

Guidance for writing a Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Policy for an Early Years setting

To support your setting in writing a setting SEND policy use the information and question prompts below as guidance.

Refer to the current legislation:

- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) states: *‘Providers must have **arrangements** in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. Maintained schools, maintained nursery schools and all providers who are funded by the local authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.’* (Page 37 section 3.68)
- The Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Code of Practice (SEND CoP 2015) states: *‘Providers must have **arrangements** in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN. The benefits of early identification are widely recognised – identifying need at the earliest point, and then making effective provision, improves the long term outcomes for children.’* (Page 79 section 5.4)
- Under the Equality Act 2010, admission to a provision cannot be denied or a child excluded due to a child’s health or development needs. Settings are required to make reasonable adjustments to include children with SEND. In addition providers must not discriminate against, victimise or harass disabled children.

ALL children are entitled to attend any provision and to have their needs identified and met.

The EYFS statutory framework 2021 and the SEND CoP framework also require early years settings to identify a **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)**: *“Maintained schools and maintained nursery schools must identify a member of staff to act as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and other providers (in group provision) are expected to identify a SENCO. Childminders are encouraged to identify a person to act as a SENCO and childminders who are registered with a childminder agency or who are part of a network may wish to share the role between them.”* (EYFS statutory guidance 2021, page 37 paragraph 3.68)

Aim of the setting:

You may wish to start your policy with an inclusive statement e.g. “It is the aim of our setting to promote equality of opportunity for all children in our care.”

To help you write your SEND policy consider the following and describe what your setting does:

- How do you have regard for the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 2015, the EYFS Statutory Framework 2021 and the Equalities Act 2010?
- How do you promote equality of opportunity for children in your care?
- How do you identify the specific needs of children with SEND and meet those needs through using a range of strategies?
- How do you work in partnership with parents and other agencies in meeting individual children’s needs?
- How do you monitor and review your practice and provision and make reasonable adjustments; promoting and valuing diversity and difference?
- How do you challenge inappropriate attitudes and practices?
- How do you encourage children to value and respect others?

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Name the **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)** and any deputy, for your childcare provision, within your policy.

The role of the SENCO:

Describe what the SENCO does in order to meet the stated role of the SENCO from the SEND CoP 2015 (section 5.54). The role of the SENCO involves:

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

Consider the following and describe what the SENCO does in your setting:

- How do you ensure the objectives of the SEND policy are reflected in the practice of your childcare provision?
- How do you support all staff to become familiar with and follow SEND practice e.g. Early identification of any difficulties, target setting and writing individual targeted plans?
- How do you ensure that appropriate record keeping and observation and assessment procedures are in place and up to date?
- How will parents identify the setting SENCO?
- How do you liaise with and involve parents?
- How do you liaise with professionals beyond the childcare provision?

Admission arrangements for Children with SEND:

- How do you welcome all children?
- How do you respond appropriately to each child's individual needs?
- How do you liaise with parents/carers in order to effectively meet individual needs?

Specialist Facilities, Resources and Staffing:

- Does your setting provide wheelchair access and accessible toilets/changing area all on one level?
- Is your SENCO trained in early identification of special needs and have any additional training?
- Do all staff access training based on the needs of their key children?
- How does your provision have due regard for the Equalities Act 2010 and how do you make **reasonable adjustments** as appropriate, seeking funding to support this if available?
- Does your setting SENCO lead the use of different communications systems when necessary to ensure all staff are consistent in support for the child and seek training in these systems and or act on advice from other professionals such as speech therapists?
- Do you offer inclusive play activities, both inside and out?
- How do you plan for flexibility in your staff deployment to meet the individual needs of children?
- Do you provide a range of differentiated or adapted resources to promote individual targets and development towards the Early Learning Goals?

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Identification Assessment and Review of Children with SEN

How do you have regard for the Graduated Approach described in the SEND Code of Practice 2015 sections 5.38 to 5.45? Explain in detail your arrangement for the four stages of action:

- **Assess** – How do you identify, monitor and assess a child's needs? Who is involved in this assessment? What types of assessment do you use?
- **Plan** – What plans do you put in place to support the child? Who is involved in writing these plans? How are parents involved in his process?
- **Do** – How do you oversee and monitor the progress of a child? Who works with the child to implement targeted support?
- **Review** – How do you review progress made, with whom and how often?

Education, Health and Care Plans

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 states that: *“Where, despite the setting having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child, the child has not made expected progress, the setting should consider requesting an Educational, Health and Care Needs Assessment.”* (SEND CoP 2015 section 5.49)

- How do you request support for a child who may require an EHC Needs Assessment?
- How do you, in conjunction with parents/carers and the LEA Educational Psychologist/Early Years and Childcare Team, carry out the Needs Assessment?
- Consider the impact a child's EHC plan may have on general provision? How do you organise additional meetings for planning provision with regard for SEND budget? Do you endeavor to seek funding or borrow special equipment such as graded resources, sensory equipment, differentiated play equipment or learning activities as appropriate?
- How will you review the advice given by professionals (reports, visits to the provision) in relation to the terms of the EHC plan?
- How will you support parents to access specialist provision where appropriate to the child's needs?

Transition arrangements for children with SEND:

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 states that:

“SEN support should include planning and preparing for transition, before a child moves into another setting or school. This can also include a review of the SEN support being provided or the EHC plan. To support the transition, information should be shared by the current setting with the receiving setting or school. The current setting should agree with parents the information to be shared as part of this planning process.” (SEND CoP section 5.47)

- How do you liaise with local primary schools?
- How do you support parents/carers of children with SEND at transition meetings?
- What information do you share at transition meetings?

Partnerships with Parents:

- How are concerns raised by parents/carers?
- Do you involve parents/carers with planning for the graduated approach?
- Do you always gain written parental permission before your first contact with any professionals outside the setting with regards to a specific child?
- Do you signpost parents to other services through the Local Offer?

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Working with other professionals:

- Who might you need to refer a child to or liaise with? E.g. speech and language therapist, physiotherapist, school teacher, Early Years advisor.
- How will you include the parents/carers in these meetings?
- Who will be involved from the setting? E.g. SENCo, keyperson, room leader.

Local Offer:

The Suffolk Local offer is a website containing information about support services and local opportunities for children and young people with SEND.

Think about what you do:

- Do you signpost families to the Local Offer site?
- Is your inclusion information included on your setting's Suffolk Infolink information? <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/>
- Do you signpost them to other useful services on the Local Offer site such as the Suffolk parent carer (SPCN) network or the SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS)?

Monitoring and Evaluation of SEND policy

Think about what you do:

- Is your policy reviewed annually or when changes are required?
- How are all staff involved in reviewing the effectiveness of the childcare provision's SEND procedures?
- How do you share the SEND policy with parents and how do you incorporate their feedback into the review of your policy?

Complaints about SEN Provision

Think about what you do:

- How are complaints about issues in relation to your SEND provision dealt with?
- Are procedures followed which include the keyperson and SENCo ensuring these are in line with your confidentiality and/or safeguarding policies and procedures?

SEND/Inclusion training

Think about what you do:

- Does your setting SENCo attend training courses for professional development and address training within the setting in relation to SEND as appropriate?
- Are there opportunities for staff members to attend training that relate to Inclusion, Early Identification and Support for keyperson(s) to support children with SEND?
- How do you address identified training needs in-house or through formal routes for continuous professional development?
- Do you have access to a range of information on special educational needs?

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Links with other Early Years Providers

Think about what you do:

- If a child attends two childcare provisions how do you liaise with the other provision to provide a coordinated approach to meet the child's individual needs?
- Is written parental permission for these meetings always gained? Consider procedures detailed in your confidentiality policy.
- Children who are due to move to another provision should have their Learning Journey tracker information sent to the new provision to support parent/carer information about their child and to support a smooth transition. What are the childcare providers arrangements for transition from home or you or to another provision and from you to the next provider/school?
- What are the arrangements for sharing information for children in shared care or dual placements?
- Do you have strong links with the local primary school and does your setting SENCo share information about targeted plans in meetings with primary teachers or the next provision?

This policy was adopted on	
Signed	
Review date	