

SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE REQUIREMENT: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

9.2 Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities



Policy Statement

At St John's Playtime Pre-school, we provide an environment in which all children, including those with special educational needs & disabilities (SEND), are supported to reach their full potential. It is the aim of our setting to promote equality of opportunity for **all** children in our care.

- We have regard for the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Code of Practice (SEND 2014).
- We ensure our provision is inclusive to **all** children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- We have in place a clear approach for identifying, responding to, and meeting children's SEND. Staff are aware of the importance of early identification and the impact of an early response.
- We support and involve parents (and where relevant, children), actively listening to, and acting on their wishes and concerns.
- We work in partnership with the local authority and other external agencies to ensure the best outcomes for children with SEND and their families.
- We regularly monitor and review our policy, practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments to be inclusive to all children. While we strive to offer the best possible provision for all children and make adjustments wherever we can to be fully inclusive, we also strive to measure the impact of the setting on children with SEND and through working closely with parents, we will make amendments to suit the child's needs and the needs of the other children in the setting (e.g. changing/reducing hours if necessary).

Procedures

- We designate a member of staff to be the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) and give his/her name to parents. Our Lead SENDCo is:

Sarah Gosling

- The SENDCo works closely with the Deputy SENDCo (Mary Oakes), our Manager (Natalie Bailey) and other colleagues and has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of our Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy and for co-ordinating provision for children with SEN/Disabilities.
- We ensure that the provision for children with SEN/Disabilities is the responsibility of all members of the setting.
- We ensure that our inclusive admissions practice ensures equality of access and opportunity.

- We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum for all children.
- We apply SEN/Disabilities support to ensure early identification of children with SEN/Disabilities.
- We use the graduated approach system (assess, plan, do and review) applied in increasing detail and frequency to ensure that children progress.
- We work closely with the parents of children with SEN/Disabilities to create and maintain a positive partnership and ensure that parents are involved at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their children's special education including all decision-making processes.
- We ensure that children with SEN/Disabilities are appropriately involved at all stages of the graduated approach, taking into account their levels of ability.
- We provide parents with information on local sources of support and advice e.g. Local Offer, Information, Advice and Support Service. <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/send-and-the-local-offer/sendias/>
- We liaise with other professionals involved with children with SEN/Disabilities and their families, including in connection with transfer arrangements to other settings and schools.
- We use a system of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing SEN Support Plans for children with SEN/Disabilities.
- We have systems in place for referring children for further assessment e.g. Common Assessment Framework/Early Help Assessment and Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment.
- We use a system for keeping records of the assessment, planning, provision and review for children with SEN/Disabilities.
- We provide resources (human and financial) to implement our Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy.
- We provide in-service training for parents, practitioners and volunteers.
- We raise awareness of any specialism the setting has to offer, e.g. Makaton trained staff.
- We ensure the effectiveness of our special educational needs provision by collecting information from a range of sources e.g. Support Plan reviews, staff and management meetings, parental and external agency's views, inspections and complaints. This information is collated, evaluated and reviewed annually.
- We provide a complaints procedure.
- We monitor and review our policy annually.

The term SEND 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 (identifying special educational needs)

- Ongoing formative assessment forms part of a continuous process for observing, assessing, planning and reviewing 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, SEND Support: Initial record of concern form can be used for this purpose.
- If despite applying differentiated strategies a child continues to struggle and is showing significantly more difficulty with learning than their peers or has a disability which requires specific adjustments, then the key person should raise a concern with the setting's SENDCo/setting manager and the child's parents.

Observation and assessment of children's SEN

Where a child appears to be behind expected levels, or their progress gives cause for concern, educators should consider all the information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting.

- Information can be collated from formal checks such as the progress check at age two, observations from parents and observation and assessment by the setting of the child's progress.
- When specialist advice has been sought externally, this is used to help determine whether or not a child has a special educational need (SEND).
- The child's key person and SENDCo/Manager use this information to decide if the child has a special educational need.

- If the decision is that the child does have a SEND and the parents are not already aware of a concern, then the information is shared with them. Once parents have been informed, they should be fully engaged in the process, contributing their insights to all future actions for their child.
- Staff do not have the capacity to make any diagnosis of any form, whereas they can identify potential emerging concerns, only medically trained teams are able to make a diagnosis. Likewise, staff do not have the capacity to rule out any SEND and medical opinions should be sought if deemed necessary.

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 SEN support: Action plan with detailed evidence-based interventions being applied straight away and simultaneously external referrals made.
- If relevant, then the child should be appropriately included in development of the action plan but only at a level which reflects their stage of comprehension.

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

- 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, 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 SEND action 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 SENDCo/setting manager 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.
- SEND support: 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 SEND 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
- If the child fails to make progress and multi-agency support is sought, then it is at this point that Early Help/CAF assessment should be considered.

Record keeping

If a child has or is suspected of having a SEND, 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). SEND support: Initial record of concern form can also be used for this purpose drawing information from other sources
- the initial discussion with parents raising the possibility of the child's SEND
- 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. SEND support 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)
- SEND support 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; Early help CAF referrals
- 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

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. 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 SEND 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 year's 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.

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

- The Children's Act 2004
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (DfE 2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE & DoH 2015)

This policy was adopted at a meeting held by St John's Playtime Pre-school committee on 17th June 2009.

This policy was reviewed & updated on: May 2024

This policy will be reviewed again on: May 2025

Signed on behalf of the Management committee and provider:

Name of Signatory: Julia Rael



Role of Signatory: Committee Chairperson