

Blue Windmill Nursery

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Policy statement

Blue Windmill Nursery is committed to the inclusion of all children.

We recognise that every child is unique and may require different levels or types of support to participate, learn and develop. We aim to identify additional needs at the earliest opportunity and provide a welcoming, inclusive environment in which children are supported alongside their peers wherever appropriate.

We will not discriminate against a child because of a special educational need or disability. We will make reasonable adjustments to reduce barriers and enable children to access nursery life as fully as possible.

We work in partnership with parents and carers and, where appropriate, with health, education, local authority and other professionals.

This policy has regard to the SEND Code of Practice, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010 and the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Definition of SEND

A child may have special educational needs where they have a learning difficulty or disability that requires provision which is additional to, or different from, that normally available to children of the same age.

A child may have a disability where they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Children do not need to have a formal diagnosis before support can be provided.

A delay in one area of development does not automatically mean that a child has SEND. Staff will consider the child's overall development, circumstances, communication, health and experiences before deciding what further support may be required.

Our aims

We aim to:

- identify children's needs early;
- maintain high expectations for every child;
- include children in all aspects of nursery life wherever reasonably possible;

- provide support according to individual need rather than diagnosis alone;
- make reasonable adjustments to reduce disadvantage;
- work closely with parents and carers;
- listen to and consider the child's views, communication and preferences;
- work with relevant professionals and agencies;
- support children through transitions;
- ensure all staff understand their responsibilities towards children with SEND.

SEND provision is the responsibility of everyone working within the nursery, supported by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

The SENCo

The nursery will designate a suitably qualified and experienced member of staff to act as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

The name of the current SENCO, and any interim arrangements, will be communicated separately to staff and parents.

The SENCo is responsible for:

- supporting staff to identify and meet children's additional needs;
- ensuring staff understand the nursery's SEND arrangements;
- advising practitioners on suitable strategies and adjustments;
- coordinating the graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do and Review;
- ensuring parents and carers are involved in decisions;
- maintaining appropriate SEND records;
- liaising with health, education, local authority and other professionals;
- supporting requests for additional funding or specialist assessment where appropriate;
- supporting children's transitions to another room, setting or school;
- monitoring the effectiveness of SEND provision;
- identifying staff training needs.

The child's key person remains responsible for the child's day-to-day learning, care and support, with advice from the SENCo.

Early identification

Staff observe and assess children's learning and development as part of everyday practice.

We will consider whether additional support may be needed where:

- a child is making less progress than expected;
- development appears significantly different from that of children of a similar age;
- progress slows or stops;
- the child experiences difficulty participating in ordinary nursery routines or activities;
- concerns are raised by parents, carers or professionals;
- communication, sensory, physical, emotional or behavioural needs are affecting the child's development or wellbeing.

The progress check at age two supports early identification, but concerns will be considered whenever they arise and will not be delayed until a formal assessment point.

When reviewing a child's development, staff will consider factors including:

- attendance and settling-in;
- health and medical needs;
- hearing and vision;
- communication and home language;
- changes in family circumstances;
- opportunities and experiences;
- emotional wellbeing;
- whether changes to the environment or adult approach may help.

A child who speaks more than one language will not be identified as having SEND solely because their English is developing.

Partnership with parents and carers

Parents and carers know their child best and will be involved throughout the identification, planning and review process.

We will:

- listen to parents' observations and concerns;
- share information about the child's development and progress;
- explain proposed support and adjustments;
- agree intended outcomes and review arrangements;
- seek permission before involving external professionals, unless safeguarding duties require action without consent;
- provide information about local support and services where appropriate;
- respect parents' views while keeping the child's needs and welfare central.

Parents will be informed before the nursery formally identifies a child as requiring SEN support.

Where parents do not share the nursery's concerns, we will continue to communicate respectfully, record the support offered and monitor the child's progress.

The graduated approach

Where a child may require SEN support, the nursery will use the graduated approach of:

Assess

The key person and SENCo will gather information about the child's strengths and needs.

This may include:

- observations;
- developmental assessments;
- discussions with parents;
- information from previous settings;
- medical or professional reports;
- consideration of the child's communication and views.

The assessment will consider the child as a whole and will not focus only on areas of difficulty.

Plan

The key person, SENCo and parents will agree:

- the outcomes being sought;

- the support or adjustments to be provided;
- who will be responsible;
- how progress will be monitored;
- when the plan will be reviewed.

The child's preferences and communication will be considered wherever possible.

Do

The agreed support will be put into practice.

The key person will normally oversee the child's daily support. The SENCo will provide advice, monitor implementation and help staff make any necessary adjustments.

Support may include adapting:

- communication methods;
- routines and transitions;
- the learning environment;
- activities and resources;
- group sizes;
- sensory experiences;
- adult interaction;
- equipment or physical access.

Review

The nursery will review:

- the child's progress;
- the effectiveness of the support;
- the views of the child and parents;
- whether the outcomes remain appropriate;
- whether support should continue, change or increase.

The timing of each review will reflect the child's needs rather than following one fixed interval.

The cycle may be repeated as often as necessary.

Reasonable adjustments and inclusive provision

We will consider reasonable adjustments to avoid placing a disabled child at a substantial disadvantage.

Adjustments may include changes to:

- the physical environment;
- routines and timetables;
- communication;
- activities and resources;
- equipment;
- staff deployment;
- methods of teaching and interaction;
- arrangements for meals, sleep, personal care or outdoor play.

Adjustments will be considered individually, taking account of:

- the child's assessed needs;
- professional advice;
- safety and risk assessment;
- the impact on the child and others;
- available resources and funding;
- what is reasonable and practicable for the nursery to provide.

The nursery will not automatically promise one-to-one staffing. Where individual support appears necessary, we will work with parents, the local authority and relevant professionals to consider funding, staffing, risk and suitable arrangements.

A child will not be excluded from an activity simply because it presents additional difficulty. Staff will first consider whether the activity or support can be adapted safely.

Outside professionals and additional support

With parental knowledge and agreement where required, the nursery may seek advice or support from professionals such as:

- health visitors;
- speech and language therapists;
- specialist teaching services;

- educational psychologists;
- physiotherapists or occupational therapists;
- paediatric services;
- local authority SEND or inclusion teams;
- children's social care or family support services.

The nursery will provide relevant observations, assessments and evidence of support already offered.

Staff will follow professional recommendations where these are appropriate, safe and reasonably practicable within the nursery.

Where a child may benefit from coordinated support from several services, the nursery will contribute to relevant early help or multi-agency processes.

Any concerns that a child may be at risk of harm will be managed through safeguarding procedures and will not be treated solely as a SEND matter.

Education, Health and Care plans

Some children may require an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

The nursery will work with parents, the local authority and other professionals by providing evidence about:

- the child's strengths and needs;
- their development and progress;
- support and adjustments already provided;
- the impact of that support;
- health, communication, emotional, physical or sensory needs;
- the level of additional provision required.

Where a child has an Education, Health and Care plan, the nursery will contribute to its implementation and review.

An Education, Health and Care plan does not replace the nursery's responsibility to make reasonable adjustments or provide suitable SEN support.

Funding and resources

The nursery will use available resources to support children with SEND.

Where needs require support beyond the nursery's ordinarily available provision, we may apply for additional funding or seek specialist support.

The availability or timing of external funding will not prevent the nursery from making reasonable adjustments or providing appropriate support within its existing resources.

However, the nursery cannot guarantee that every requested form of support or level of staffing will be available immediately. Arrangements will be considered according to assessed need, safety, professional advice, available funding and what it is reasonable for the nursery to provide.

Admissions and attendance

Children with SEND will be considered for admission on the same fair basis as other children.

Before a child starts, we will seek sufficient information to understand:

- their needs;
- existing support;
- medical requirements;
- communication;
- equipment or access needs;
- any relevant risk;
- whether additional planning or professional input is required.

Where necessary, a phased settling-in arrangement may be agreed.

The nursery will not refuse or reduce a child's attendance simply because they have SEND. However, where the nursery cannot presently meet a child's needs safely, we will work with parents and relevant professionals to explore adjustments, support, funding and appropriate next steps.

Any decision affecting attendance will be based on individual evidence and will not be made as a blanket response to disability or SEND.

Behaviour and emotional regulation

Behaviour may be a form of communication and can reflect sensory, developmental, communication or emotional needs.

Children will not be punished for behaviour arising from a disability or unmet need without staff first considering:

- possible triggers;

- communication difficulties;
- sensory needs;
- reasonable adjustments;
- environmental changes;
- additional support.

Where behaviour creates a risk, suitable support plans and risk assessments may be prepared in partnership with parents and professionals.

Personal care and dignity

Children who require additional support with personal or intimate care will be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.

Staff will encourage independence according to the child's ability and will consider the child's communication and preferences.

Personal information will be shared only with those who need it to support the child safely.

Transitions

We will support children moving:

- between rooms within the nursery;
- from another early years setting;
- to a new nursery or childminder;
- into school.

With parental consent where required, we will share relevant information with the receiving setting and contribute to transition meetings.

Transition arrangements may include:

- visits;
- photographs or visual information;
- meetings with new staff;
- sharing support plans;
- familiar routines or resources;
- additional settling sessions.

Recording and confidentiality

SEND records will be factual, respectful, accurate and kept securely.

Records may include:

- observations and assessments;
- discussions with parents;
- support plans;
- review notes;
- professional reports;
- referrals and funding applications;
- transition information.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with data protection and safeguarding requirements.

Parents will normally be able to access information held about their own child, subject to legal and safeguarding restrictions.

Complaints and concerns

Parents are encouraged to raise concerns with the child's key person, SENCo or nursery manager.

Concerns will be listened to and addressed promptly.

A parent may also seek advice from the local authority SEND information, advice and support service where appropriate.

Responsibilities

The nursery manager is responsible for ensuring that suitable SEND arrangements are in place and that the SENCo is given appropriate support, time and training.

The SENCo coordinates SEND provision but does not hold sole responsibility for children with SEND.

Room supervisors and key persons are responsible for implementing agreed support and sharing concerns promptly.

All staff are responsible for:

- maintaining high expectations;
- observing children's development;

- providing inclusive learning opportunities;
- making agreed adjustments;
- working respectfully with families;
- seeking support when they are unsure;
- maintaining confidentiality.