**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy**

This policy is to include children with additional needs within the centrally managed (by Bristol City Council Early Years Service) early education and childcare provision in our Children’s Centres.

**Aims**

The Children’s Centres are committed to providing high quality, broad-ranging and balanced play and learning opportunities to all children through the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. We believe that each child is unique and should be equally valued and that all children should be fully included in all aspects of our setting, whilst being able to follow their own interests.

The Children’s Centres are committed to inclusion and we strive to develop policies and practices that include all children and their families. As outlined in this policy, we ensure that the disability duties of the Equality Act 2010 are implemented in our centres in relation to the children and to the community of adults. We actively promote equal opportunities and strive to eliminate prejudice. We implement the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015) as outlined in this policy.

We believe that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all children and their families whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background.

This policy describes the way in which we meet the needs of children who experience barriers to their learning. These may relate to sensory or physical impairment, learning difficulties or emotional or social development or may relate to factors in their environment – including the learning environment that they experience in the centres.

We recognise that children learn at different rates and that there are many factors affecting achievement, including; stage of development, emotional state, age and maturity. We believe that many children may experience difficulties which affect their learning at some time and we recognise that these may be long or short term.

We work in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure their children are safe, happy and making progress.

**Objectives of the Policy**

* To ensure the inclusion requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are implemented for all children.
* To ensure the SEN and Disability Discrimination Acts, Equalities Act and relevant Codes of Practice and guidance are implemented effectively across the centres.
* To ensure equality of opportunity for and to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against children identified with ‘special educational needs and disabilities’
* To continually monitor the progress of all children to identify needs as they arise and to provide support as early as possible.
* To provide full access to the curriculum through differentiated planning by key persons, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and support staff as appropriate.
* To provide specific input, matched to individual needs, in addition to differentiated provision, for those children identified as having SEND or additional needs.
* To ensure that children with SEND are perceived positively by all members of the Children’s Centres and that inclusive provision is positively valued and accessed by staff and parents/carers.
* To involve parents/carers at every stage in the decision making and planning to meet their child’s additional needs.
* To involve the children themselves in planning and in any decision making that affects them where possible.
* To enable children and families to move on from us well equipped for the transition process to their next setting.

**Partnership with Parents and Carers**

We are committed to working in equal partnership with all parents/carers, valuing the knowledge that they have of their child and acknowledging that every child is unique. Working in partnership ensures that families feel involved in their child’s care and feel comfortable to express their thoughts and feelings. We are aware that in some cases support may be needed to do this: for example, a interpreter may be required. We are always available to answer parents’ questions and we have regular informal contacts with parents.

* Staff and parents/carers work together to support children identified as having additional needs.
* Parents/carers are involved at all stages of the education planning process.
* Regular opportunities are provided by the key person and the SENCO to meet parents/carers whose children are identified as having an additional need.
* In partnership with parents/carers we share their child’s strengths and any areas for development. Achievable shared goals are agreed upon which enable a consistent approach at home and at the centre that meets the child’s needs.
* Ideas and materials for supporting learning at home will be discussed and shared with parents and carers: for example, visual timetables.
* Parents/carers and key person are clearly informed about the action to be taken and the way in which outcomes will be monitored and reviewed.

**Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)**

The role and responsibilities of the Children’s Centres Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators are:

* Ensuring that all practitioners in the centre understand their responsibilities to children with SEND and the settings approach to identifying and meeting SEND.
* Advising and supporting staff in identifying and meeting the special educational needs of children.
* Identifying training needs of staff both to extend their professional development and to ensure ‘tailor made’ training which is need specific is available when appropriate.
* Ensuring liaison with professionals and outside agencies in respect of children with SEND.
* Working in partnership with parents to ensure that relevant information about individual children with special educational needs is collected, recorded and kept up to date.
* Ensuring Support Plans are in place and regularly reviewed.
* To promote the use of a Makaton signing and a multi modal communication environment within the centre.
* Linking the family into the Children’s Centre family support services
* Supporting children within the centre with behaviour support plans, care plans and communication aids.
* Assess their own skills and competencies, identify any gaps and next steps in professional development.

**Settling Arrangements**

Children with special educational needs and disabilities will not be discriminated against. Children’s individual needs and interests will be discussed with their parents / carers and we will adapt to meet those needs. We will be flexible in planning the day during the settling in period so children can get to know us at their own pace.

Specific training will be accessed to meet individual children’s health needs.

**Resources and the Learning Environment**

All children with special educational needs and disabilities have access to the Early Years Foundation Stage differentiated to meet their needs. This is done by:

* The way opportunities are presented and explained to children.
* The amount of support given to children.
* What we expect of the children.
* Always building on success.
* Extending children’s own interests.

Children’s Support Plans are used to support access to learning opportunities where appropriate.

**Resources**

We adapt our resources to suit the needs of children and have story books and resources that portray positive images of disabled children and adults. We will seek specialist advice if necessary regarding resources needed by individual children. Children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance are eligible for funding which can go towards resources specific to their needs at nursery. We will seek the advice of a child’s Physio or Occupational Therapist to access specialist seating or postural equipment if needed by a child.

**Learning environment**

We arrange the furniture, lay out the equipment and use the space in our centres so all children have maximum independence, are comfortable and feel respected.

**Listening to Children’s Views**

We have different ways of enabling young children to make choices and to express their feelings in our centres. We use language at their level of understanding, signing, significant objects, photographs, line drawings, puppets. We involve children’s interests and views when developing Support Plans, having observed them carefully and listened to their parents. We find ways of giving children feedback on how they are doing and build on successes.

**Identification, Assessment and Provision for Children with SEND**

The centre’s system for regularly observing, assessing and recording the progress of all children is used to identify children who are not progressing and who may have additional needs.

The centres gather information from:

* Starting and Spotlights using the Opal Assessment Programme.
* Observations by key person of play, interaction and learning.
* Progress reviews with parents/carers.
* Observations of behavioural, emotional and social development by key person.
* Assessments by a specialist service such as an Educational Psychologist or a Speech and Language Therapist identifying additional needs.
* Another setting which has identified or has provided for additional needs In addition ‘specialist’ assessments and monitoring methods may be undertaken or considered to gather information and plan for teaching in specific areas of learning or difficulty.
* WellComm communication assessment.
* BRISC language and communication development assessment.
* Differentiated Early Years Outcomes (DEYO) assessment tool.
* Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequences and Communication (ABCC) monitoring format.
* An existing support plan or statutory Education Health and Care plan (EHCP).
* Assessments by a specialist service such as Educational Psychology, Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist, Portage Worker, Bristol Autism Team identifying additional needs.

Based on the centre’s observations and assessment data and following a discussion between the key person, SENCO and parent, the child may be recorded as needing additional differentiated SEN support and adapted provision through the graduated approach.

**SEN Support through the Graduated Approach**

Every child is unique with a unique set of needs. These are identified and differentiated learning opportunities are planned for throughout the child’s sessions at the centre. Next steps are identified by the key person to ensure their needs are met and progress made.

The differentiation may involve modifying learning intentions, teaching styles or providing different materials/resources and access strategies. Under these circumstances, a child’s needs will be provided for within the whole group planning frameworks and individual target setting, as well as work time planning. Monitoring Observations of progress will be carried out by the SENCO/ key person and used to inform future planning and recorded in learning diaries. The child’s progress is reviewed on a regular basis and a decision made about whether the provision and strategies in place are supporting progress towards the targets set at a particular level of intervention.

It is important in the early years that there is no delay in making any necessary special educational provision. Early action to address identified needs is critical to future progress and improved outcomes that are essential in helping a child to prepare for adult life.

When a child has been identified as having SEND the centres work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs. In line with requirements of the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015) a graduated approach is adopted with four stages of action:

* Assess.
* Plan.
* Do.
* Review

**Assess**

The Key Person working together with a child’s parents and the SENCO will assess a child’s needs. They should regularly assess the child to make sure the right support is put into place.

Where the child makes little or no progress, specialist assessment from outside professionals may be needed.

Where outside professionals are not already working with the setting, the SENCO will discuss this with the child’s parents to get their agreement for any referrals.

**Plan**

The child’s parents, Key Person and SENCO agree:

* Outcomes they are seeking for the child.
* Interventions and support to be put in place.
* How they expect the interventions to impact upon the child’s progress.
* A review date.

Interventions should:

* Be strategies and support provided by practitioners with the relevant skills
* Include a range of learning opportunities and differentiated activities to meet the outcomes identified for the child.

Depending the level of support that a child needs, interventions should be documented on:

* An Individual Provision Plan.
* A Support Plan.

**Do**

The Key Person will responsible for supporting the child each day and putting in place the agreed interventions. Practitioners record learning and progress through observations detailing significant learning and development for the child’s learning diary and for SEN monitoring purposes.

The setting’s SENCO will:

* Support the key person in assessing the child’s response to the actions.
* Provide advice on how to put the interventions in place effectively.

**Review**

The setting will work with the child’s parents to:

* Review the child’s progress in line with the agreed date.
* Evaluate the impact and quality of support.
* Agree any changes to the outcomes, depending on the child’s progress.

If outside professionals are involved they should also be invited to attend regular reviews.

**Involving Specialists**

Centres use the ‘Assess, Plan, Do, Review’ graduated approach to meet children’s needs as a continuous cycle. If a child isn’t making expected progress despite interventions matched to their needs, the centre will consider involving specialists, if they’re not already involved. This decision will be made in partnership with the child’s parents.

**Application for Additional Funding**

For some children additional adult support will be required; the Support Plan is used to make an application for additional funding to the Early Years SEN Panel, and is made by the SENCO.

Additional funding is allocated to early years settings for individual children based on evidence and information supplied through the Support Plan, an Individual Referral Form, an Individual Provision Plan, and reports and advice from outside professionals. A specific banding or level of funding is agreed by the panel using the Early Years Bristol Universal Descriptors which relate to each specific area and level of SEN need. When a level of funding has been allocated this allows staffing ratios to be enhanced to support the specific needs of individual children.

**Transitions**

When children with additional needs move on to another setting we will arrange a Transfer Review/Meeting and also encourage the setting to visit the child at the centre and to have a handover discussion with the key person. Any relevant documentation is passed on, for example; an Early Years Transfer Pack, The Support Plan and any reports and advice from outside professionals. The child’s learning diary is passed on to the parents/carers.

**Levels of support for transfer for children with additional needs**

The level of support needed at transfer will depend on the specific needs of the child transferring and how additional and different the provision will need to be. This will include:

* A visit and a discussion with the key person from the next setting sharing up- to-date and detailed records.
* A Transfer/Review meeting or a Support Plan Meeting in partnership with child’s parents/carers, key staff at the centre, the SENCO and any other professionals that are involved. The needs of the child are shared, necessary resources can be considered and strategies for smooth transfer are put in place.
* An annual review for a child with an EHCP. This multi-agency process is similar to the Transfer/Review meeting outlined above and involves the sending and receiving setting, parents/carers and any other professionals that have been involved.

**Training**

Our Children’s Centres have a commitment to training in all areas of practice and in particular staff attend training relevant to inclusion and to meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The SENCO’s will attend regular cluster meetings within their areas to update and revise developments in Special Needs Education, Disability and Inclusion.

In house additional needs and Inclusion training is arranged by the SENCO’s and delivered by appropriate professionals.

All staff have access to professional development opportunities and are able to request additional needs or inclusion training where a need is identified.

Staff are encouraged to extend their own professional development and the senior leadership team will ensure ‘tailor made’ training where this is appropriate.

**Review of this Policy**

This policy will be reviewed yearly or when necessary, and in relation to any changes in the law and guidance.

* To review the policy there will be a designated meeting of all the staff team.
* All staff will be made aware of the policy review.
* We will evaluate and identify transitions for children to other settings, and identify the need for SEND training.

Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy may include:

* An observation(s) of how activities are differentiated.
* Logging training relating to inclusion, disability equality and to supporting children with special educational needs.
* Auditing the language and the images within the Children’s Centres to make sure they reflect positively on all children and adults and in particular all disabled children and adults.
* Monitoring adult’s increased confidence in including disabled children/children with special educational needs.
* Monitoring the satisfaction of parents/carers of disabled children/children with SEND.

Date agreed: 13th August 2024 Signed By: Kitty Tomlin

Review Date: September 2025 Role of Signatory: Day Care Manager