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| <b>Policy Title:</b>  | <b>Special Educational Needs, Medical Needs and Disabilities</b> |                             |                 |
| <b>Aims:</b> To ensure that every child who has a disability or a special educational need is identified early and supported in their inclusion and development. To ensure that the parents or carers of these children are central to decision making and discussion around their child's development, in line with the SEND Code of Practice. |  |                             |                 |
| <b>Role of Responsibility</b>   | Nursery  | <b>Current policy owner</b> | Nursery Manager |
| <b>Date last updated</b>  | Sept 2021  | <b>Date due for review</b>  | Sept 2022       |
| <b>Method of evaluation</b>   | Annual review  |                             |                 |

Elements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage covered by this policy include;  
Educational Programmes  
Learning and Development Considerations  
Assessment  
Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

We aim to put into practice the fundamental principles of the SEND Code of Practice (2014) and the Children and Families Act 2014. We must meet our statutory duties in relation to identifying and supporting all children with special educational needs or Disabilities (SEND), whether or not they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

The aim of this policy is to clarify and confirm our commitment to providing our children with full and timely support for any additional educational needs and neurodiversity that they may have, whether the child is presented to us as having a disability or special need or whether these become apparent during the period that the child is with us.

Any practitioner involved in the assessment and support of a child with SEND must be skilled and knowledgeable to do this. If you feel that you require more training or support, you must request this.

We must provide support across the four broad areas of SEND, which are;

- Communication and interaction – a difficulty in communicating with others, which could be a difficulty in speaking, understanding what is said to them, or understanding and using social rules of communication. The difficulty could be in one area or across all aspects
- Cognition and learning – when a child learns at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Needs can include moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Also, there may be specific learning difficulties (SpLD) affecting one or more specific aspect of learning (such as dyslexia, dyscalculia or dyspraxia)
- Sensory and/or physical needs – Many children with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or multi-sensory impairment (MSI) with require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning.



- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties - this can manifest itself in many ways, such as being withdrawn or isolated, displaying disruptive behaviour. This may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression.

### **SENCO**

Our Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinators (s) are (at the time of publishing);

Durham – Laura Howard, Nicola Lister & Rebecca Gayle

Bishop Auckland – Vikki Mitchell

However, both work as part of a team. All staff are responsible for supporting children and families with SEND.

Each nursery has its own SENCO, who is supported by the Area SENCO and the Early Years Equality and Inclusion Development Advisers. Each SENCO must attend the full range of training courses available to them via the Durham County Council Education Development Team and must attend at least 50% of the cluster meetings each year, to maintain their knowledge. It is imperative that the SENCO disseminates this information to the rest of the team. It is essential that Nursery Managers also maintain their knowledge of county procedures and best practice and therefore it is expected that they will also attend the other 50% of the cluster meetings.

The Early years Equality and Inclusion EDAs are available for advice as follows;

Gill Briggs 03000 268920

Chris Taylor 03000 268924

Each SENCO (supported by the Manager) is responsible for supporting the rest of the team in providing support to the children with SEND and their families. This includes early identification of special educational needs, for smooth transition between settings and for managing and supporting the family and children in the setting.

The role of the SENCO involves;

- Ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand the responsibilities for children with SEND and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting the needs of their SEND
- Advising and supporting colleagues
- Ensuring key workers involve parents throughout and that their insights inform actions taken
- Liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the setting

Where a practitioner does not require support, they can carry out this role as the child's keyworker.

### **Working with Parents and/or carers**

We are committed to working closely with parents in a confidential and professional manner, providing them with support without patronising and without offering advice or diagnoses outside our area of expertise. We work alongside parents to provide a single and holistic approach to supporting the child's development and needs. We may be able to support the parent by directing them to other professionals or by inviting professionals in to meet the parents, should they require it.



## **Early Identification**

The benefits of early identification are widely recognised. Identifying need at the earliest point, and then making effective provision, improves long-term outcomes for children.

If a practitioner suspects that a child is showing signs of SEND, neurodiversity or developmental delay, they should seek advice from the SENCO and nursery manager before sharing their concerns with the parent. This is to ensure that we do not raise alarm unduly. This should be done quickly and without delay, to ensure that we achieve early identification.

Routines, strategies, resources and pedagogical approaches may need to be changed to meet a child's needs. These should be discussed and agreed in the team to provide a rapid and focused opportunity to observe a child's responses. These should be shared with parents to provide consistency and diverse views. Some children will respond positively to focused work and no further concerns may arise.

All children are observed and assessed using the Summary Assessments and Two-Year Check (Progress Summary) processes. Parents are always invited and encouraged to attend a regular meeting to discuss their child's progress. Parents must receive a copy of the progress summary at the two-year check stage and at all other stages if they request it. From observations and assessments emerging concerns may be highlighted. We should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early, in particular we should respond to parents' concerns. We work alongside the Health Visiting team in supporting an integrated two-year review.

## **Support Plan**

If a child joins us with an identified need or if a child has been assessed as having an emerging need, a Support Plan may be required. The Support Plan should be created with the parents and with other professionals, where required.

This should highlight;

- areas where good progress is being made
- additional support that might be needed
- if there is concern that a child may have a developmental delay (which may indicate SEND or disability).
- the activities, strategies and adjustments we intend to adopt to address any issues or concerns (these should be specific and measurable)
- details of the actions of other professionals involved (sourced from parents or from other professionals directly)

A child who has a delay in learning and development which may be due to domestic circumstances (eg lack of opportunity, EAL, neglect) should be monitored using the nursery assessment process unless or until concerns highlight other factors such as underlying learning or communication difficulty.

Children should be assessed using the plan, do, review model, with two cycles, to ensure that the assessment is accurate and considered in different scenarios. Where there is little or no improvement in the child's progress, more specialist assessment may be called for from the relevant professional(s), with the parents' agreement.



## **SEND Support Plan**

Where it is decided to provide SEND Support, alongside the parents the following should be agreed;

- Intended outcomes for the child
- interventions and support to be put into place
- the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour
- a date for review
- any related staff development required
- opportunities for supporting at home

This should be reviewed on a regular basis, normally 8 weeks or suitable for the individual child and/or family. It is likely as time progresses, the plan becomes more detailed and more frequently reviewed.

We must ensure that we have provision to meet the needs of every child with known or emerging SEND or medical conditions. Where we require support, equipment or training to meet these needs, this should be accessed via the Inclusion and Equality Team.

Every child must be allocated a key person and that person must establish a relationship with parents when the child starts with us. At this point, we will encourage parents to share any prior knowledge of developmental or health issues that their child may have and to share any concerns that they may have. If a child is known to have any developmental or health concerns, the parent may be involved in the child's initial 'All About Me' meeting if required.

When we create a SEND support plan, we must create a SEND Chronology to record a summary of all conversations and contacts with other professionals. To make a record of conversations and decisions with parents and professionals, we create a 'short note', to be signed by the parents – as a record of agreement for action.

## **EHC Assessment**

Where, despite taking relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child, the child has not made expected progress, or the child has a known condition which would provide an expectation of the child not accessing mainstream school without support, we should consider requesting an EHC needs assessment. The parent can request the assessment too. The purpose of an EHC is to make special education provision to meet the SEND of the child, to secure the best possible outcomes across education, health and social care. From the EHC, the Durham local authority will use the assessment to record parental preferences, establish outcomes, detail the SEND and specify provision needed.

If we are aware that a child is likely to need special educational provision within the first 2 years of school, we should seek advice on whether to request an EHC assessment (eg if they have a debilitating condition which is likely to worsen and cause learning or access problems at school).

In the event that a child presents to us with significant difficulties or impairments which are diagnosed and known we can request an EHC assessment without doing a support plan first. However, we must do an interim support plan to meet the child's immediate needs and identify outcomes with the parent.



An EHC plan will specify how services will be delivered as part of the whole package and explain how best to achieve the outcomes sought across education, health and social care for the child. An EHC assessment will not always lead to an EHC Plan. For example, if we and the parents together can support the child, a plan will not be required.

The local authority will inform us if they believe that an EHC Plan is necessary within 6 weeks of the request.

In the review of an EHC assessment or the creation of an EHC plan, we may be requested to attend meetings or provide developmental reports. This report would be in the format of a Support Plan and may be alongside a progress summary, and should be provided as soon as possible, the maximum timescale is 6 weeks, however it is anticipated that we can respond within 2 weeks (there will be exceptions). In the event that a child is 'looked after' these timescales may be shorter.

If the EHC assessment finds that it is necessary for special educational provision to be made, Durham local authority will decide to prepare an EHC Plan.

### **EHC Plan**

The EHC Plan will include;

- A positive description of what the child can do
- The outcomes sought (these must be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound).
- Consideration of how best to achieve the outcomes sought
- Detail of how different approaches will be coordinated
- A forward looking plan
- How informal and home support can help
- A review date

Full details of the statutory requirements of the plan's content can be found in section 9 of the SEND Code of Practice 2014.

If in the EHC Plan Yellow Wellies is named as the Early Years provider. The child must attend Yellow Wellies. Therefore, please ensure that we can accommodate the sessions required prior to committing to this request. We should be sent a copy of the draft EHC prior to us confirming that we can accommodate a child. We have a statutory duty to provide a place for the child if we have a space within our standard sessions (as with any child). We must respond to this within 15 days.

Durham County Council has the responsibility to coordinate the EHC assessment and the development of the plan. We can be requested to hold an EHC Plan review meeting on behalf of the local authority. If we do, we must manage the whole meeting including arranging the meeting, note-taking, report sharing etc. We DO NOT HAVE TO agree to hold this meeting but we must provide developmental reports and attend the meeting as one of the professionals.

A draft of the EHC Plan will be sent to the parents to review within 15 days before the plan is finalised. The final plan will be sent to us.

The EHC Plan will be reviewed at least annually but should be considered for 3-6 monthly reviews (more frequent than annual review may not require the attendance



of all professionals). The review will be led by Durham local authority and must focus on the child's progress towards meeting their outcomes and the outcomes must be reviewed to ensure they continue to be appropriate. We should prepare our interim targets for the coming year prior to the meeting. We should receive guidance as to how to deliver the recommendations to support the child.

### **Transitions**

EHC Plans and SEND Support plans must be shared with the next provider in a child's transition (eg school). The Area should be aware of any children with SEND preparing for a transition to school. This must be completed prior to February 15<sup>th</sup> of the year the child starts school.

### **Other agencies and support**

We welcome and support working alongside other professionals in identifying SEND and in supporting the child and the family through their SEND or medical conditions. Other professionals may include educational psychologist, speech and language therapist, portage, health visitors, specialist outreach workers, paediatricians.

It is the responsibility of EVERY PRACTITIONER to discuss any developmental concerns of any child in their care with their senior and/or SENCO. Early identification of children with SEND is paramount and must be managed quickly, efficiently and alongside parents. It is our responsibility to support any child with SEND to the best of our ability. If any practitioner requires development to achieve this, they must discuss this with their line manager as soon as possible.

We must be responsive and active in providing additional support to a child with whom we have any concerns prior to referring them to other agencies (eg SALT). This will identify children who just require more time and focus and children who require agency intervention.

More details are available in the SEND Code of Practice 2014. It is recommended that every practitioner who works with children who have SEND reads this.

Durham Local Authority have a SEND 'local offer' available via [Special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) and our Local Offer - Durham County Council](#). All staff should use this resource to make themselves familiar with service and support available. Parents should be referred to the local offer, when appropriate to support their strategies at home too.