

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY POLICY

All children are entitled to an education that enables them to achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, and become confident young children with a growing ability to communicate their own views and ready to make the transition into compulsory education.

The Children's Garden is a Steiner Waldorf kindergarten which welcomes children from age 3 to 6 in a mixed class. The Children's Garden considers all children to be special and that every child has individual needs. Every endeavour will be taken to accommodate the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual needs of every child. The Children's Garden aims to provide appropriate learning opportunities for all children.

The Government Early Learning Goals as laid down in the Early Years Foundation Stage are addressed following the Steiner Waldorf Early Years Curriculum.

This Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy takes account of the Education Act 1996, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Special Needs and Disability Act 2001, The Equality Act 2010, the Code of Practice 2014, the policy of the Local Education Authority (LEA) and the aims of the kindergarten as outlined in our documentation.

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have special educational needs if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority;
- are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition above or would do so on reaching compulsory school age if special educational provision was not made for them.

Defining disability

All disabled children with SEN are covered by the provisions of the SEND Code of Practice 2014. Not all children with disabilities will have SEN. Under the Equality Act 2010 children are disabled if they

- have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial (more than minor or trivial) and long-term (a year or more) negative effect on their ability to do normal duties.

This definition includes:

- sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing
- long-term health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

The Children's Garden follows the principles of the SEND Code of Practice and these are:

- taking into account the views of children and their families
- enabling children and their parents to participate in decision-making
- collaborating with partners in education, health and social care to provide support
- identifying the needs of children
- making high quality provision to meet the needs of children
- focusing on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning
- helping children to prepare for adulthood

Special educational provision means:

- (a) For children of two or over, education provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the local authority, other than special schools, in the area.
- (b) For children under two, educational provision of any kind.

Where a child is covered by SEN and disability legislation The Children's Garden will consider reasonable adjustments and access arrangements as part of the SEN planning and review.

English as an Additional Language

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or *form* of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Admissions Policy

Admission is by order of application though priority is given to siblings and to children coming up from the Children's Garden's parent and child group. As far as possible we will accommodate the needs of each child and his/her family arising from their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, social background, religion, ethnicity or from English being a newly acquired additional language.

Access for the Disabled

The Children's Garden will meet the needs of disabled children or parents regarding access to the building and access to the curriculum as they arise.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO will have responsibility for:

- working closely with families and seeking their involvement in decision-making processes;
- liaison with other professionals in respect of children with special educational needs;
- taking the lead in further assessments and planning support;
- ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEN
- advising and supporting other practitioners in the setting;
- ensuring that appropriate Individual Education Plans are in place and that these are reviewed regularly;
- ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with SEND is collected, recorded and updated.

Graduated Response

If a child in our setting has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than his or her peers, or a disability that prevents or hinders him/her from making use of the facilities and requires a special educational provision, this will be made through a graduated approach characterised by a continuous cycle of “assess”, “plan”, “do” and “review”.

Staff will:

- bring an issue to the attention of the SENCO;
- observe, monitor and share their findings with other staff and parents;
- be allocated time to devise planned intervention and monitor its effectiveness;
- adapt working practices and environment to suit the needs of the child;
- produce action plans with achievable targets for the child;
- attend regular staff training to provide effective intervention;
- review their findings and intervention at regular intervals.

This graduated response recognises that there is a continuum of special educational need or disability and, where necessary and with parental permission, draws support from a range of specialist expertise to support the child. In our setting, the different support mechanisms may include:

- an initial visit from the Borough's Early Years Adviser;
- referrals to outside agencies, including speech therapists, paediatricians, educational psychologists, etc.
- Local authority support services for advice or equipment.

Initial Concerns

Staff may initially have concerns about a child that they share internally and in particular with the SENCO. At this stage, staff will observe the child regularly to gather evidence for possible future discussions with parents or outside agencies.

As a Steiner Waldorf kindergarten, child assessment will be carried out through regular observation to facilitate the gathering of sufficient information and details to prepare a Child Study. This study is first of all shared amongst staff and with parents or outside agencies if necessary.

Discussion with parents

If the SENCO feels that there is still concern after initial observations, parents will be invited to discuss these concerns with the teacher/SENCOS. Parents will be invited to share their knowledge and understanding of their child and raise any concerns they may have and to contribute to targets if an SEN Action Plan is produced. Their permission will be sought if the kindergarten needs to contact outside agencies.

SEN Support

When a child in the setting has special educational needs we initially devise our own strategies to be used in addition to our usual curriculum. The triggers for SEN Support could be that the child:

- makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are particularly targeted to improve the child's identified area of weakness;
- presents persistent emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the setting;
- has sensory or physical problems, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of personal aids and equipment;
- has communication and/or interaction difficulties and requires specific individual interventions in order to access.

SEN Action Plan

The SEN Action Plan will be drawn up by the key person, the SENCO and the parents and, if appropriate, the child and outside agencies if they are already involved. Where it is deemed not applicable for the child to attend, their views and needs should be taken into consideration. The SEN Action Plan will be reviewed half termly.

An SEN Action Plan is designed to achieve the best outcomes for the child. It contains planning for the child which is additional to, or different from, the standard provision and includes:

- short-term strategies set for the child
- teaching strategies
- the provision to put in place

- when/how the plan is to be reviewed
- specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) outcomes

Sometimes, despite internal support, the child requires the involvement of external support services who can provide more specialist assessments, give advice on the use of new or specialist strategies or materials and, in some cases, provide support for particular activities.

Requests for EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan

For a small number of children the help given by the early education setting through SEND support will not be sufficiently effective to enable the child to progress satisfactorily. Therefore an EHC assessment from the local authority may be requested by the kindergarten or the child's parents. The child will have demonstrated significant cause for concern and the setting will have evidence gathered throughout the stages listed above.

Once a request has been made the kindergarten will collate and prepare evidence to submit to the local authority.

Making a decision

As a result of a coordinated assessment the local authority will decide whether a child needs provision through an EHC plan. The local authority must inform the child's parents of their decision within a maximum of six weeks of receiving a request for an EHC assessment.

Content of an EHC plan

The EHC plan will outline the provision necessary, the name of the setting where the provision is to be made and how the needs will be met; this may be through additional support or equipment and may have a cost implication to the local authority. All early years EHC plans are reviewed every three to six months and those involved are invited to consider whether any amendments need to be made.

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.

Record Keeping

We keep individual records; these are based predominantly on observations. We use regular observations, consultations with parents, staff and other professionals to inform planning in order to meet the needs of individuals. Information gathered may be shared with other professionals with parental permission. The records we keep are available to the child's parents on request.

Nursery Transfer

If a child moves to another nursery or reception setting, we complete a Nursery Transfer Summary that outlines the child's achievements at our setting. This has a section which relates to Special Educational Needs and asks for the parents and child's comments.

The nominated SENCO is Régine Charrière