

Widford Lodge
PREPARATORY SCHOOL



3b
**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: November 2023
Review Date: November 2024

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 EHC 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 special educational needs 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 Claire Palmer who has achieved the National Award for SEN Coordination NASENCO 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. They are assisted by Mrs Dawn Scorrar, the Special Educational Needs Learning Enhancement Assistant.

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 or any other protected characteristic.

Identification in the EYFS

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, where 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.

EYFS staff help to identify a child with special educational needs by continuously assessing the children through observations. 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. If a difficulty in any developmental area is detected while at Widford Lodge the following steps would be taken:

- One to one supervision staff meeting to discuss child's needs
- Discussion between keyworker/teachers and parents. The outcome of this meeting would be recorded on cpoms
- Information gathered from previous settings
- Key person completes baseline assessments
- Continuous observations encompassing a wide range of different situations, i.e. large group and small groups
- Further discussion with parents – notes from this meeting would again be recorded and signed by the keyworker/teacher or senior member of staff and kept in the SEND file
- Parents would be asked to sign a consent form, allowing the staff to talk to our SENCO and seek advice from outside agencies in order to provide the best care possible for the child. This form is kept in our SEND file
- The SENCO and child's key worker will draw up an appropriate 'Individual Play Plan' or 'Learning Enhancement Plan' ("LEP")

- The staff and SENCO will carry out the steps on these plans. Targets are continually reviewed, with a more formal review at the end of each term. When a LEP is in place we will follow a graduated response
- Depending on the outcome of said plans advice would be sought and put into practice within the setting. Parents would be kept up to date with all developments. Notes on all discussions will be kept in the SEN file and recorded on CPOMS
- We will work with outside professionals to meet child specific needs
- Staff will attend any relevant available SEN courses.

During their first year in Reception, children are assessed using the Foundation Stage Profile, 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.

Identification throughout the School

Children's learning is assessed informally and formally, 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 as an indication for special needs assessment.

It is ultimately the role of the class teacher to identify any child they believe may have special educational needs. Any concerns or observations regarding possible special educational needs are recorded on CPOMS. Discussions will be held with the SENCO who will follow up and action as required.

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, alongside observations of the child and how they learn, will determine what further action, if any, needs to be taken. A variety of assessments can be used, depending on the needs of the child.

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/Dyslexic assessor etc, as appropriate.

Following the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle, it should be noted that children will be regularly assessed against baseline data, enabling us to track and monitor progress.

Planning (and Reviewing)

Following identification of a child with SEND, the class teacher and SENCo plan appropriate provision according to the child's needs. In the majority of cases a Learning Enhancement Plan (LEP) will be

written, which lists the specific targets that the child is working towards. This will detail the provision both in class and through additional interventions as appropriate. Teachers are made aware of each child's targets and the form teachers have a copy of the plan that they can annotate and adjust as the children progress. The LEPs are updated termly.

The SENCo and SEN LSA keep detailed records of the interventions that the children receive. Where appropriate, progress is monitored through the use of short assessments, the results of which help to plan further support.

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, scaffolding learning tasks appropriately for all children within normal timetabled lessons. 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 and the SENCO. Within the classroom context there will be scaffolding 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.

Wave 2: Includes 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. The SEN Learning Enhancement Assistant 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. Examples of schemes that we use regularly at Widford Lodge and find effective with individual pupils are Toe by Toe and Apples and Pears to aid literacy and Plus 1 and Power of 2 to aid numeracy, although we may use other schemes occasionally as required. We also run 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, a LEP and 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 a Learning Enhancement Plan which is reviewed termly. 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 an application for a EHCP to provide for the child's needs. The need to make EHCP applications 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.

Learning Enhancement Plans (LEPs)

LEPs are drawn up in conjunction with comments from class teachers, parents and pupils and are reviewed termly and evaluated by staff and parents. At this time progress towards specific targets will be reviewed and new targets will be set. These reviews will include input from the class teacher, the SENCO and other learning support teachers, any outside agencies involved and the Headteacher where necessary. Form teachers have copies of the LEPs for children in their class and update these with notes and revised targets as appropriate.

SEND Register

All children with special educational needs are included on a register which is updated termly by the SENCO. The register will show clearly the child's area of need, level of support required (and whether they have a LEP), and any brief additional information. All teaching staff will be given a copy of this each term and are expected to take note of the details to inform their planning.

The SENCO holds separate lists of those children who are being monitored at different levels and we keep registers to track the impact of various interventions, such as Toe by Toe, booster groups etc.

A file is maintained for each child containing assessments, details of targeted interventions, LEPs and other relevant information, eg reports from specialists.

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.

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 difficulties can be overcome and work can be presented in a way appropriate to the child's needs through the use of scaffolded activities. The SENCO will give advice, where appropriate, to class teachers on how a child's additional 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:

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

As an independent school, Widford Lodge cannot access some local authority funded services listed above and parents will be required to pay for assessments and follow up.

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 or any other protected characteristic.

- 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 inclusion partner
- To ensure all staff are aware of the child's needs, we draw up Learning Enhancement Plans, which are communicated to staff and parents and are used daily
- 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. The SENCO Claire Palmer is responsible for monitoring our provision.

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.