9. Childcare Practice Procedures

9.9 Identification, Assessment and Support for Children with SEND

At Pirton Pre School, we are committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming and supportive environment in which every child can learn, develop and thrive.

We recognise that children develop at different rates and in different ways. Some children may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which require additional support, adaptations or specialist provision. We aim to identify emerging needs as early as possible and work in partnership with children, parents/carers and relevant professionals to ensure that appropriate support is put in place.

We follow the principles of the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** and the **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years**. We use a graduated approach of **assess, plan, do and review** to identify needs, implement appropriate support and monitor children's progress.

We promote equality, participation and inclusion and will make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to children's learning and participation.

We will -

- identify children who may have SEND as early as possible;
- recognise and respond appropriately to emerging developmental needs;
- ensure that children with SEND have full and meaningful access to the EYFS curriculum and all aspects of setting life
- Promote 'Ordinarily Available Provision'
- provide appropriate and timely support based on each child's individual strengths, needs and interests;
- work collaboratively with parents/carers and children, where appropriate;
- work effectively with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), key persons and other professionals;
- use a graduated approach to assessment, planning, intervention and review;
- ensure that staff understand their responsibilities in relation to SEND;
- monitor children's progress and the effectiveness of support;

- make appropriate referrals to external agencies where necessary;
- support successful transitions into the setting, between rooms and settings, and into school;
- ensure that SEND provision is inclusive, respectful and non-discriminatory.

Definition of SEND

A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child of compulsory school age or younger has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age.

Children may have SEND for a variety of reasons. Their needs may include, but are not limited to:

- communication and interaction;
- cognition and learning;
- social, emotional and mental health;
- sensory and/or physical needs.

Some children may have needs across more than one area.

We recognise that not all children who experience difficulties will have SEND. Children may require additional support because of factors such as changes at home, bereavement, English as an additional language, attendance, health or other circumstances. Staff will consider the whole child and avoid making assumptions about the cause of a child's difficulties.

Inclusive Practice

We believe that children with SEND should be able to participate fully in the life of the setting.

We will:

- value every child as an individual;
- focus on children's strengths, interests and achievements as well as areas requiring support;
- provide an accessible and enabling environment;
- adapt activities, resources, routines and communication approaches where necessary;
- provide appropriate adult support without unnecessarily creating dependency;
- promote children's independence, confidence and self-esteem;

- ensure that children are included in play, learning, outings, celebrations and other activities;
- provide reasonable adjustments for disabled children;
- challenge discrimination, prejudice and negative attitudes;
- maintain high expectations while recognising individual differences.

Identification of Additional Needs

Early identification is an important part of our approach.

Children's development will be observed and assessed through normal day-to-day practice in accordance with the EYFS. Staff will consider children's development in the context of their age, individual circumstances, interests and previous experiences.

Potential indicators of additional need may include:

- difficulties communicating wants, needs or ideas;
- limited understanding of language;
- persistent difficulties interacting with adults or other children;
- difficulties with attention, concentration or engagement;
- differences in social communication;
- difficulties with emotional regulation;
- delays or differences in physical development;
- difficulties with self-care or independence;
- sensory sensitivities or sensory-seeking behaviours;
- difficulties accessing activities or routines;
- limited progress despite appropriate teaching and support;
- a significant difference between a child's development and that expected for their age;
- concerns identified by parents/carers or other professionals.

Staff will not use a single observation or developmental difference as evidence of SEND. Concerns will be considered over time and alongside information from parents/carers and other relevant sources. We use assessment tools such as WELCOMM and the IAELD

The Role of the Key Person

The key person plays an important role in identifying and supporting children's individual needs.

The key person will:

- build a secure and trusting relationship with the child;
- become familiar with the child's strengths, interests, development and individual needs;
- observe and assess the child's development;
- identify where a child may require additional support;

- communicate concerns sensitively with the SENCO and parents/carers;
- implement agreed strategies and interventions;
- contribute to assessments and reviews;
- maintain appropriate records;
- support children's participation and independence;
- contribute to transition planning.

The Role of the SENCO

The SENCO has responsibility for coordinating SEND provision within the setting.

The SENCO will:

- work with the leadership team to develop and maintain effective SEND practice;
- advise staff on identifying and supporting children with SEND;
- support staff in carrying out observations and assessments;
- coordinate the graduated approach;
- help develop individual support plans where appropriate;
- liaise with parents/carers;
- liaise with health, education and other professionals;
- coordinate referrals where appropriate;
- support applications for specialist advice or additional funding where applicable;
- maintain appropriate SEND records;
- ensure relevant staff receive appropriate training and guidance;
- contribute to transition planning;
- monitor the effectiveness of SEND provision;
- ensure that the setting's SEND information is accessible and up to date.

The SENCO will work closely with the setting's leadership and, where applicable, the Area SENCO or other local authority SEND support services.

Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are valued partners in identifying and supporting children's needs.

We will:

- listen to parents/carers' concerns and observations;
- share information about children's development openly and sensitively;
- involve parents/carers in decisions about additional support;
- explain proposed strategies and interventions;
- seek parents/carers' views when reviewing support;
- provide opportunities for parents/carers to share information from other professionals;
- signpost families to appropriate sources of information and support.

Where there are concerns about a child's development, staff will approach the conversation sensitively and focus on the child's strengths and support needs rather than on labels or deficits.

We recognise that parents/carers know their children well and their views are an important part of the assessment process.

The Graduated Approach: Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Where a child is identified as having an emerging or additional need, the setting will use a graduated approach.

Assess

We will gather information from:

- observations of the child;
- assessment information;
- the child's key person;
- parents/carers;
- other practitioners;
- previous settings or professionals, where appropriate and with appropriate information-sharing arrangements;
- health or specialist professionals, where involved.

We will consider the child's strengths, needs, interests, development, learning environment and barriers to participation.

Plan

Where additional support is required, the setting will agree a plan with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the child.

The plan may include:

- specific outcomes or targets;
- strategies to support learning and development;
- environmental adaptations;
- changes to routines;
- differentiated or adapted activities;
- communication strategies;
- additional resources;
- targeted small-group or individual support;
- advice from external professionals.

Plans will be proportionate to the child's needs and will avoid unnecessary paperwork.

Do

The agreed strategies will be implemented by the child's key person and relevant staff.

Staff will ensure that support is incorporated into everyday practice wherever possible rather than separating the child unnecessarily from their peers.

The SENCO will support staff and monitor implementation.

Review

Support will be reviewed regularly with parents/carers.

Reviews will consider:

- progress towards agreed outcomes;
- what has worked well;
- what has not worked;
- the child's views and experiences, where appropriate;
- parents'/carers' views;
- whether strategies need to continue, change or be increased;
- whether further specialist advice is required.

The frequency of reviews will reflect the child's individual circumstances and needs.

Assessment

Assessment will be ongoing and form part of everyday practice.

Staff will use a range of evidence, including:

- observation;
- interaction with the child;
- examples of children's work and learning;
- developmental information;
- conversations with parents/carers;
- information from previous settings;
- advice from relevant professionals.

We recognise that standard developmental expectations are not intended to be used as a diagnostic tool. Assessment will be used to understand what a child can do, identify barriers to learning and determine how adults can best support the child.

Where concerns remain despite appropriate support, the SENCO may seek advice from relevant external professionals.

Specialist Support and Referrals

Where a child's needs cannot be adequately supported through ordinarily available provision, we may seek advice or support from relevant professionals, which may include:

- health visitors;
- speech and language therapists;
- paediatricians;
- occupational therapists;
- physiotherapists;
- educational psychologists;
- specialist teachers;
- local authority SEND services;
- early help or family support services;
- other relevant health, education or social care professionals.

Referrals will normally be discussed with parents/carers and made in accordance with local procedures.

Where a child requires a more coordinated level of support, the setting will work with the family and relevant professionals to contribute to any further assessment or planning process.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessments and Plans

Some children may require support beyond that ordinarily available in an early years setting.

Where appropriate, the setting will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to contribute evidence for an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment**.

If a child has an EHC plan, the setting will:

- ensure staff are familiar with the provision and outcomes relevant to the setting;
- implement the specified provision within the setting's responsibility;
- work with parents/carers and professionals;
- monitor progress towards relevant outcomes;
- contribute to annual reviews and other review processes as required;
- support transition planning.

Adapting the Environment and Curriculum

We recognise that inclusion may require changes to the environment, curriculum and teaching approaches.

Adaptations may include:

- visual timetables and visual prompts;
- simplified or additional instructions;
- additional processing time;
- reduced distractions;
- quiet or low-stimulation spaces;
- sensory resources;
- adapted seating or positioning;
- accessible resources and equipment;
- alternative methods of communication;
- use of symbols, objects, photographs or signs;
- smaller-group activities;
- additional repetition and modelling;
- changes to routines;
- opportunities for movement and sensory breaks;
- adapting the level, pace or presentation of activities.

Adaptations will be individualised and reviewed regularly.

Communication and Interaction Needs

Where a child has communication or interaction needs, staff will consider how best to support the child's ability to understand and express themselves.

Strategies may include:

- using clear and concise language;
- allowing additional processing time;
- using visual supports;
- modelling language;
- commenting rather than relying solely on questions;
- using gestures, objects or symbols;
- supporting turn-taking and joint attention;
- providing opportunities for communication throughout the day;
- working consistently with advice from speech and language or other professionals.

Children will be given appropriate opportunities to communicate their choices, feelings, interests and needs.

Supporting Social, Emotional and Mental Health

We recognise that emotional wellbeing is closely linked to children's ability to learn and participate.

Staff will:

- establish warm, consistent relationships;
- provide predictable routines;
- support children to identify and express emotions;

- teach and model appropriate social skills;
- provide reassurance and co-regulation;
- identify potential triggers for distress;
- make reasonable adaptations to reduce barriers;
- work with parents/carers and professionals where concerns persist.

Behaviour will be understood in the context of the child's developmental level, communication, environment and individual needs.

Supporting Physical, Sensory and Medical Needs

Where children have physical, sensory or medical needs, we will work with families and relevant professionals to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place.

This may include:

- environmental adaptations;
- specialist equipment;
- personal care arrangements;
- mobility support;
- sensory strategies;
- medication procedures where applicable;
- individual healthcare plans;
- staff training.

The setting will follow its relevant health, safety, intimate care and medication policies.

Children with English as an Additional Language

Having English as an additional language does not, in itself, mean that a child has SEND.

When assessing a child who is learning English, staff will consider:

- the child's home language development;
- opportunities to use their home language;
- previous educational experiences;
- cultural and family context;
- progress in all areas of development;
- communication skills across languages where information is available.

Where difficulties are evident across languages and contexts, the setting will consider whether additional support may be required.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

We will maintain appropriate records relating to children's additional needs and support.

Records may include:

- observations and assessments;
- support plans;
- review records;
- professional reports;
- referrals;
- correspondence with parents/carers and professionals;
- records of interventions and their outcomes.

Information will be stored securely and shared only where there is a lawful and appropriate reason to do so.

All staff will follow the setting's confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding procedures.

Transition

We recognise that transitions can be particularly important for children with SEND.

Transition planning may include:

- sharing relevant information with the receiving setting or school;
- visits to the new environment;
- photographs and visual resources;
- meeting the child's new key person or teacher;
- transition books or personalised resources;
- sharing successful strategies;
- meetings with parents/carers and professionals;
- gradual introduction to new routines;
- sharing relevant SEND documentation with appropriate consent and information-sharing arrangements.

Transition planning will begin early enough to allow the child and family to experience a positive and well-supported move.

Staff Training and Development

All staff will receive appropriate information and training to support inclusive practice.

Training needs may be identified through:

- individual children's needs;
- staff supervision;
- professional development;
- changes in guidance or legislation;
- advice from external professionals;
- monitoring and review of SEND provision.

The SENCO will support staff to develop their knowledge and confidence in identifying and meeting children's needs.

Monitoring and Evaluating SEND Provision

The leadership team and SENCO will monitor SEND provision regularly.

Monitoring will consider:

- identification of children with emerging needs;
- children's progress and outcomes;
- the quality and consistency of support;
- parental involvement;
- staff knowledge and practice;
- effectiveness of interventions;
- accessibility and inclusion;
- transition arrangements;
- feedback from children, parents/carers and professionals.

Where provision is not having the intended impact, it will be reviewed and adapted.

Safeguarding and SEND

Children with SEND may be more vulnerable to safeguarding risks. All staff have a responsibility to remain alert to safeguarding concerns and to follow the setting's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Staff will not assume that behaviour or communication differences are solely attributable to a child's SEND. Any safeguarding concern will be reported in accordance with the setting's safeguarding procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENCO will work together where appropriate, while maintaining clear professional responsibilities.

Early Years Inclusion Funding

If the child's needs cannot be met from within the setting's core funding, then it will be at this point that the evidence collated will be used to apply for top-up/enhanced funding from the Local Authority's Inclusion Fund. If a new or existing child is disabled, then the setting should check if the family is in receipt of or have applied for Disability Living Allowance. If so, the setting will be able to apply to their local authority for the local Disability Access Fund.

Guidance on available funding and its criteria's can be found here https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/early-years-0-5/early-years-inclusion-funding.aspx

External intervention and support

Where external agency intervention has been identified to help support a child with SEND then this intervention should be recommended in writing by a suitably reliable source such as a speech and language therapist, paediatrician or educational psychologist.

We will apply for Inclusion funding via the Early Years Portal and this funding can be used, alongside the settings own inclusion budget, to fund speech and language assessments, play therapy sessions etc

Complaints

We aim to resolve concerns through open and constructive communication with parents/carers.

Parents/carers who have concerns about SEND provision should initially speak with the child's key person or SENCO.

If the concern cannot be resolved, it should be raised with the setting manager or designated senior leader in accordance with the setting's complaints procedure.

Parents/carers will not be disadvantaged for raising concerns about their child's provision.