



St Helens College



University Centre
St Helens

Nursery Childcare Policy – Special Educational Needs

Relating to: Nursery

Document reference: SHCPolNur21

Document owner: Nursery Manager

Date of approval: 25 January 2025

Date of next review: 25 January 2026

Definitions of Special Educational Needs

The Code of Practice 2020 defines SEND as: 'A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.'

Introduction

This policy is in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and Equality Act 2010. The Special Needs Coordinator for the setting (SENCO) is Emma Spark.

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

The Early Years Foundation Stage is our 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 particular action by the Nursery.

Where a child appears to be behind expected levels, or where a child's progress gives cause for concern, practitioners should consider all the information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting, from formal checks, from practitioner observations and from any more detailed assessment of the child's needs. From within the setting practitioners should particularly consider information on a child's progress in communication and language, physical development, and personal, social, and emotional development. Where any specialist advice has been sought from beyond the setting, this should also inform decisions about whether or not a child has SEND. All the information should be brought together with the observations of parents and considered with them.

A delay in learning and development in the early years may or may not indicate that a child has SEND that is, that they have 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 Equally, difficult or withdrawn behaviour does not necessarily mean that a child has SEND.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 should be an assessment to determine whether there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any casual 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 Early Help Assessment Tool should be adopted.

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

Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are:

- to create an environment that meets the Special Educational Needs of each child
- to ensure that the Special Educational Needs 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 Needs
- to enable all children to have full access to all elements of the Nursery's curriculum
- to ensure that parents 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 St Helens College Nursery, 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 the 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 years practitioners should 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 or disability. 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 across any area of learning
- 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
- Liaising with parents in a timely & sensitive manner and keeping them informed at every point
- 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 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
- Staff work with parents to devise plans such as IEP's, behaviour, and play plans which clearly sets out targets for the child to work towards achieving. Parents are provided with a copy of the child's plan to support at home. Plans are reviewed, adapted and new targets set, regularly.

Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs 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 the same age
- they have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities that are provided for children of the same age

During the settling in period, staff gather children's starting points in the three prime areas over a period of time, depending on how often a child attends. Key workers work with parents to identify any gaps in development as it is understood, children may feel more confident doing something at home that we haven't seen them do in the setting. Once starting points are secured in the prime areas, key workers work on gathering them for the four specific areas of learning.

Observations and assessments continue on a day-to-day basis by the child's key person and any staff who works closely with a child. If our assessments show that a child may have a learning difficulty, we use a range of strategies that make full use of all available resources. In liaison with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), the child's Key person will offer interventions that are 'different from' or 'additional to' those provided as part of the nursery's usual working practices. The Key person will keep parents informed and draw upon them for additional information. If the SENCO, Key person, and parents feel that the child would benefit from further support, the key person will then take the lead in further assessments of the child's needs with support from the SENCO. The Early Years Development Journal is designed to be completed if practitioners are concerned about a child's rate of progress compared with their peers, or when some of their skills appear to be delayed. The Early Years Development Journal assesses a child's skills within the setting in collaboration with parents or carers.

We will record the strategies used to support the child, If the child continues to demonstrate significant cause for concern, we will consult parents prior to support being actioned. A request for a statutory assessment will be made to our local 'outreach' worker who will carry out closer observations of the child in the nursery environment. The nursery is provided with a written report which is also to be shared with parents. From these observations, it will be decided which service the child will be referred into. Outreach provides the nursery with positive strategies to support the child whilst attending nursery and guidance to help parents at home.

Early Support

Early Support supports parents and carers of children aged 5 and under. It brings together all the services and support available from different agencies. This makes it easier for families to co-ordinate their child's health, education, and social care needs.

Some families will have a Portage worker who provides advice and support and can help negotiate the system. A Portage worker may be needed more at some times than others. Families can decide what works best for them.

Early Support has developed a wide range of resources, training courses and workshops which can be found: SEND (sthelens.gov.uk)

Educational Health and Care Plans

An education, health, and care (EHC) plan are for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support.

EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

How does the Assessment work?

At the start of the assessment, you and your child or the young person will have the opportunity to say what's working, what's not working and what you think needs to change. An SEN Casework Manager will help you with this.

The SEN Casework Manager will gather information from the other people involved and arrange a meeting for you all to agree the outcomes and how you think they can best be met. Remember that this is all about partnership between you and the professionals involved to make the right decisions as a family.

The whole process lasts for 20 weeks.

Towards the end of this period, the SEN Casework Manager will meet you again if you wish to discuss the EHC plan and decide the support necessary to meet the agreed outcomes.

The plan will be clear about how much things cost and will have agreed timescales to make sure that it is updated and reviewed regularly, for example, annually.

The plan could go with your child or the young person as they change services, change schools and also when they leave school and go on to college, work related training or apprenticeships.

The plan will cease when the education or training outcomes specified in the Education, Health and Care plan have been achieved.

Following the EHC Pathway will not put children and young people at a disadvantage as it will include, and continue to comply with, all statutory obligations required under current legislation. This includes rights of appeal. See how the process works, please access our easy to follow diagram

Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT)

The EHAT is a shared assessment and planning framework for the use across all children's services and all local areas in England. It aims to help the early identification of children and young people's additional needs to promote co-ordinated service provision to meet them. The EHAT is aimed at children and young people with additional needs who have needs that are not being met by their current service provision.

At St Helens College Nursery, the SENCO:

- manages the day-to-day operation of the policy
- co-ordinates the provision for and manages the responses to children's special needs

- supports and advises colleagues
- oversees the records of all children with Special Educational Needs
- acts as the link with parents
- acts as a link with external agencies and other support agencies
- monitors and evaluates the Special Educational Needs provision alongside the Manager/Deputy Manager
- manages a range of resources, human and material, to enable appropriate provision for children with Special Educational Needs
- contributes to the professional development of all staff

Local Offer

Local authorities must publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEND or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans. In setting out what they 'expect to be available,' local authorities should include provision which they believe will actually be available.

The Local Offer has two key purposes:

- to provide clear, comprehensive, accessible, and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it, and
- to make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving those with SEND, disabled children, their parents and service providers in its development and review

Access to the Curriculum

All children have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is differentiated to enable children to:

- understand the relevance and purpose of learning activities
- experience levels of understanding and rates of progress that brings feelings of success and achievement

Staff use a range of strategies to meet children's Special Educational Needs. Learning and activities have clear learning objectives, we differentiate work appropriately, and we use assessment to inform the next stage of learning.

We support children in a manner that acknowledges their entitlement to share the same learning experiences that their peers enjoy. Wherever possible we do not withdraw children from the nursery situation. There are times, though, when to maximise learning, we ask the children to work in small groups, or in a one-to-one situation outside the main learning environment.

Partnership with Parents

At St Helens College Nursery, we work closely with parents in the support of those children with Special Educational Needs. We encourage an active partnership through an ongoing dialogue with parents. Parents have much to contribute to our support for children with Special Educational Needs.

We have regular discussions with parents to review the progress of their child against the targets set in the child's individual planning, and to set new targets for the following planning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The SENCO monitors the movement of children within the Special Educational Needs system in the nursery. The SENCO provides staff with regular summaries of the impact of the policy on the practice of the nursery.

The SENCO and Key Workers monitor the progress of children with Special Educational Needs regularly and discuss findings with all staff and parents.

If you would like to discuss your child's special needs and support, please talk to Emma Spark.

Roles and Responsibilities of SENCO – Main Responsibilities

- Ensure your setting has regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015), the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995) and the Equality Act 2010
- be responsible for ensuring:
 - A SEND Inclusion Policy is in place
 - The policy is put into practice
 - The policy is reviewed annually
- Observation, Recording, Assessment and Planning
 - Support staff who take the lead in observations and assessments of children with SEND including their strengths and areas to develop.
- Gather evidence and co-ordinate support; work with colleagues to develop the child's skills through inclusive planning in line with Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum
- Keep appropriate records which are regularly reviewed and monitored
 - Ensure appropriate Individual planning is in place for children with SEND and regularly monitored and reviewed
- Apply for Exceptional Needs Funding where appropriate
 - Support agencies and families with Educational Health Care Plans

- Work closely with parents to ensure background information is collected and shared appropriately
- Liaise with colleagues and managers as appropriate
 - Promote a positive working relationship with parents/carers
 - Develop links and liaise as appropriate with other professionals, Health Visitors, SEND Preschool Advisory Teacher, Speech and Language Therapists, Inclusion Development Officer, Educational Psychologists
- Identify individual settings needs and arrange in-house training where appropriate
- Have an awareness of the Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT)
- Use your knowledge and experience to support your setting to develop their inclusive practice

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff, parents, and children of the Childcare Facility.

Associated Policies and Procedures

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Equality & Inclusion
- Managing Children's Behaviour
- Health & Safety
- Medications & Ill Health
- Visits & Outings
- Communication
- Parental Participation
- Record Keeping & Confidentiality
- Maintaining Children's Safety & Security on the Premises
- Induction of Staff & Students
- Intimate Care
- Key Person & Settling In
- Working In Partnership with other Agencies
- Transition
- Data Protection & Sharing of Information
- Nappy Changing
- Admissions & Registration
- Foods & Snacks
- Staff Behaviour
- Whistleblowing

Access to the Policy

This policy will also be given to all Childcare Facility staff and made available to users of the Childcare Facility. A copy of all policies will also be held centrally in the Childcare Facility Manager's office.

Post-Holder to Contact

Director of Student Services.