WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and Inclusion

Our Ethos

At Walthamstow Montessori School (WMS) we welcome the inclusion of all children whatever their individual needs may be. All children have the right to achieve and develop to their full potential. At WMS we believe that having an inclusive policy benefits all children and is a positive experience that reflects the diversity of our community.

This policy represents the agreed principles for Special Educational Needs and Disability throughout WMS. All school staff, representing WMS have agreed to this policy.

Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

"A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her." As defined by the Code of Practice 2015 for those who have Special Educational Needs and disabled children.

Introduction

This policy is in line with the Code of Practice 2024 and Equality Act 2010.

The Special Educational needs and disability Coordinators (SENCO) are Nabeela Shah, Assistant Head of School and Marcella Balind. The Area SENDco Lead is Sajedah Valli.

The building is accessible for wheelchair users.

At WMS we strive to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all children and for them to become confident young people with a growing ability to communicate their own views and ready to make the transition into compulsory education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is the starting point for planning that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. When planning, staff set suitable learning challenges and respond to children's diverse learning needs. Some children have barriers to learning that mean they have special needs and require action by the school.

Where a child appears to be behind expected levels, or where a child's progress gives cause for concern, practitioners will consider all the information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting, from formal checks,

practitioner observations and more detailed assessment of the child's needs. In the setting, practitioners will particularly consider information on a child's progress in communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. When specialist advice has been sought from beyond the setting, this will also inform decisions about whether or not a child has SEND. All the information will be brought together with the observations of parents/carers and considered with them.

A delay in learning and development in the early years may or may not indicate that a child has SEND (a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision.) Equally, difficult or withdrawn behaviour does not necessarily mean that a child has SEND. However, where there are concerns, there will be an assessment to determine whether there are causal factors such as an underlying learning or communication difficulty. If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behaviour, a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of approaches such as the Early Help Assessment, will be adopted.

Children may have Special Educational Needs or a disability, either throughout or at any specific time during their school journey. This policy ensures that curriculum planning and assessment for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability takes account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the child.

It is a legal requirement under the SEN and Disability Act 2001 that each setting

must:

- Have a written SEND policy
- Ensure children with SEND have full access to the curriculum
- Keep records of the child's progress and behaviour. These records should include the child's own perception of any difficulties and how they might be addressed, if appropriate
- Employ strategies to enable the child to progress. These strategies should always be recorded within a SEND support plan.
- Identify a member of staff to act as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENCO).
- Create a positive partnership between children, parents, professionals and the school.

The SENDCo is responsible for:

- Working with other staff and parents on producing a written SEND policy
- The day to day implementation of the SEND policy

The SENDCo will:

- Be involved in monitoring and reviewing the SEND Policy
- Set up a SEND record or register, to include the names of the children identified as having SEND
- Monitor and update the register as required
- Ensure effective liaison with parents
- Be responsible for supporting staff in meetings or reviews with parents/carers and setting appropriate review dates and times
- Liaise with other professionals and agencies to gain advice or support for the setting in relation to SEND issues.
- Ensure that all staff have an understanding of the setting's SEND practice and that there is consistency and continuity in the way it is carried out.
- Support staff in making observations and setting targets to provide for children's needs
- Keep up to date with any national or local developments on the provision for children with SEND
- Identify and address the training need of the staff, in relation to SEND
- Ensure that appropriate SEND plan is in place
- Keep records for the children on the SEND register.

Aims and objectives

The aims of this policy are:

- To create an environment that meets the Special Educational Needs and Disability of each child;
- To ensure that the Special Educational Needs and Disability of children are identified, assessed and provided for;
- To make clear the expectations of all partners in the process;
- To identify the roles and responsibilities of staff in providing for children's Special Educational and Disability Needs;
- To enable all children to have full access to all elements of the school's curriculum;
- To ensure that parents/carers are able to play their part in supporting their child's education;
- To ensure that our children have a voice in this process.

Educational Inclusion

At WMS we aim to offer excellence and choice to all our children, whatever their ability or needs. We have high expectations of all our children. We aim to achieve this through the removal of barriers to learning and participation. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our nursery community. Through appropriate curricular provision, we respect the fact that children:

- Have different educational and behavioural needs and aspirations;
- Require different strategies for learning;
- Acquire, assimilate and communicate information at different rates;
- Need a range of different teaching approaches and experiences.

Identifying and assessing SEND for young children whose first language is not English requires particular care. Early year's practitioners look carefully at all aspects of a child's learning and development to establish whether any delay is related to learning English as an additional language or if it arises from SEND. Difficulties related solely to learning English as an additional language are not SEND.

Staff respond to children's needs by:

- providing support for children who need help with communication, language and literacy;
- planning to develop children's understanding through the use of all available senses and experiences;
- planning for children's full participation in learning, and in physical and practical activities;
- helping children to manage their behaviour and to take part in learning effectively and safely;
- helping individuals to manage their emotions, particularly trauma or stress, and to take part in learning.

It is particularly important in the early years that there is no delay in making any necessary special educational provision. Delay at this stage can give rise to learning difficulty and subsequently to loss of self-esteem, frustration in learning and to behaviour difficulties. Early action to address identified needs is critical to the future progress and improved outcomes that are essential in helping the child to prepare for adult life.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability have learning difficulties that call for special provision to be made. All children may have special needs at some time in their lives. Children have a learning difficulty if:

- They have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;

- They have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities that are provided for children of the same age;
- A general developmental delay
- A physical impairment
- A speech or language difficulty
- Sensory difficulties e.g. sight/hearing
- Social or communication difficulties
- A recognised syndrome with associated learning difficulties
- Delayed social and emotional development
- Health problems which affect the child's access to learning

All our children are assessed when they join our nursery, so that we can build upon their prior learning. We do this by collecting as much information from parents/carers using the Starting Points form. We use this information to provide development of an appropriate curriculum for all our children.

A Graduated Approach to SEND Support

In line with requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, we take a graduated approach to working with children with emerging concerns and their families. This approach includes:

Assess: A baseline assessment is done within the first 6 weeks of a child starting in school, and a further assessment six weeks later. These continue throughout the year with further assessments to track progress. Observations, monitoring and regular progress meetings with staff and parents/carers are also part of the ongoing assessment process. In identifying a child as needing SEND support, the early year's practitioner/teacher, working with the SENDCo and the child's parents/carers will have carried out an analysis of the child's needs. This initial assessment is 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 from health, social care, educational psychology or other agencies. The SENDCo will always obtain parent/carer consent to contact professionals.

Plan: where it is decided to provide SEND support, parents/carers are formally notified. The key person and SENDCo agree, in consultation with parents /carers 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. The support and intervention are provided by the child's key person who has the relevant skills and knowledge. The key person is supported by the SENDCo, and if required specialist support is sought. Parents/carers are involved in planning support, and where appropriate, in reinforcing the provision or contributing to progress at home. A SEND support plan is drawn up.

Do: The key person is responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. The SENDCo oversees the implementation of the interventions or programme agreed. The SENDCo also supports the key person in assessing the child's response to the action taken, helps problem solve and advises on the effective implementation of support.

Review: The effectiveness of the support and its impact on the child's progress are reviewed in line with the agreed date. This is done by the SENDCo, the key person and the child's parents/carers taking into account the child's views. Changes to the outcomes and support are agreed in light of the child's progress and development, and parents/carers are involved in planning the next steps.

This cycle of action is revisited frequently to identify the best way of securing good progress. At each stage parents are involved, contributing their insights to assessment and planning. This graduated approach is led and co-ordinated by the SENDCo working with and supporting the key person, and informed by EYFS materials, Early Years Outcomes guidance and Early Support resource.

Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans

The majority of children with SEN or disabilities will have their needs met within local mainstream early years' settings. However, some children may require an EHC Needs Assessment in order for the local authority to decide whether it is necessary to make provision for the child in accordance with an EHC plan. Parents/carers or the setting (WMS) can request an assessment.

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/carers and child or young person
- Provide a full description of the child or young person's special educational needs and any health and social care needs
- Establish outcomes across education, health and social care based on the child or young person's needs and aspirations
- Specify the provision required and how education, health and care services will work together to meet the child or young person's needs and support the achievement of the agreed outcomes

EHC plans should be forward-looking documents that help raise aspirations and outline the provision required to meet assessed needs to support the child or young person in achieving their ambitions. EHC plans will specify how services will be delivered as part

of a whole package and explain how best to achieve the outcomes sought across education, health and social care for the child or young person.

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 the provider can meet the child or young person's needs without an EHC plan.

Evaluation of this policy:

At WMS we will review our policy annually or sooner if the need arises to ensure that our policy and practice is effective.

Complaints:

Any complaints surrounding our practice and provision of children with additional needs should be addressed using the school's complaints procedures. Parents/carers needing any additional information on any area of our special needs policy, should speak to Lorna Mahoney, Principal who will be happy to advise.

This policy was adopted on: 1st March 2016

Date Last Reviewed: 12th September 2026

Date to be Reviewed: 12th September 2027