

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy

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St. Nicholas Children's Centre works in accordance with national legislation as set out in the "Special Educational Needs-Code Of Practice and disability" and the EYFS Statutory Framework, to inform our policies and procedures which ensure all children in our care have appropriate opportunities to learn through play and that all families feel welcome.

We believe Early Intervention ensures that children who have difficulties learning receive the help they need as soon as possible and that parents of children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities have access to suitable services and support.

"Supporting children with SEND or other vulnerabilities is the responsibility of all practitioners, supported by an effective SENDCO".

Admission

St. Nicholas Children's Centre welcomes all children regardless of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability. We believe all children should have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable program of learning and development.

We ensure that our inclusive admissions practice provides equality of access and opportunity to all children who wish to attend, however once our setting has reached its full capacity to meet the needs of children with special educational needs or disabilities, we will have to redirect families to their nearest Children's Centre where they will be supported in finding the most suitable placement for their child.

Staff at St. Nicholas Children's Centre strive to provide a smooth and successful transition for the happiness of both the child and parents. Where a child already has professionals involved the setting SENDCO will arrange a meeting with the family before admission. The meeting will be an opportunity to share and gather information around the child's strengths, difficulties and stage of development. Nursery is aware of the importance of ensuring they can cater for the child, this may mean making arrangements prior to the child's first session. The setting SENDCO will contact our Early Years Adviser to arrange this and remove barriers where possible.

Parents are encouraged to share as much information as possible at the meeting, providing names and contact details of all of the professionals involved and their role within the family. With parental consent the setting SENDCO may contact the professionals prior to admission to gain a full picture of the child.

The setting SENDCO will be keen to determine the parents aspirations for the child whilst in our care and any difficulties or needs they are particularly worried about. These meetings will continue on a regular basis during the child's time at nursery through to school transition.

Equal Opportunities

St. Nicholas Children's Centre has facilities for children with physical disabilities. The entrance has a wide door and a lift to all floors. There are ramps at all exits and there is also a toilet for the disabled.

We ensure positive attitudes towards diversity and difference, not only so that every child is included and not disadvantaged, but also so that they learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society.

Working In Partnership With Parents

Parents hold key information and have a critical role to play in their children's education. They have unique knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of the child's needs and the best way of supporting them. It is therefore essential that we as professionals seek to work closely with parents and value the contribution they make.

Positive relationships are central to partnership working. Clear and honest communication is needed within a framework of mutual trust and respect. There will be no presumption about what parents can or cannot do to support their child's learning.

All those working with young children should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. In particular, parents know their children best and it is important that all practitioners listen to and understand when parent's express concerns about their child's development.

“Practitioners are experts in children and childcare; parents are experts in their children.”

If after repeated observation and assessment staff express concerns regarding a child's development under no circumstances (with the exception of Child Protection) would we seek support for the child without approaching the

parents first and obtaining written consent to do so.

Parents views, wishes and feelings are important to us they will always be consulted and informed of any action and the outcome of any action taken, in regard to their child. Any action taken will only be done with prior written consent from the parent and with their full participation in any decisions that are made.

It is our policy to ensure that parents understand the Centre's Special Educational Needs procedures and that they have knowledge of their child's entitlement within the SEND framework.

Parents are offered support, information and advice during assessment and any related decision making process about Special Educational provision.

We encourage parents to voice their views on how their child is being educated and cared for within our setting, discussing their child's strengths and area's for concern.

We value our parents input and opinions and strive to work closely and form a trusting relationship in order to provide the best possible provision for the child.

The setting SENDCO is based in the office where an open access policy is operated. She is happy to arrange a meeting to see parents at any time.

We understand that not all parents will have time to attend all meetings and feedback but we are happy to keep them informed and enthused about what is happening via email on request.

Supporting Parents "Right From The Start"

"Right From The Start" is a National scheme led by Scope which promotes good practice when parents receive a diagnosis of their child's additional needs. The vision is for all families who have children with a disability or additional need will have the support they need to live ordinary lives, as a matter of course and to promote a positive social model of disability. St. Nicholas Children's Centre supports "Right From The Start", we promote Inclusion, with the child and their family at the Centre of the process at all times. We are aware that parents will experience various emotions on the lead up to and during diagnosis of their child. From the Early identification through to diagnosis and transition in to school the setting SENDCO's role is to support the child and their family.

"Right From The Start" Working Practice:

- * We put the child first and the disability/impairment second.
- * We value the child and respect parents and family.
- * We will support and empower parents.
- * All parent concerns will be treated seriously.
- * We will listen to parents and share information sensitively and honestly.
- * We acknowledge and respect cultural difference.
- * Parents are given opportunities to ask questions and staff will ensure that parents understand the situation.
- * All concerns will be shared with parents.

Early Support-Extension of “Right From The Start”

Early Support is a National program to improve the way that services for young children with disabilities in England work with families. It provides a standard framework and a set of materials that can be used in many different circumstances, as well as a set of expectations about how services should work with families.

Parents may be offered an Early Support Family File. This can be carried around when attending appointments and meetings in different places as your child’s situation and development is being discussed. The file is designed to inform professionals about the support needs that the parent and child have and to keep any current paperwork about the child in one place. More information can be acquired from the Family Pack itself.

Roles and responsibilities of the staff

- * The setting management team work with practitioners and parents to determine the settings general policy and approach to provision for children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities.
- * The manager has responsibility for the day to day management of all aspects of the setting work, including provision for children with SEND. The SENDCO support officer works closely with the setting SENDCO/Manager.
- * All practitioners are involved in the development of the SEND policy and are fully aware of the procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for children with Special Educational Needs. Staff are responsible for implementing the SEND policy.
- *The SENDCO also works closely with practitioners and has responsibility for the day to day operation of the setting SEND policy and for co-ordinating provision for children with SEND, particularly through the “Graduated Approach”.
- * The SENDCO and key person will work together to:
 - Ensure decisions are informed by the insights of the parents
 - Have high ambitions and set stretching targets

- Track progress towards these goals
- Keep under review the additional or different provision
- Ensure the approaches used are based on best evidence and are having the required impact on progress.

Training

We ensure that the provision for children with Special Educational Needs is the responsibility of all members of staff in the setting. Staff are sent on relevant training courses to ensure that they keep up to date with the requirements of all children with SEND and regarding specific conditions and disabilities.

Newly appointed staff are given time to read the Centre Induction pack and policies and are made aware of the designated setting SENDCO.

The setting SENDCO has attended the following courses and passed on in house training to the relevant staff:

- * Introductory day for Setting SENDCO's.
- * Developing good practice for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs.
- * Introduction to the Early Support Programme.
- * Early Years Autism Awareness.
- * Epipen/Piriton training.
- * Multi-agency working and the role of the Lead Professional training.
- * Introduction to assessment skills training.
- * Multi Agency FSP training.
- * Safeguarding Children (Child Protection)
- * 3 Day Setting SENCo Certificate
- * 2 Day Sensory Course
- * Elklan (speech and language) training
- * Early Years Safeguarding Lead Practitioner Training (SLP)
- * Introduction to the Autistic Spectrum
- * Attention Autism
- * Step On Training
- * Writing support plans for children with SEND
- * SENCO Network- EHCP's, Transition and Inclusion Funding.
- * Complex Needs school visit.
- * Signs of safety.
- * Glue Ear training

The setting SENDCO support Officer has also attended the setting SENDCO training and Speech and language courses.

Allocation of resources

The setting SENDCO/Manager will apply for SEN inclusion funding under the 4 possible applications criteria's with support from the setting SENDCO support officer and child's key person.

Our prime aim is to meet the needs of the child, if we do not have the resources needed we will do our best to access the equipment required. In some situations it may be in the child's best interest if staff and parents discuss back tracking the care being offered, this may include reducing the amount of hours that the child attends. Hours can be increased again at a later date once staff and parents are in agreement that this is the best option for the child. This would not be a decision that is made lightly and would only be in exceptional circumstances.

We will ensure the layout of the setting is appropriate to cater for the child's needs. Adjustments will be made where necessary and where possible.

Identification, Assessment, Record Keeping and Review

Special educational provision should be matched to the child's identified SEND. Children's SEND are generally thought of in the following four broad area's of need and support:

- Communication and Interaction
 - Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
 - Sensory and/or physical needs

Where a child has a greater difficulty in learning than their peers, or disability that prevents or hinders a child from making use of the facilities in the setting and requires special educational provision the setting will make that provision. In all cases, early identification and intervention can significantly reduce the need for more complex interventions at a later stage.

We use the "Graduated Approach" system for identifying, assessing and responding to children's special educational needs. The importance of early identification, assessment and provision for any child who may have special educational needs is a priority at St. Nicholas Children's Centre.

If after some monitoring and observation through Individual Tracking Records, Speech and Language Audits and 2 Year Checks staff have concerns about the development of an individual child these will be discussed in confidence with the parent/carer. It may be that our concerns reflect those of the parent/carer, so with their permission the setting SENDCO will support staff in following the "Code Of Practice and Disability" for the early intervention and possible referral of the child who may have an additional or special educational need. Where it is felt necessary parents can request additional Social and Emotional checks from

their Health Visitor during their child's routine 2 year check.

The setting SENDCO will lead and co-ordinate the graduated approach with 4 stages of action, working with and supporting individual practitioners:

ASSESS – Why is special help being given?

In identifying a child as needing SEND support, the early years practitioner, working with the setting SENDCO and the child's parents, will have carried out an analysis of the child's needs. This initial assessment should be reviewed regularly to ensure that support is matched to need. Where there is little or no improvement in the child's progress, more specialist assessment may be called for from health, social services or other agencies beyond the setting, the SENDCO should contact them, with the parents agreement.

PLAN – What special help is being given?

Where it is decided to provide SEN support, and having formally notified the parents, the practitioner and the SENDCO should agree, in consultation with the parent, the outcomes they are seeking, the interventions and support to be put in place, the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, and a clear date for review. Plans should take in to account the views of the child. The support and intervention provided should be selected to meet the outcomes identified for the child, based on reliable evidence of effectiveness, and provided by practitioners with relevant skills and knowledge. Any related staff development needs should be identified and addressed.

Parents should be involved in planning support and, where appropriate, in reinforcing the provision or contributing to progress at home.

DO – Who will provide the help and how often. What can parents give their child at home?

The early years practitioner, usually the child's key person, remains responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. With support from the SENDCO, they should oversee the implementation of the interventions or programs agreed as part of SEND support. The SENDCO should support the practitioner in assessing the child's response to the action taken, in problem solving and advising the effective implementation of support

REVIEW - When and how will the plan be monitored and updated?

The effectiveness of the support and its impact on the child's progress should be reviewed in line with the agreed date. The impact and quality of the support should be evaluated by the practitioner and the SENDCO working with the child's parents and taking in to account the child's views. They should agree any changes to the outcomes and support for the child in light of the child's progress and development. Parents should have clear

information about the impact of the support provided and be involved in planning next steps.

This cycle of action should be revisited in increasing detail and with increasing frequency, to identify the best way of securing good progress. At each stage parents should be engaged with the setting, contributing their insights to assessment and planning. Intended outcomes should be shared with parents and reviewed with them, along with action taken by the setting, at agreed times.

The graduated approach should be led and co-ordinated by the setting SENDCO working with and supporting individual practitioners in the setting and informed by EYFS materials, the Early Years Outcomes guidance and Early Support resources.

Where a child has an EHC plan, the local authority **must** review that plan as a minimum every twelve months. As part of the review, the local authority can ask settings to convene and hold the annual review meeting on its behalf.

Parents should be engaged at each stage, contributing their insights to assessment and planning.

What is a Support Plan?

A Support Plan is implemented when a child requires “additional to” or “different from” the usual provision. It is designed to focus on small steps of a child’s development, needs or behaviour. They act principally as an action plan, focusing on the child’s strengths and interests as well as area’s of additional need. This is done in consultation with parents, discussing outcomes they are seeking and the steps that will be taken to get their child there. “Play plans” are available to parents to support their child’s targets at home, although Tapestry will keep a parent/carer informed of their child’s next steps for development.

Involving specialists

Where a child continues to make less than expected progress, despite evidence based support and interventions that are matched to the child’s area of need, practitioners should consider involving appropriate specialists, for example, health visitors, speech and language therapists, portage workers, educational psychologists or specialist teachers, who may be able to identify strategies, equipment, programs or other interventions to enable the child to make progress towards the desired learning and development outcomes. The decision to involve specialists should be taken with the child’s parents.

For a very few children help given through the “ Graduated Approach” and services accessed through the “Local Offer” will not be enough to enable the child to progress satisfactorily therefore a referral may need to be made for *Education Health and Care Needs Assessment* which may or may not result in the child receiving a *Education Health and Care Plan*.

Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment Criteria

The majority of children with SEN or disabilities will have their needs met within local mainstream early years settings. Some children may require an EHC needs assessment in order for the local authority to decide whether it is necessary for it to make provision in accordance with an EHC plan.

The purpose of an EHC plan is to make special educational provision to meet the special educational needs of the child, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and, as they get older, prepare them for adulthood. To achieve this, local authorities use the information from the assessment to:

- establish and record the views, interests and aspirations of the parents and the child
- provide a full description of the child’s special educational needs and any health and social care needs
- establish outcomes across education, health and social care based on the child’s needs and aspirations
- specify the provision required and how education, health and care services will work together to meet the child’s needs and support the achievement of the agreed outcomes.

An EHC needs assessment will not always lead to an EHC plan. The information gathered during an EHC needs assessment may indicate ways in which an early years setting/school can meet the child’s needs without an EHC plan.

Where, in light of an EHC assessment, it is necessary for special educational provision to be made in accordance with an EHC plan, the local authority **must** notify the child’s parent and give reasons for its decision. The local authority should ensure it allows enough time to prepare the draft plan and complete the remaining steps in the process within the 20-week overall time limit within which it **must** issue the finalized EHC plan.

The Local Offer

The Children and Families Act has introduced a requirement for every Local Authority to publish a Local Offer. This will contain information about services the local authority expects to be available in their area for children and young people (from birth to 25) who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Services outside of the area, but which the Local Authority expects to be used by children, young people and their families, will also be included. The Local Offer has two main purposes:

- to provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the support and opportunities that are available; and
- to make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving children and young people with SEND, parents carers, and service providers in its development and review.

The Local Authority must involve parents, children and young people in developing and reviewing their Local Offer. Local services, including early years settings, schools, colleges, health and social care agencies, must also be consulted. The Local Offer is a new way of providing information and should not simply be a directory of existing services - an address and telephone numbers will not be sufficient.

Early Help & Family Support Process

In some circumstances it may be beneficial for the child and/or the parent to be offered support using the Early Help Programme.

The Early Help Programme is a standardized assessment, which gives a full picture of the child and their families additional need at any stage. It includes information from the child and their parents/carers and covers all aspects of a child's development including health, education and social development.

The Early Help Programme, through an FSP (Family Support Process) will be the main assessment tool to support inter-agency referral and multi-agency working. Where a child is being supported by more than one agency, possibly involving specialist assessment, a FSP will provide the structure to evaluate and summarize information from different agencies into a single, simple format. The FSP will be the main tool to support lead professionals and practitioners working in multi-agency teams. All information recorded is strictly confidential.

Parents/carers will be involved in all aspects of the FSP, with the exception of where there are concerns that suggest the child is at risk of harm or abuse, in this case Child Protection procedures will be followed.

At the initial FSP meeting the parents/carers will be asked to nominate a professional involved with their family to become the Lead Professional. It is the responsibility of the Lead Professional to liaise between parents and their multi-agency team which is identified at the initial meeting. The Lead

Professional will also chair all future meetings.

Management and Supervisors attend training courses.

Nursery staff are trained by Managers to identify families who will benefit from the introduction of a FSP. Management can then be informed and necessary action taken.

Policy Success Criteria

We ensure the effectiveness of our SEND provision by regularly monitoring and reviewing our policy, practice and provision and where necessary making adjustments.

Through SP's, reviews, questionnaires, staff meetings, parental and external agency views and feedback, OFSTED inspections and implementation of a "Complaints Policy" we are able to collect information, evaluate and review our procedures effectively to ensure continuity of professional SEND provision.

Transitions

St. Nicholas Children's Centre has procedures and a Transition Officer in place in order to ensure all of our children have a smooth and successful transition into school or into another nursery setting. When a child has a Special Educational need/Additional need with Parents consent a transition meeting will be arranged with staff of the receiving school or nursery, where outside agencies are supporting the child they will also be invited to attend the Transition meeting with parental consent. With parental consent relevant information to support the child and the family will be passed on to the prospective key person/teacher and setting SENDCO. Transition meetings are not only beneficial to the child, creating a happier and successful transition but will also give parents some added confidence regarding their child moving to a new environment with new carers. During these meetings discussions can be held in order to make arrangements for any extra support needed to support the child in their new setting, a Transition Plan will be created thus ensuring everything is in place before the child starts their new setting.

On request where staff ratios will allow, the setting SENDCO will happily visit the prospective school with the family.

Sensory Equipment

St. Nicholas Children's Centre was awarded with both a Bubble machine and a Sensory Case containing lots of lovely equipment from Norfolk

County Council. Staff have been trained in the importance of offering Sensory Stimuli and are now trained in how to use the equipment to offer the children 'Sensory Sessions'. The equipment is used specifically for children with Additional or Special Educational Needs but can be accessed by all of the children in the Nursery. Staff have designed and created some of their own sensory equipment and resources to offer the children. The Sensory equipment is permanently set up in our heated Sensory Shed. We can now also access The Priory Nursery Sensory Room.

The Role Of The Key person

It is the responsibility of the key person to work with the SENDCO to write the support and action plan and ensure that the child's targets are incorporated in to day to day planning and provision. This requires full knowledge of:

- The child's characteristics of learning
 - The child's rate of learning
 - The child's current skill level
- The EYFS learning and development requirements

Role Of The SENDCO

1. Ensure the setting has a SEND policy in place, review and facilitate the daily operation of the policy.

2. Maintain ongoing good relationships with families and ensure that there is liaison with parents about their child's special educational needs.

* Parents will always be consulted, informed of any action and the outcome of any action, in regard of their child.

* The SENDCO will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place so that parents are informed of any special educational needs their child might have and are consulted on all aspects of response to those needs.

* The SENDCO and key person will be in close liaison with parents, but it is the SENDCO's responsibility to ensure that systems are in place to keep parents informed and to act on parents insights and information to the needs and development of their children.

* The SENDCO will direct parents where they can access information and advice as to the types of information available through the Local Authority.

3. Work closely, advise and support other practitioners in the setting with children's special educational needs.

* Plan future support for the child through discussion with colleagues.

* When and where necessary seek the help of other outside professionals-training for staff, advice on strategies etc.

4. Ensure information is collected, recorded and updated, regarding the child's special educational need. Including the creation, implementation and reviewing of SPs.

Records which require maintaining include:

- * Background information about the child
- * Information about the child's progress and behaviour from the setting, parents and Health Services etc. and if possible the child's own perceptions of their difficulties.
- * General strategies used.
- * Steps taken to meet the needs of the child.
- * Support Plans and EHC Plans.
- * Individual Tracking Records.
- * 2 Year Checks.

These records will highlight any immediate educational concerns, giving an overall picture of the child's strengths and weaknesses.

5. Ensuring that appropriate Support Plans (SPs) are in place.

The SENDCO will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate SPs are in place and working effectively to support individual children's learning and development and reviewed regularly. This will necessitate the SENDCO in suggesting appropriate strategies and teaching methods to support particular needs and further assessing the child's particular strengths and weaknesses and liaising with the key person, parents and outside agencies to formulate and review SP's.

Regular reviews of SPs are essential to:

- * Monitor and assess progress, to ensure that the child is achieving targets and that their needs are being met.
- * Evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the SP and to review any special provision made.
- * Provide an opportunity for parents/carers to contribute to their child's development and learning and to discuss the parents contribution at home.
- * To update any information or advice on a child's special educational need.
- * To plan any future action-setting new targets to meet overall objectives.

6. Maintaining links with other professionals, working closely with key people.

- * It is the responsibility of the SENDCO to co-ordinate the activities and involvement of various groups (psychologists, therapists etc.) and to ensure that they meet the special educational need of the child.
- * The SENDCO will initiate any action with LEAs and other services about the special educational needs of any child in the setting or a child they intend to admit.
- * The SENDCO is the facilitator of **Partnership** bringing together the setting, parents/carers, external agencies and professionals to share

information, plan action and pool resources. This will include attending meetings.

* Where a child has suffered loss, bereavement, domestic violence or has a high level of need, an Educational Psychologist assessment can be requested.

The setting SENDCO plays an important role in a Early Help and Family Support Process .

* The SENDCO may initiate introducing a Early Help Program to support a child and/or their family.

* The SENDCO will support the family throughout the process.

* The SENDCO will provide information to support the Early Help Program.

* The SENDCO may be nominated as the lead professional.

7. Speech and Language Sessions

In November 2012 the setting SENDCo completed ELKLAN training, this is a level 2 in speech language and communication for under 5's. From January 2013 the SENDCo and staff will be offering speech and language sessions on a regular basis for children who have SP's to support their communication skills and also for children who already have a speech and language therapist involved. It will also be a good resource to have when staff or parents have concerns around a child's speech and language development. Concerns can be raised with the SENDCo who can then offer a couple of sessions to assess if extra support needs to be put in place such as an SP or referral to the Speech and Language team. The SENDCo will also train the staff to support their key children using ELKLAN. Not only will this enable ELKLAN training to be implemented it will also ensure regular sessions are being offered to the children to support their speech and language development.

Staff are trained to offer "Talking Topic" sessions which also support Speech and Language Development as well as social skills.

Staff implement basic Makaton signing to support children with additional needs, 2 staff have attended Makaton training. We also have various visual aids such as Timelines, First and Then, Choice boards, Communication Books and Cue cards.

8. Attend Cluster/Network groups and training sessions.

9. Ensure setting Inclusion Log is kept up to date.

10. Apply/help with any funding applications.

11. Work with staff to identify and review services for the Local Offer and ensure it is kept updated.

Complaints

In the unfortunate event of a complaint being made regarding the setting SEND provision of care the “Complaints procedure” will be followed. (Please see the Complaints Policy for more information)

With continuing observation, planning and assessment it is hoped that St. Nicholas Children’s Centre will play a full part in enabling all of our children to reach their full potential.

For Further support from Norfolk County Council access their website “Family Information Service”. The team offer support to families with children aged 0-19 or up to the age of 25 for children with additional needs.