

KINDERGARTEN SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES INCLUDING EARLY YEARS OFFER

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full every two years.

The policy was last reviewed on 31st January 2017.

It is due for review in January 2019.

Kindergarten Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and Procedures

1. Policy Statement

The four kindergartens at our school consider all children to be unique, capable and full of potential. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and every child has individual needs.

The Steiner/Waldorf Early Years curriculum is holistic and supports the idea of the child as a unique individual. The curriculum has an inclusive practice and aims to remove barriers to learning. The objective of the Steiner/Waldorf Early Years curriculum is to enable all children to achieve their full potential. Every endeavour will be taken to accommodate the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual needs of each child.

The kindergartens have an obligation to follow the DfEE *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years*, including the Disability Discrimination Act, which states that children with disabilities may no longer legally be excluded from any nursery on the grounds of inadequate facilities. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a disability will not be treated less favourably than other children. Early identification of special educational needs will ensure an early response to the individual needs of the child.

The staff and the Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) aim to develop good relationship and communication with the parents, sharing information with them at all times. The kindergarten teachers work in partnership with the parents to communicate and share perceptions of their children's needs, abilities and developmental stages. A code of confidentiality is followed.

2. Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN) – Identifying SEN

In the kindergartens, where formal learning is not yet introduced, a child may have SEN if they:

- Have communication and/or interaction difficulties [COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION]
- Work at levels significantly below those expected for children of similar age [COGNITION AND LEARNING]
- Present significant emotional and/or behavioural difficulties [SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH]
- Have sensory or physical problems [SENSORY AND/OR PHYSICAL NEEDS]

Children are not to 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 are taught.

Individual children may have needs that cut across these four areas and their needs may change over time.

When a child appears to be behind expected levels, or when a child's progress and behaviour give cause for concern, the kindergarten teachers, together with the SENCO, will consider all

information about the child's learning and development gathered in their observations, information collected from the SENCO's observations, and any assessment that may have taken place outside of the setting. A delay in learning and development may or may not indicate that a child has SEN. Likewise, difficult or withdrawn behaviour does not necessarily mean that a child has SEN. However, if the teacher has a concern over the child's learning and development, there should be an assessment to determine the cause of the development or learning delay.

Children who have been identified as having special educational needs may require *special educational provision* to be made for them. Special educational provision involves educational provision that is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age. Special education provision will be matched to the child's identified SEN.

Once a child has been identified as having SEN, the teachers will work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs.

3. Admission of children to the kindergarten with known or suspected SEN

For admission to the kindergarten, in addition to the initial interview, the parents of a child with known or suspected SEN are required to provide information about the child's needs (including reports from child care practitioners and/or other specialists.) A second interview may be requested to assess the levels of difficulties the child is experiencing and whether the kindergarten can adequately meet the child's needs.

A place in kindergarten does not mean that the child will automatically be offered a place in Class 1, where more formal learning in larger groups starts.

4. SEN support in the kindergarten

The kindergarten staff, together with the SENCO, aim for an early identification of SEN and intervention. Delay in the early years can give rise to learning difficulties and subsequently loss of self-esteem, frustration in learning and to behaviour difficulties.

A trigger for kindergarten action could be:

- A teacher's concern about a child's behaviour, attention or learning abilities
- A parent's concern about a child's behaviour, attention or learning abilities
- The school doctor's concern about a child's behaviour, attention or learning abilities
- The result of a class observation

The kindergartens adopt a **graduated approach** involving four stages of action: assess, plan, do, and review.

The staff, together with the SENCO, will carry out an initial **assessment** to identify children who need SEN support. Once a child has been identified as needing special educational provision, the child's parents will be informed and involved. This initial assessment will be reviewed regularly (at least once a term) to ensure that the support matches the needs. If there is little progress, the teachers may suggest to the parents the involvement of specialist teachers within the school, or external agencies.

Once a child has been identified as needing special educational provision, the teacher, together with the SENCO and the child's parents, should work together and agree on a set of targets with desired outcomes, the strategies that will be put in place in the setting and at home, and a stated date for review. This information will be put into an **SEN Support Plan**, signed by the parents and the SENCO, copies of which will be given to the parents, filed in the child's file, and in the Learning Support (LS) room. The targets must be specific and realistic, and identified in relation to the expected outcomes. The kindergarten teachers are responsible for sharing the support plans with their assistants, as they will need to adopt the strategies identified to meet the targets.

The parents have a responsibility to reinforce the provision or contribute to its progress at home. Strategies that they can adopt at home will be identified together with the parents and included in the support plan.

The kindergarten teachers and their assistants are responsible for working with the children on a daily basis. With the support of the SENCO, they should oversee the **implementation** of the strategies agreed in the support plan. The SENCO should support the teachers and assistants in assessing the child's response to the strategies taken, in problem solving, and advising on the effective implementation of the support.

On the agreed **review** date, the kindergarten teacher, the SENCO and the parents will evaluate the effectiveness of the response and its impact on the progress of the child. At the review, three scenarios (Waves) are possible:

- a) *Wave 1*: the child has successfully met all the targets in the support plan. The teacher and the SENCO may then decide whether another plan needs to be put in place with different targets, or whether the kindergarten rhythm and routine are sufficient to meet the child's individual needs.
- b) *Wave 2*: some of the targets in the plan have been successfully met, while others are emerging. In this case, a new plan can be written focusing on the emerging targets. In this situation, it is possible that the involvement of a specialist teacher (extra eurythmy or creative speech) is required.
- c) *Wave 3*: none of the strategies set in the plan have been successful in meeting the targets. In this case, there is a need for a revision of the targets and strategies. It is also possible that the involvement of specialist teachers is required, as well as the involvement of external agencies.

When the teacher has a serious concern about a child's development, she might discuss with the child's parents the involvement of external agencies. Parents are responsible for implementing the recommendation to involve an outside agency. A rare exception to this would be if the school considered the child to be at risk. The SENCO will liaise with agencies where appropriate. It is also the parents' responsibility to inform the teacher and the SENCO of any assessments and reports that have been produced by external agencies. Following recommendations from outside agencies, the school would need to consider if they could be carried out in the context of the Educational Philosophy of the school and current resourcing levels.

The school provides the following therapies for children in kindergarten: extra eurythmy and creative speech. Extra eurythmy therapy sessions take place on an ongoing basis depending on the child's progress. The extra eurythmy therapy teacher is Smadar Bunzl. These sessions are at no extra cost to the parents. Creative speech takes place on a weekly basis in block of sessions. The creative speech therapist is Sibylle Eichstaedt. There is a charge for these sessions.

In Wave 3, the kindergarten teachers and the SENCO may seek advice from one or more of the following:

- GP or paediatrician
- Educational Psychologist
- Child Psychologist
- Child Psychiatrist
- Social Services
- LEA (e.g. in the case of a school or parental referral/request for statutory assessment)
- External Special Needs expert or therapist
- Other

The SENCO and the kindergarten teacher will take note in the child's personal file of the advice that has been sought and the support that has been provided in the meantime. When the additional advice has been received, a new support plan can be drawn up to reflect the recommendations. The support plan should continue to be implemented, and, when appropriate, the external agencies should be involved with the review process.

5. Documentation

Once a support plan has been agreed by the teacher, the SENCO and the parents, it will be signed by one of the parent and the SENCO. A signed copy will be given to the parents, and other copies will be filed in the Learning Support room and the child's individual file. The review of a support plan will also be filed in the LS room and the child's file.

Any external assessment and report will be filed in the LS room and the child's file.

All information relevant to a child with an Education and Health Care plan will be filed in the LS room and the child's file (this information include individual plans, annual reviews, and correspondence).

The kindergarten teachers are responsible for filling in a Referral Request Form for extra eurythmy/creative speech therapy when they have decided, together with the child's parents, that a child will take these therapy sessions. These forms will be filed in the LS room and in the child's file. The specialist teachers are responsible for providing a report at the end of the sessions, which will be filed in the LS room and in the child's file.

6. The role and responsibilities of the SENCO

The Early Years SENCO is Silvia Lauzzana.

The role of the SENCO is to be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Special Educational Needs policy including:

- The day to day operation of the SEN policy
- Liaising with, and advising, members of staff about children with SEN, ensuring that they understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and the kindergarten approach to identifying and meeting SEN
- Co-ordinating provision for children with SEN

- Involvement in coordination and liaison between kindergarten and school, where the child concerned is currently in kindergarten and the parents wish the child to progress through to the school
- Involvement in admissions of any child to kindergarten who may have special educational needs
- Maintaining an SEN monitoring sheet and overseeing records, including support plans, reviews, annual reviews, discussions with parents, teachers or the school doctor and details of remedial interventions
- Liaising with parents of children with SEN and ensuring that they are closely involved and that their insights inform action taken by the kindergartens
- Liaising with internal specialists (extra eurythmy and creative speech teachers)
- Liaising with external agencies
- Coordinating liaison between external agencies and the teaching staff
- Keeping up to date with SEN legislation and practice through study and training

7. Transition to Class 1

The kindergarten teachers speak to the parents of borderline children (born in June/July) in the Spring/Summer term of the year in which the child is 5 years old.

In the **Autumn** term of the last year of kindergarten, children with identified learning or behavioural difficulties will preferably have support plans in place (drawn together with the SENCO, kindergarten teacher and parents), which will be reviewed at the end of the term by the SENCO, kindergarten teacher and parents.

In the **Spring** term, any support plans will be re-issued if necessary, and reviewed at the end of term.

The SENCO will arrange with the school doctor a date for his/her visit to make a Class 1 Readiness Assessment of all rising Class 1 children, which will take place in the Summer term.

Before the end of the Spring term, the kindergarten teachers will fill in a School Doctor Referral Form for each child. These forms will then be sent to the school doctor prior to the visit. Copies of these forms will be filed in the School Doctor folder in the LS room.

In the **Summer** term, any support plans will be re-issued if necessary.

The school doctor will see the children over the course of one or two days, in small groups. Where there are any concerns and for those children whose birthday falls in the summer (borderline children), the school doctor may decide to speak with the parents of these children, individually, after having seen all of the children.

A review meeting will take place after the school doctor has finished speaking with the parents. At the meeting, the school doctor, kindergarten teachers, Early Years SENCO, and Lower School SENCO/Learning Support teacher, and, if already appointed, the new Class 1 teacher will be present. The school doctor will report on each child individually, highlighting areas of possible concerns for learning. The school doctor will also provide advice on whether borderline children should go up or stay in kindergarten for one more year.

After the review meeting, the Early Years SENCO will collate notes taken into a grid. A copy will be given to the new Class 1 teacher, if already appointed, and one copy will be filed in the School

Doctor folder in the LS room.

The Lower School Learning Support teacher/SENCO, together with the Class 1 teacher (if already appointed), the Early Years SENCO, and the kindergarten teachers will meet in the second half of the Summer term to share information of each individual child going up to Class 1. If the Class 1 teacher has not been appointed yet, another class teacher may be able to attend the meeting.

Documentation

The new Class 1 teacher and the Lower School Learning Support teacher will have access to:

- the School Doctor folder (LS room);
- the 5-year-old reports (from pupils' file);
- the 6-year-old reports (these will be accessible in the summer);
- early years support plans and reviews for children who have had SEN support in kindergarten (these are filed for each child individually in the filing cabinet in the Learning Support room)
- referral request forms for extra eurythmy and creative speech (filed in a folder marked "SEN Provision Kindergarten" in the LS room)
- Termly SEN monitoring sheets with forms documenting interventions (in the school SEN register in the LS resource room)

8. Complaints procedure

If a parent has a concern about the SEN provision for a child, they should, in the first instance, ask for an initial meeting with the child's kindergarten teacher, who will consult with the SENCO. If the matter is not resolved at this meeting, a second meeting, involving the parent(s), kindergarten teacher, and SENCO will be arranged. For this meeting, the SENCO may decide to observe the child in the kindergarten. At this point, it may also be decided to seek external advice (ie, GP's report) relating to a specific learning difficulty. In this case, a subsequent meeting will be held to take account of such advice. In the event that a concern remains unresolved after these meetings, the parent(s) will be referred to the school's standard complaints procedure.

9. 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 SEN 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. Our setting has written an Early Years Offer which feeds into the HCC Local offer. Please see Appendix I for further details. The local offer can be viewed also on the school's website.

Appendix I: RSSKL Early Years Offer

1. How does the setting know if children need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

At the Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley you can speak to the kindergarten teachers if you have any concerns about your child. Silvia Lauzzana is our dedicated coordinator for special educational needs and disabilities (SENCO).

Your child's kindergarten teacher will work with Silvia to monitor and review your child's development and progress in the setting through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EFYS) framework (subject to granted exemptions).

When your child sees other professionals regularly, including speech and language therapists, we work very closely with them to ensure that your child is given appropriate support and that we provide the very best care and educational opportunities for your child.

2. How will the setting staff support my child?

The kindergarten teacher will develop a strong bond with your child, which may start with a home visit; and we will work with you to ensure your child is happy and settled in the kindergarten.

The SENCO will work to ensure that you are closely involved at all stages and will also liaise with a wide range of professionals.

3. How will I know how my child is doing?

You are always welcome to discuss your child's progress informally at the setting or by email. Once a week, the kindergarten teachers are available for individual meetings by prior arrangement with them. When an SEN Support Plan is in place for your child, we will also review progress with you once a term.

The regularity of formal meetings between staff and parents will depend on your child's level of need.

There are many formal ways of communicating about your child's progress but nothing is better than an informal chat at the end of a session, so please always speak to us about any concerns.

4. How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

Through our knowledge and insights into Steiner early years education we

will observe and assess your child and then plan their learning and development provision around our observations.

We will follow advice from other professionals who are involved in your child's progress on how to support your child's particular needs.

5. What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

The Kindergartens have a strong emphasis on providing a warm caring environment for your child. A mixed age range (3-6), strong rhythms and routines and an emphasis on healthy organic food all contribute to creating an experience conducive to healthy growth both physically, and emotionally.

If your child has any specific medical needs our staff will undergo any relevant training – e.g. epi pen training, replacing breathing tubes etc. – and we will administer any medication prescribed by a hospital paediatrician or GP.

We have a "Supporting behaviour policy" that outlines the procedures used in the kindergartens. However, if specialist help is required to manage behaviour we can request the support of the inclusion development officer employed by the local authority.

All staff have a positive approach to children's individual learning and development and are sensitive to their needs. Challenging behaviour testing boundaries is often part of growing up, and we will work closely with you to put strategies in place to support and enhance your child's positive behaviour. The rhythm and routine of the morning provide a secure space for your child to develop within safe boundaries. Our focus on rhythm and routine will help your child to settle in the group and the structure of the morning is designed to support optimum child development.

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the setting?

The kindergarten teachers have a long-term experience of working with young children. Through their training and practice in Steiner Early Years Education, they look at the child as a whole to support his/her development, hence the emphasis on physical, emotional and cognitive learning. These are equally significant and important for child development. The teachers and the SENCO continue to attend professional development courses that support them in their daily practice with young children.

We have experience of working with outside agencies, including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, health visitors, GPs etc.

7. What training and/or experience do the staff, supporting children with SEND, have?

Our dedicated SENCO has attended an accredited Early Years SENCO training course run by Herts County Council; she regularly attends SENCO cluster meetings that keep her informed of recent developments in the field of SEN & Disability. She has also attended an Eiklan training on “Speech and language support for 3-5s”.

All staff at our kindergartens have some experience of working with children with special needs.

8. How will my child be included in activities outside the setting?

Your child will benefit from any activities outside the setting and full risk assessments will be carried out. The regular activity at our kindergartens is a walk either on the school premises or out in the nearby fields.

We will discuss your child’s needs with you to ensure they can be included. You will not be required to accompany children on any outside activities. However, if you are unhappy about your child joining in a trip, visit or event without your presence you would be welcome to speak to the kindergarten teacher and work out a positive strategy between you.

9. How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child’s learning and development?

Your child’s kindergarten teacher will be available to discuss your child’s needs. It will be necessary to arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting.

If outside professionals come in to see your child, we try to organise a meeting at the end of that visit for a brief discussion. If this is not possible, any reports are always copied and given to you.

Parental consent is always obtained before we refer to any outside agencies.

10. How accessible is the building / environment?

The two kindergarten gardens are very accessible and meet the current disability regulations. They mainly have grassed area, with some slabs areas with a few steps next to the buildings. Both gardens have sand areas.

We have ramp access in one of our kindergarten buildings, with access to the garden as well.

We have purpose built toys and equipment at your child’s level.

We do not have a disabled toilet with wheelchair access.

11. How will the setting prepare and support my child with transitions between home, settings and school?

Before starting kindergarten, the teachers will endeavour to do a home visit so they can meet your child in their home environment.

At the initial meeting, kindergarten teachers endeavour to find out all they need in order to ensure your child settles easily. A picnic is arranged before the start of term to help familiarise you and your child with other children, parents and general environment.

If your child is going to leave us at the end of kindergarten to start primary school elsewhere, we can liaise with the new setting and invite them to visit your child in kindergarten should this prove helpful. During this visit, the teacher or key person from the school will meet and play with your child and discuss their development and progress.

12. How will [the setting's] resources be used to support children's special educational needs?

All equipment and toys are moveable and can be made accessible, they are age and stage appropriate. We will seek to borrow specific equipment needed for specific needs.

The toys and equipment in our kindergarten are made of natural materials (wood, stone, wool, cotton, silk, sand) to nurture and develop the sensory needs of the young child.

13. Who can I contact for further information about the early years offer in the setting?

Silvia Lauzzana, SENCO, Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley, 01923 262505, e-mail: silviala@rsskl.org

For further information on the local authority's Local Offer of service and provision for children with special educational needs and disability go to www.hertsdirect.org/localoffer