule for all staff, focusing on both foundational and advanced SEND training to ensure a well-prepared and knowledgeable team.
- **Current Training Programs**: Staff members are currently trained in key information, such as recognising SEND, autism awareness, and strategies to support children with specific learning difficulties.
- **Tracking and Evaluating Training Outcomes**

  To ensure the effectiveness of SEND training, we track outcomes to embed knowledge into daily practice, sharing learning across the team.

- **Training Tracking**: Each staff member's training progress is logged and monitored, ensuring that mandatory courses are completed and further professional development is encouraged according to their role and the needs of the children.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Reflection**: Regular meetings and SEND-focused workshops allow staff to share learning experiences and develop collective strategies, enhancing the support provided to children with SEND.

Inclusive Practices and Resources

- Inclusive admissions practices guarantee equal access and opportunity.
- We offer a broad, balanced curriculum that is differentiated to meet all children's needs.
- Staff receive regular training on the SEND policy, procedures, and provision requirements, ensuring consistency and quality in support for children with SEND.
- Resources are allocated to implement SEND support effectively, and additional funding can be pursued with management support when necessary.

  Through these practices, we foster an environment that supports each child's unique needs, involving families and collaborating with professionals to create a truly inclusive setting that empowers children with SEND to thrive. Our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure their effectiveness, compliance, and alignment with best practices.

Informing Parents About SEND Information, Advice, and Support Services

- Our goal is to ensure parents are well-informed about available SEND support and resources within the community, enabling them to make informed decisions and access the best possible support.
- **Accessible Information and SEND Support Resources**: Information about local SEND services, advice, and support is available to parents via leaflets in our reception area, newsletters, and our website, which is regularly updated to reflect the latest support resources. We also provide books and printed leaflets with contact details for local SEND services, including phone numbers, websites, and details on accessing further assistance.
- **Regular Reminders and Updates**: Using platforms like Famly, we inform parents of new services, community events, and SEND workshops, helping them stay connected to helpful resources.

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 Publication)