

Widford Lodge

PREPARATORY SCHOOL



Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

This policy applies to all pupils at Widford Lodge School including those in the EYFS

Reviewed and Approved by the Proprietor: October 2019
Review date: October 2020

Widford Lodge Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

The term 'Special Educational Needs' can be misleading and can lead to the assumption that children with special educational needs are an easily defined group with common characteristics, and that they will continue to be so throughout their school career. However, the term encompasses a variety of difficulties in the following areas: Cognition and Learning; Communication and Interaction; Physical and Sensory; Social, Emotional and Mental health. Many children may only need additional support for a short period of time whilst for others it may be ongoing.

For the purpose of this policy the term "Special Educational Needs" will be used to refer to:

- children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities requiring Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans; and
- children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities where an ECH plan is not required.

The legal definition of special educational needs is that if a child has:

- a learning difficulty (i.e. a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age) or a disability which makes it difficult to use the educational facilities; and if that learning difficulty calls for:
- special educational provision i.e. provision additional to, or different from, that made generally available for children of the same age.

As defined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 -25 years 2014.

Children must not 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. At Widford Lodge we may have children on roll for whom English is an additional language and their first language remains a crucial dimension for their social and cultural identity. We have a separate English as an Additional Language policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

In an independent school, the boundaries of this definition are not rigid and children with other difficulties may fall under the remit of special educational needs.

Objectives

As a small school, Widford Lodge is well positioned to identify children with special educational needs at the earliest opportunity and we concur with the view that the best way to tackle educational disadvantage is to diagnose early and put support measures in place. We believe that early diagnosis and appropriate intervention does improve children's prospects.

It is our aim therefore that every child at Widford Lodge should have the opportunity to achieve their full potential in a happy, caring environment where their educational, social and emotional needs are met.

We believe that it is crucial for us to understand the needs of individual children and celebrate their positive achievements and successes.

The School aims to create a set of working practices that ensure that pupils with English as an additional language are able, as with any pupil, to achieve their very best in all aspects of school life.

The school endeavours to meet the principles laid out in the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, 0 – 25 years 2014*:

- a child with special educational needs should have their needs met
- the views of the child should be sought and taken into account

- parents have a vital role in supporting their child's education
- children with special educational needs should be offered full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education

In accordance with the school's accessibility plan, Widford Lodge aims to make reasonable adjustments to allow children with physical disabilities to attend accessible parts of the school. In accordance with the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 - 25 Years 2014*, our Local Offer is attached as an Appendix.

The named SENCO in the school is Mrs. Kay Beardsworth (OCR Level 5 Specialist Teacher for Dyslexic/SpLD Learners) and with the Headteacher, Miss Michelle Cole, it is their joint responsibility to supervise the provision of Special Educational Needs and to monitor and evaluate special educational needs provision throughout the school. Mrs. Claire Palmer is the Assistant SENCO, working with the SENCO to monitor learning support provision, particularly in EYFS and the Pre-Prep section of the School.

Admission

The admission of children with special educational needs will be at the discretion of the Headteacher in conference with the SENCO and will take into consideration the needs of the child and the school, and whether the school will be fully able to provide for the child's needs. Any admission therefore must include all relevant information, partnership with any outside agencies already involved and full medical disclosure where appropriate. We welcome all children with physical disabilities, and will do our best to make adjustments to take account of a pupil's needs, although parents should be aware that we are constrained by the nature and layout of the school buildings.

No child, or their parents, will be refused entry on the grounds of race, religion, language, national or social origin, political or other opinion, sexual orientation, birth or other status.

Identification in the EYFS (including the Pre-school and Reception Year)

Early identification should start from the time a child enters early education and consequently at Widford Lodge, special educational needs identification, assessment and provision commences in the EYFS, when deemed appropriate. This includes identifying any additional needs of a child with English as an additional language, so the school can ensure equality of access to the curriculum.

Where EYFS staff are made aware of a potential concern prior to a child joining Widford Lodge, liaison will take place between parents, Health Services, the SENCO and the child's keyworker.

EYFS staff have a responsibility to identify a child with special educational needs by continuously assessing the children through observations. We are aware that early intervention in recognizing and addressing needs is recommended as best practice and is crucial for a child's development. If a difficulty in any developmental area is detected while at Widford Lodge, the following steps would be taken:

- Key worker/teacher to record initial concerns on a green form and to make parents aware early on of nature of observations/concerns (communication with parents should also be noted on the green form);
- Key worker to gather information about child from parents (and previous settings, if applicable);
- Key worker to complete baseline assessments of child;
- With reference to the school's SEN Toolkit in the first instance, keyworker to put strategies in place to support child and to note impact of these actions upon the child (note actions taken and impact on child on green form; keep parents informed throughout);

- Key worker responsible for continuous observations of child, encompassing a wide range of different situations, i.e. large group and small groups;
- Discuss child's needs and progress with Head of EYFS (and SENCO as required);
- Further discussion with parents – details from this meeting should be recorded on green form and signed by the keyworker/teacher and kept confidentially in the SEND file;
- If a child is not showing signs of progress in line with age related expectations, despite a number of targeted strategies being implemented by the Key worker for at least one term, parents would be asked to sign a consent form, allowing our staff to seek advice from our Area SENCO, Nicola Wiseman, and outside agencies in order to provide the best care possible for the child. We value the importance of working with external agencies to support the child's well-being and development. This parental consent form is kept securely in our SEND file.
- The SENCO will seek advice from external agencies as appropriate to support a child's needs and all information/advice received from other professionals will be stored securely in the child's SEN file. Parents will be kept informed of all developments by the child's key worker/Head of EYFS/SENCO (as appropriate).
- If the child requires support **additional to or different from** that provided for other children of a similar age, The SENCO and child's key worker will draw up an appropriate 'Individual Support Plan', detailing SMART targets and planned interventions. **We will provide support via a graduated response – Assess, Plan, Do, Review.** Parents will be involved in this process and will be invited to attend regular meetings to discuss the child's targets, progress and next steps towards desired outcomes. If necessary/appropriate, external agencies may also be invited to have input into these support plans.
- The key worker is responsible for planning and leading daily support, which will be recorded on a weekly tracker sheet. This weekly tracker sheet will be monitored by the SENCO and seen by the parents at the end of each week.
- Staff will endeavor to attend any available SEN courses relevant to a child's specific needs.
- The Support Plan will be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary, depending upon a child's needs.
- Some children may only need a Support Plan and additional intervention for a short time in order to help them to catch up with their peers. Other children may require more long-term, ongoing support. Parents will be kept informed of all developments.
- **The child's SEN file will be passed on to the child's next key worker/teacher or next setting, as appropriate.**

During their first year in Reception, children are assessed using Early Learning Goals, which is ongoing throughout the year. This in itself will not establish whether individual pupils have special educational needs but will be crucial in helping to show where a child has developmental concerns which require attention. It should show those pupils who need a targeted teaching strategy or further classroom-based assessment. Children are monitored closely by their class teachers/key workers and appropriate action will be implemented in the classroom. Where a child does not meet Early Learning Goal expectations by the end of Reception year, the class teacher should provide relevant information to the next teacher in order to continue targeted support in these areas of development.

Identification throughout the School

Children's learning is assessed informally and formally, via teacher's observations of a child's responses, including using screening tests (if deemed useful/necessary), throughout Forms 1 and 2, and the information gained from these assessments is included within any identification of special educational needs. Throughout the school, the children take academic assessment tests and these are also used to identify children who may require additional support.

It is ultimately the role of the class teacher to identify any child they believe may require additional support and to implement teaching strategies which will remove barriers to learning. To support our staff in this important area of education, SEND is a priority for ongoing staff development at Widford Lodge – the SENCO provides weekly updates in staff meetings about particular children and we value regular training/ updates relating to specific learning difficulties throughout the academic year.

Throughout the school (Pre-school → Year 6), the key worker or class teacher is responsible for logging any concerns on a green referral form, which is stored centrally and electronically in a secure area. The class teacher should note details of concerns, make parents aware of nature of concerns, use SEN Toolkit in the first instance to implement support strategies and review impact of strategies on the child. All of this information should be recorded on the green form and parents should be kept updated. Parents should be well aware of any concerns relating to their child and the class teacher will have implemented appropriate strategies in the first instance. If the child does not make expected progress in line with age related expectations and ability after at least one term of teacher interventions/support, the teacher should then seek further advice from the SENCO.

Assess, Plan, Do, Review

At Widford Lodge, we aim to follow the SEN cycle of provision, as recommended in the 2014 Code of Practice. The process for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs follows the cycle outlined in the Code of Practice 2014: Assess – Plan – Do – Review. It should be noted that the Review stage is an ongoing process which overlaps with the other stages. The way in which each step of the cycle is implemented at Widford Lodge is outlined below:

Assessment

Once the child has been referred to the SENCO (and parental permission has been obtained where it is felt necessary), appropriate assessments will be undertaken and the results of these will determine what further action, if any, needs to be taken. A variety of assessments are used, depending on the needs of the child. Assessments that the SENCO may typically use to assess a child's needs may include:-

- Lucid COPS dyslexia screener (for 4-8 year olds)
- Lucid LASS dyslexia screener (for 8-11 year olds)
- Lucid RECALL working memory and processing speed screener
- Dyslexia Matters assessment materials – Phonics checklists, diagnostic spelling tests, etc.
- Crossbow Visual Stress Assessment Pack
- DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting)
- CTOPP
- Aston Index for literacy difficulties
- Speak Clearly resources to assess for common speech problems
- Dyscalculia Assessment
- NHS ticksheets to record observations about potential traits of other conditions, such as ADHD, Autism, Dyspraxia, Sensory Processing Disorder, etc.
- Other assessments as necessary

Parents are then invited to discuss the findings of these assessments at a meeting with the SENCO and class teacher, where next steps can be discussed and agreed.

Occasionally, for children who display needs beyond the SENCO's expertise, it may be considered that the child would benefit from specialist assessment by an external agency, in which case the SENCO will advise parents about referral to GP/Educational Psychologist/Occupational Therapist/Speech and Language Therapist/Dyslexia assessor etc., as appropriate.

Planning (and Reviewing)

Following identification of a child with SEN, the class teacher and SENCo plan appropriate provision according to the child's needs. Individual Support Plans are used to track a child's learning support. This is a working document used to set specific targets, plan interventions, record progress and identify further steps of action required (if necessary).

These Support Plans are reviewed regularly and parents are involved in this process. Parents are invited to meet with the class teacher and the SENCo once per term to discuss progress and agree next steps to address ongoing needs (if applicable).

Where appropriate, we use information from specialist reports written by external professionals such as Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists to inform our planning of SEND provision for individual children in school.

We work closely with parents to keep them informed of their child's SEND needs, provision and progress.

Children with SEND are regularly discussed in staff meetings to monitor their provision and progress.

Provision and Monitoring (Do and Review)

The school operates in accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014, with certain adjustments to reflect the circumstances of Widford Lodge. We provide support for children with SEND via three graduated levels of provision:

Wave 1: We aim to provide an inclusive learning environment, which offers Quality First Teaching for all, differentiating learning tasks appropriately for all children within normal timetabled lessons. Within the classroom context there will be differentiation in all work set. Staff are regularly reminded of their responsibility to remove barriers to learning and that every teacher is a teacher of SEND. Initial provision of special educational needs teaching is provided by the class teacher; although in certain circumstances, small group work and individual work may be carried out by a Learning Support Assistant, under the guidance of the class teacher or the SENCO. The SENCO is timetabled to support children with spelling difficulties via small group work for 30 minutes per week in each class in the Prep School, offering a differentiated spelling scheme in line with the children's needs. This is to consolidate the children's understanding of common spelling patterns/rules and there is also a focus on mastering High Frequency Words.

Wave 2: Additional small group/1:1 interventions, with specific targets, which enable a child to work at age-related expectations. This level of support is for children who require "keep up" or "catch up" sessions, in addition to Wave 1 provision. Examples of schemes that we use regularly at Widford Lodge and find effective with individual pupils are Toe by Toe, Hornet Literacy Primer/Word Wasp and Apples and Pears to aid literacy; Plus 1 and Power of 2 to aid numeracy, although we may use other schemes occasionally as required. Some parents pay for weekly online maths tuition with Third Space Learning, with lessons selected by Widford maths teachers. Occasionally children may be invited to before school small intervention groups for maths which enable us to target specific skills for certain groups of children. Some children may only need Wave 2 intervention for a short period of time and may return to Wave 1 monitoring, whilst for other children this level of support may be ongoing. If a child does not make expected progress, following a period of Wave 2 intervention, progress to Wave 3 should be considered.

Wave 3: Highly personalized 1:1 intervention for more severe/ongoing needs (sometimes in partnership with outside agencies/specialists), for children who have not made expected levels of progress following Wave 1 and Wave 2 support. The provision at this level will be specifically tailored to the child's needs. It may involve regular 1:1/small group sessions with a Learning Support Assistant, the SENCo, and/or an external agency in order to meet their specific needs. All pupils requiring this level of support have an Individual Support Plan which is reviewed termly and a weekly

tracker sheet to monitor their learning support provision. Their response to support and their progress is very carefully monitored by the SENCo at this stage. Children may only need Wave 3 intervention for a short period of time, whilst for other children this level of support may be ongoing. If a child fails to make adequate progress following a period of Wave 3 interventions, it may be necessary to consider requesting an EHC Assessment of a child's needs. The need to refer a child for an EHC assessment is very rare at Widford Lodge, as our early interventions and graduated response usually ensure adequate provision for the great majority of our children.

It may be that the additional support and services required by a child are beyond the timetabled provision available, in which case parents may be charged an additional fee. Such costs and support would be discussed with the parents.

Individual Support Plans

Individual Support Plans are drawn up for children receiving support at Wave 2 and Wave 3. This plan includes a list of key staff supporting the child's learning, a proposed timetable of support and interventions to be carried out, an individual target sheet which is an ongoing working document and a review page to record progress and plan next steps. These plans are reviewed termly in a meeting by the class teacher, the SENCo and the child's parents.

Learning Support Register

All children from the Pre-School through to Year 6 who require support **additional to** and/or **different from** the provision of their peers, are included on a register which is updated termly by the SENCo. The register clearly indicates the child's area of need, level of support required, and any brief additional information. All teaching staff and support staff will have access to this each term and are expected to take note of the details to inform their planning.

The SENCo holds an additional colour-coded list for each class in the school, detailing the children requiring support/monitoring at different waves. This is a working document that is reviewed and updated regularly by the SENCO. All teaching and support staff have access to this list via a secure shared area.

A file is maintained for each child who has required learning support during their time at the school - containing their green form recording the teacher's log of concerns/actions/impact/contact with parents, any assessments/observations carried out by the SENCO as required, details of targeted interventions, copies of Individual Support Plans and other relevant information, eg. reports from specialists. All documents are stored securely. The SENCo seeks parental permission to pass on relevant SEN information and documentation to external agencies and to transfer information to the child's new setting, when they leave Widford Lodge School.

EAL

Children with English as an additional language will have their provision, support and progress monitored to ensure that they achieve appropriate levels of achievement in all curriculum areas. Parents will be a vital link and the school will keep them informed and ensure that they have appropriate information in an accessible form. Please refer to our separate EAL Policy for additional information.

Curriculum

Children with special educational needs require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure that children with special educational needs have

full access to the curriculum but to be sensitive to the areas in which the child may experience difficulty i.e. recording work, completing work in a set time, copying from the board, reading and understanding work etc. However, most of the problems can be overcome and work can be presented in a way appropriate to the child's needs via strategies suggested in our SEN Toolkit. The SENCO has compiled this toolkit as a first reference point for teaching and learning support staff. The SENCO will give additional advice, where appropriate, to class teachers on how a child's special educational needs may best be met. The use of computers and laptops in the classroom may be beneficial to some children. All children with special educational needs at Widford Lodge are fully integrated into the school. Where necessary, children with special educational needs may require extra time or assistance with reading text/questions during school exams.

Where appropriate, staff will undertake professional development to support general or specific learning needs, including where further provision is required for pupils with English as an additional language.

This policy document is subject to an annual review by the Headteacher and the SENCO. The criteria for evaluating the success of the Special Educational Needs and Disability policy will include the progress children are making, identification of special educational needs and whether the policy adequately reflects the needs of pupils at Widford Lodge. Through constant review and monitoring of this policy, our objective is to identify a child's special educational needs at the earliest opportunity and to provide successfully for those needs.

Disabilities and Medical Conditions

Widford Lodge aims to ensure that, within the constraints of the buildings and facilities, children with disabilities and medical conditions have full access to the curriculum, but with any necessary reasonable adjustments made. The school will aim to identify children with disabilities or relevant medical conditions as soon as possible upon entry and will liaise with the parents to obtain copies of medical documentation and to document the nature of restrictions or adjustments necessary to the usual curriculum. This information will be communicated to all relevant staff and the child's needs and progress will be reviewed at least annually at a meeting with the parents.

Complaints

We encourage parents to work closely with their child's teacher and the SENCO. Through establishing good lines of communication and keeping parents well informed, we hope to defer any cause for complaints. Parents are encouraged to express their concerns firstly to their child's teacher and then to the SENCO or Headteacher if felt necessary.

Complaints will be dealt with confidentially and with discretion and in accordance with the school's complaints procedure.

Outside Agencies

The school recognises the important contribution that external support services make in assisting identification, assessment and provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

When it is considered necessary, colleagues from the following support services will be involved:

- Area EYFS SENCO, Nicola Wiseman
- Dyslexia specialists
- Educational Psychologists
- Speech Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Behavioural Support Services and local family support services
- Other medical professionals as required (eg GPs, opticians, hearing specialists)

Appendix - Widford Lodge Local Offer

The purpose of the Widford Lodge Local Offer is to improve choice for families by providing information about how we support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

We aim to provide all children at Widford Lodge with the opportunity to achieve their full potential in a happy, caring environment where their educational, social and emotional needs are met. We will do our best to make adjustments to take account of a pupil's needs, although parents should be aware that we are constrained by the nature and layout of the school buildings.

No child or their parents will be refused entry on the grounds of race, religion, language, national or social origin, political or other opinion, sexual orientation, birth or other status.

- We feel that early identification of SEND is crucial to support the child and ensure that their needs are met
- Parents are a very important part of the process and we aim to maintain regular and open channels of communication
- Where appropriate, we seek advice and support from outside agencies, including the Essex County Council area SENDCO
- To ensure all staff are aware of the child's needs, we draw up Individual Support Plans, which are communicated to staff and parents and are used daily. The child's key worker or class teacher uses a weekly tracker sheet to record a child's learning support provision, which is monitored weekly by the SENCO/Assistant SENCO.
- We follow the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 Years 2014 and use the cycle recommended within that document of Assess – Plan – Do – Review

All staff are committed to supporting children with SEND. There are two suitably trained SEND co-ordinators whose responsibility it is to supervise and monitor the provision: Mrs Kim Perugini in the Early Years department and Mrs Kay Beardsworth in the main school.

Further details about our SEND provision are outlined in our SEND Policy. There are also a number of other policies that may be useful to parents: these are available on our website or from the School Office.