

Scotswood Village Nursery

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Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Policy

Setting: Scotswood Village Nursery

SENDCo: Caroline Duncan

Policy effective from: 1 September 2026

Review date: 31 August 2027

Policy owner: Nursery Management / SENDCo

1. Our Commitment

At Scotswood Village Nursery, every child is valued as a unique individual.

We are committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing environment in which all children are given the opportunity to participate, learn, develop and flourish.

We recognise that children develop at different rates and in different ways. Some children may need additional support for a short period of time, while others may have longer-term or more complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

We believe that early identification, high-quality inclusive practice, strong partnerships with parents and carers and effective working with other professionals can make a significant difference to children's development and future outcomes.

Children do not need to have a formal diagnosis before we put appropriate support in place.

Our approach is always centred around the individual child — their strengths, interests, needs, communication and what helps them to thrive.

2. Our Intent

At Scotswood Village Nursery, we aim to:

- ensure that every child feels safe, valued, respected and included;
- provide an ambitious, broad and balanced Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum which is accessible to all children;
- identify children's additional needs as early as possible;
- respond promptly when a child may require additional or different support;

- remove or reduce barriers to children's participation, learning and development;
- have high expectations for all children, including children with SEND;
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled children;
- work closely and openly with parents and carers;
- listen to and value children's views, communication and preferences;
- use the graduated approach of **Assess, Plan, Do and Review** when providing SEND support;
- work collaboratively with health, education, social care and other professionals where appropriate;
- support children's independence, confidence, communication, wellbeing and life skills;
- support children and families through transitions, including the transition to school or another specialist or early-years setting; and
- continually review the effectiveness of the support we provide.

Our aim is not simply for children to "fit in" with our provision. We adapt our environment, curriculum, routines and approaches wherever reasonably possible so that children can participate meaningfully in nursery life.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy has regard to current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0–25 years;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, effective September 2026;
- Childcare Act 2006;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children; and
- relevant local authority SEND and early-years guidance.

This policy should be read alongside our Equality and Inclusion, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Admissions, Behaviour, Supporting Children with Medical Needs and other relevant nursery policies.

4. What Do We Mean by SEND?

A child has special educational needs where they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

For children under compulsory school age, this includes a child who is likely to fall within the statutory definition of special educational needs when they reach compulsory school age, or would do so if special educational provision were not made for them.

Special educational provision is provision that is additional to or different from that normally available to children of the same age.

A disability does not automatically mean that a child has SEND. However, a child may have both a disability and special educational needs.

We recognise four broad areas of need:

- **Communication and interaction**
- **Cognition and learning**
- **Social, emotional and mental health**
- **Sensory and/or physical needs**

These areas help us to understand and plan support. We recognise, however, that every child is different and children's needs do not always fit neatly into one category.

A child may have needs across more than one area and their needs may change over time.

5. Inclusion

Inclusion is at the heart of our nursery.

All practitioners share responsibility for creating an environment in which children with different abilities, backgrounds, experiences and needs can participate and belong.

We aim to identify and remove barriers rather than focusing solely on a child's difficulties.

This may include adapting:

- activities and learning opportunities;
- the nursery environment;
- communication methods;
- resources and equipment;
- routines and transitions;
- expectations and instructions;
- group sizes;
- adult support;
- sensory experiences; and

- the way in which children demonstrate their learning and understanding.

Where appropriate, individual or small-group support may also be provided.

Additional support should complement children's participation in everyday nursery life rather than unnecessarily separating them from their peers.

6. The Role of the SENDCo

The Nursery SENDCo is:

Caroline Duncan

The SENDCo is a qualified teacher and a member of the Nursery Management Team.

The SENDCo is responsible for coordinating the nursery's approach to supporting children with SEND.

The SENDCo will:

- oversee the day-to-day implementation of this policy;
- support the early identification of children who may have SEND;
- coordinate SEND provision;
- advise practitioners on inclusive practice and the graduated approach;
- support practitioners to plan appropriate strategies, interventions and reasonable adjustments;
- work closely with children's key persons;
- liaise with and support parents and carers;
- maintain appropriate SEND records;
- monitor children's progress and the effectiveness of provision;
- support applications for appropriate additional funding where required;
- liaise with the Local Authority and relevant support services;
- work with health, education and social care professionals where appropriate;
- support referrals to specialist services, with appropriate parental involvement and consent;
- support requests for Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments where appropriate;
- ensure relevant professional advice is reflected in children's support;
- coordinate SEND reviews where appropriate;
- support staff training and professional development;
- work with the Management Team to ensure the nursery meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010; and

- liaise with children's future schools or settings to support effective transitions.

SEND is not solely the responsibility of the SENDCo. **Every practitioner is responsible for supporting the children in their care.**

7. Identifying Additional Needs

We recognise the importance of identifying additional needs as early as possible.

Practitioners get to know children through:

- observation;
- play and everyday interaction;
- conversations with parents and carers;
- children's communication and behaviour;
- assessment of learning and development;
- children's progress over time;
- information provided when children join the nursery;
- the EYFS progress check at age two, where applicable; and
- information or assessments from other professionals where appropriate.

We take concerns raised by parents and carers seriously.

Similarly, where nursery practitioners have concerns about a child's development, progress or wellbeing, we will discuss these sensitively with parents/carers.

We will not delay appropriate support simply because a child does not have a diagnosis.

Where concerns remain despite appropriate inclusive practice, the child's key person and SENDCo will consider whether additional SEND support is required.

8. Factors That Are Not SEND in Themselves

There are many reasons why a child may need additional support or may not be making expected progress.

The following do not, by themselves, mean that a child has SEND:

- English as an additional language (EAL);
- attendance;
- family circumstances;
- being a looked-after or previously looked-after child;
- health or medical needs;

- disadvantage;
- changes or difficulties within family life; or
- a child being new to the setting.

We will always consider the whole child and their individual circumstances.

Where a child speaks more than one language, we will take particular care to distinguish between difficulties arising from learning English as an additional language and a possible special educational need.

9. The Graduated Approach – Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Where a child requires SEND support, Scotswood Village Nursery follows the graduated approach:

Assess → Plan → Do → Review

This is an ongoing cycle. As we learn more about the child and what works well for them, support is refined and adapted.

Assess

The child's key person/practitioner and SENDCo will build a clear picture of the child's strengths and needs.

Assessment may draw upon:

- observations;
- developmental information;
- the child's interests and strengths;
- progress and previous assessments;
- information from parents/carers;
- the child's views and communication;
- strategies already tried;
- relevant health or developmental information; and
- advice or assessment from external professionals where appropriate.

Parents and carers are important partners in this process.

Assessment is not about attaching a label to a child. Its purpose is to understand the child and identify how we can best support them.

Plan

The SENDCo, key person/practitioner and parents/carers will agree appropriate outcomes and the support required to work towards them.

This may be recorded within an individual SEND support plan or other appropriate nursery documentation.

The plan may identify:

- the child's strengths and interests;
- areas in which support is required;
- agreed outcomes or targets;
- strategies and reasonable adjustments;
- additional resources or equipment;
- interventions or additional adult support;
- who is responsible for providing support;
- how progress will be monitored; and
- a date for review.

The child's views and preferences will be included in ways appropriate to their age, development and communication.

Do

The child's key person and practitioners working with the child are responsible for implementing the agreed support as part of everyday nursery practice.

The SENDCo will support and advise practitioners and monitor how the provision is being implemented.

Strategies should, wherever possible, be embedded within the child's normal play, routines and learning experiences so that skills can be developed naturally and meaningfully.

Review

We will review:

- the child's progress towards agreed outcomes;
- the effectiveness of strategies and interventions;
- what has worked well;
- what has not worked;
- the views of parents/carers;
- the child's views and responses;

- advice from other professionals where relevant; and
- whether provision needs to continue, change or increase.

Parents/carers will be fully involved in reviews.

Formal SEND support plans will normally be reviewed at least termly, although we will review provision sooner where a child's needs change or this is necessary.

Following a review, support may be continued, adapted, increased or, where appropriate, reduced or concluded.

10. Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers know their children extremely well and are essential partners in supporting children's development.

We aim to develop positive, honest and respectful relationships with families.

Parents/carers will:

- be listened to when they raise concerns;
- be informed when the nursery identifies concerns about their child's development;
- be involved in assessing their child's needs;
- contribute to plans and agreed outcomes;
- receive information about the support being provided;
- be involved in reviews;
- be informed before referrals to external services are made, where consent is required; and
- be supported to understand relevant SEND processes.

We will make reasonable efforts to ensure information and meetings are accessible.

This may include providing information in an alternative format or arranging interpretation or translation support where appropriate.

11. The Voice of the Child

Children are at the centre of decisions about their support.

We recognise that very young children may not always be able to express their views verbally.

Practitioners therefore listen to children's voices in many different ways, including through:

- words and conversations;
- play;
- choices;

- gestures;
- facial expressions;
- behaviour;
- body language;
- communication systems;
- interests;
- relationships; and
- observing what makes a child comfortable, engaged, happy or distressed.

For children who are non-speaking or communicate differently, we will work with families and professionals to understand the child's preferred methods of communication.

The child's communication and responses will inform decisions about their support.

12. Working with Other Professionals

Where a child requires additional expertise, we may work with relevant professionals and services.

Depending upon the child's needs, these could include:

- health visitors;
- speech and language therapists;
- educational psychologists;
- occupational therapists;
- physiotherapists;
- specialist teachers;
- paediatric services;
- Early Years SEND/Inclusion services;
- social care professionals; and
- other appropriate health, education or family-support services.

We value multi-agency working and will share relevant information appropriately to support the child.

Parents/carers will normally be involved in decisions about referrals and information sharing, except where safeguarding duties or another legal basis requires information to be shared without consent.

13. Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

Most children's needs can be supported effectively within the nursery through inclusive practice, reasonable adjustments and the graduated approach.

Where a child has significant and/or complex needs and does not make sufficient progress despite appropriate support, consideration may be given to requesting an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment** from the Local Authority.

The SENDCo will work closely with parents/carers and other professionals throughout this process.

Where a child already has an EHC Plan, the nursery will work with the family, Local Authority and relevant professionals to deliver the provision applicable to the nursery and support progress towards the child's agreed outcomes.

14. Additional Funding

The Nursery Management Team and SENDCo are responsible for ensuring that available resources are used appropriately to support children with SEND.

Where eligible and appropriate, the nursery may apply for additional funding available through Newcastle City Council, including the **Early Years Inclusion Fund**.

Where applicable, the nursery may also receive **Disability Access Fund (DAF)** funding for eligible children.

Any additional funding will be used to support inclusion and improve access to the provision in accordance with the relevant funding conditions.

Funding may support, for example:

- additional staffing;
- enhanced staff ratios;
- specialist or adapted resources;
- equipment;
- environmental adaptations; or
- other provision necessary to meet identified needs.

Access to appropriate SEND support will not be dependent upon a family being able to pay for additional provision.

15. Equality, Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Scotswood Village Nursery complies with its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

We will not discriminate unlawfully against a child because of disability or another protected characteristic.

We make reasonable adjustments to help disabled children access and participate in nursery provision.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered individually and may include changes to:

- the physical environment;
- resources and equipment;
- routines;
- communication;
- activities;
- teaching and interaction strategies; and
- the way support is organised.

We aim to anticipate barriers wherever reasonably possible rather than waiting for a child to experience disadvantage.

Our commitment to equality extends to children, families, staff and visitors.

We value and respect different cultures, languages, family structures, religions and beliefs.

Resources, books, activities and everyday conversations should positively reflect the diversity of children, families and the wider community.

16. English as an Additional Language (EAL)

We recognise multilingualism as a strength.

A child learning English as an additional language does not have SEND simply because they are developing their English.

We will support children to develop English while respecting and valuing their home language and cultural identity.

Where there are concerns about a child's development, we will consider their abilities across their languages and seek information from parents/carers before deciding whether SEND assessment or support may be appropriate.

17. Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children

We recognise that some looked-after and previously looked-after children may also have SEND.

Where this is the case, the SENDCo will work with the appropriate designated member of staff, parents/carers, social care professionals and other relevant professionals to ensure that support is coordinated effectively.

Where applicable, SEND support and Personal Education Plan (PEP) arrangements will complement one another and avoid unnecessary duplication for the child and family.

Please also refer to the Nursery's policy relating to looked-after children.

18. Supporting Transitions

We recognise that transitions can be particularly significant for children with SEND.

Transitions will therefore be planned carefully and individually.

This may include transitions:

- into Scotswood Village Nursery;
- between rooms, groups or key persons;
- to another early-years provision;
- to a specialist setting; or
- from nursery into school.

With appropriate parental involvement, we may:

- arrange additional visits;
- meet with the receiving setting;
- invite receiving staff to visit the child at nursery;
- share relevant support plans and professional advice;
- provide information about successful strategies, communication and routines;
- use photographs, visual supports or transition books;
- involve relevant professionals; and
- develop an individual transition plan.

Our aim is for the next setting to understand the child and the support that helps them **before** the child arrives wherever possible.

19. Staff Knowledge and Professional Development

All staff have a responsibility for inclusion.

The SENDCo and Management Team will identify staff development needs and provide or arrange appropriate training.

This may include training relating to:

- identifying and supporting SEND;
- communication and language;
- autism and social communication;
- sensory needs;
- physical disabilities;
- emotional development;
- inclusive practice;
- specific medical or developmental conditions;
- communication systems;
- behaviour as communication; and
- specialist strategies recommended for individual children.

Where specialist knowledge is required to meet an individual child's needs, we will seek appropriate advice and training wherever possible.

20. Positive and Inclusive Approaches to Behaviour

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication.

Where a child displays distressed, dysregulated or challenging behaviour, we will seek to understand what the child may be communicating and whether there are unmet communication, developmental, sensory, emotional or physical needs.

Children will not be disadvantaged because behaviours are related to SEND or disability.

We will consider appropriate reasonable adjustments and individual strategies while maintaining the safety and wellbeing of the child and others.

Please also refer to the Nursery's Behaviour Policy.

21. Monitoring the Impact of Our SEND Provision

We continually monitor the effectiveness of our SEND and inclusion practice.

This may include:

- observations of children;
- monitoring children's progress and development;

- reviewing individual outcomes;
- reviewing SEND support plans;
- discussions with parents/carers;
- children's views and responses;
- feedback from professionals;
- reviewing the impact of interventions;
- monitoring children's participation and wellbeing;
- reviewing the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments;
- staff supervision and professional development; and
- Management Team and SENDCo review of SEND provision.

Success is not measured only through developmental assessment.

For some children, significant progress may include increased confidence, communication, independence, emotional regulation, engagement, relationships, participation or wellbeing.

We celebrate progress in all its forms.

22. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Information relating to a child's SEND will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

Records will be:

- accurate;
- factual;
- relevant;
- stored securely;
- accessible only to appropriate people; and
- shared in accordance with data protection, safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.

Relevant information will be shared with staff who need it in order to provide safe and effective support for the child.

When a child transfers to another setting or school, relevant SEND information will be transferred securely in accordance with appropriate procedures and with parents/carers kept informed.

23. Safeguarding Children with SEND

Children with SEND may experience additional barriers to recognising or communicating that something is wrong.

All staff must remain alert to safeguarding concerns and must never assume that changes in behaviour, communication or presentation are simply a consequence of a child's SEND or disability.

Any safeguarding concern will be managed in accordance with the Nursery's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.

Safeguarding takes priority over normal SEND information-sharing and consent arrangements where a child may be at risk of harm.

24. Concerns or Complaints

We aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers and encourage families to speak to us as soon as possible if they have a concern about their child's SEND provision.

In the first instance, parents/carers are encouraged to speak with their child's key person or the SENDCo, **Caroline Duncan**.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, parents/carers may use the Nursery's Complaints Procedure.

Information about local SEND services, advice and support is also available through the **Newcastle SEND Local Offer**.

25. Review of This Policy

The SENDCo and Nursery Management Team will review this policy annually, or sooner where:

- legislation or statutory guidance changes;
- local procedures change;
- the needs of the setting change; or
- learning from practice indicates that the policy should be amended.

The views and experiences of children, parents/carers, staff and relevant professionals will be considered as part of our ongoing development of inclusive practice.

Our SEND and Inclusion Commitment

At Scotswood Village Nursery, inclusion is not an additional activity — **it is part of everything we do**.

We want every child to:

belong, participate, communicate, learn, develop and thrive.

We recognise children's strengths as well as their needs and work in partnership with families to provide the support each individual child requires.

This policy was adopted by: Scotswood Village Nursery

Effective from: 1 September 2026

Review date: 31 August 2027

SENDCo: Caroline Duncan

Signed on behalf of provider: _____

Name: Jen Rodden / Caroline Duncan

Role: Manager / Director / Teacher

Date: _____