



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Policy framework

This policy has been developed with regard to the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers applicable from 1 September 2026, and relevant safeguarding guidance.

Cherish Childcare has regard to the statutory SEND Code of Practice when identifying, assessing and making provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Definition of SEND

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

For young children, we consider whether a child is making less than expected progress, has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than others of a similar age, or has a disability that prevents or hinders their use of facilities or opportunities generally available to other children.

Statement of intent

Cherish Childcare is committed to the inclusion of all children. We aim to ensure that every child is welcomed, valued and supported to participate meaningfully in nursery life alongside their peers.

We recognise that each child's strengths, needs and circumstances are individual. We do not define children by a diagnosis or label. We work in partnership with parents and carers, make reasonable adjustments and seek additional advice or support where needed so that children can make progress and experience success.

Our commitments

- have high aspirations for all children and support each child to achieve the best possible outcomes;
- identify emerging needs as early as possible through observation, assessment, professional curiosity and partnership with families;
- ensure all staff understand that SEND provision is a whole-setting responsibility;
- make reasonable adjustments to routines, communication, resources, learning experiences and the physical environment where needed;

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- support children to participate in all aspects of the nursery day according to their individual strengths, needs and abilities
- work closely with parents and carers at every stage of identification, planning, support and review;
- take account of the child's views, communication and lived experience in a way appropriate to their age and development;
- seek specialist advice, assessment, equipment or training where this is required;
- support smooth transitions between home, nursery, other settings and school;
- challenge discriminatory attitudes and promote positive representations of disability and difference; and
- monitor the effectiveness of provision and adjust support where progress is not as expected.

Early identification and assessment

Practitioners observe children as part of everyday practice and use their knowledge of child development, the child's individual starting points and information from parents/carers to identify strengths and any emerging areas of need.

Cherish Childcare completes the statutory Progress Check at Age Two in accordance with the EYFS. Where a child remains with us at the relevant stage, we will also contribute to statutory assessment and transition information as required.

Where progress is less than expected, the key person and SENCO will consider the child's development holistically and explore whether additional action is needed. This may include reviewing observations and records, speaking with parents, considering environmental or communication factors, and seeking advice from other professionals.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is Fariba Azarinejad.

The SENCO's role includes:

- ensuring practitioners understand their responsibilities to children with SEND and the setting's approach to identification and support;
- advising and supporting practitioners and key persons;
- coordinating the graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do and Review;
- ensuring parents and carers are closely involved and that their knowledge and views inform decisions;
- helping staff identify appropriate strategies, adaptations and outcomes;

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- liaising with external professionals and agencies, with parental involvement and consent where appropriate;
- supporting applications for additional funding, specialist assessment or Education, Health and Care needs assessment where required;
- coordinating transition arrangements for children moving to another setting or school;
- identifying staff training needs and helping management arrange appropriate SEND development; and
- monitoring the effectiveness of SEND provision across the setting.

The graduated approach

Cherish Childcare follows the graduated approach recommended in the SEND Code of Practice. Support is developed through a continuous cycle of Assess, Plan, Do and Review.

Assess

Where a child may need SEND support, the key person, SENCO and parents/carers will analyse the child's strengths and needs. Assessment may draw on observations, developmental information, parent views, existing reports and advice from professionals.

Assessment is not a one-off event. It is reviewed as new information becomes available and as the child's response to support is observed.

Plan

Where additional SEND support is required, the key person and SENCO will agree with parents/carers the outcomes being sought, the support or intervention to be provided, who will be responsible, how progress will be recognised and when the plan will be reviewed.

Plans will take account of the child's communication, preferences and views where these can be identified. Staff development or specialist guidance needed to deliver the plan will also be identified.

Do

The child's key person remains responsible for working with the child on a day-to-day basis. The SENCO supports the key person and wider team to implement agreed strategies consistently and to adapt provision as necessary.

Review

The effectiveness of support and its impact on the child's progress, participation and wellbeing will be reviewed on the agreed date. The key person, SENCO and parents/carers will consider what is working, what needs to change and whether additional support or advice is required.

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Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers are central partners in SEND support. Their knowledge of their child is valued and they will be involved in discussions about concerns, assessments, support plans, referrals and reviews.

- Parents will be informed when the setting considers that additional SEND support may be required.
- Plans and reviews will be discussed with parents and carers and copies shared where appropriate.
- Parents are encouraged to share reports, assessments and information from health or other professionals.
- The setting will signpost families to Hackney's Local Offer and other relevant local services.
- Information will be provided in an accessible format wherever reasonably practicable.

Working with other professionals

Where a child would benefit from additional expertise, Cherish Childcare may work with professionals such as the Area SENCO, health visitor, speech and language therapist, educational psychologist, paediatric services, occupational therapy, social care or other specialist services.

Parents/carers will normally be involved and their consent obtained before a referral is made. Information will be shared securely and only where necessary. Where there is a safeguarding concern, information may be shared without consent where this is necessary to protect the child, in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Reasonable adjustments and inclusive provision

- adapt the learning environment, routines and organisation of the day;
- use visual supports, objects of reference, signs, gestures or other communication approaches where appropriate;
- adapt activities, resources and expectations to the child's developmental stage and needs;
- provide additional adult support where this is necessary and proportionate;
- seek specialist equipment or advice where required;
- support sensory, physical, communication, emotional or medical needs through individual planning; and
- review whether barriers to access can be reduced through reasonable adjustments.

Where specialist medical care or procedures are required, appropriate arrangements and training must be in place before the setting relies on staff to meet those needs independently.

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Education, Health and Care needs assessment and EHCPs

Some children may require an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment where their needs are significant, complex or cannot be met through ordinarily available provision and additional support alone.

Where an EHC needs assessment is requested, Cherish Childcare will provide relevant evidence to the local authority, which may include:

- the child's developmental profile, strengths and rate of progress;
- the nature, extent and context of the child's needs;
- records of the graduated approach and support already provided;
- evidence of interventions, reviews and their impact;
- information from parents/carers and relevant professionals;
- evidence of additional staffing, adaptations, resources or specialist support required; and
- information about the child's physical, communication, social, emotional and health needs.

Where a child has an EHCP, Cherish Childcare will contribute to agreed provision and reviews within the setting's role, work with the family and professionals, and maintain evidence of the support provided and the child's progress.

Family Help and safeguarding

SEND does not in itself mean that a child requires safeguarding intervention. However, children with SEND can face additional barriers to communicating concerns and may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect or unmet need.

Where wider family or support needs are identified, the SENCO and DSL will consider whether Family Help or another multi-agency response may be beneficial. Where there is reason to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be followed immediately.

Transition

Transitions are planned carefully for children with SEND. With parental involvement, we will share relevant information with the receiving setting or school, liaise with professionals, arrange visits or transition meetings where appropriate and support continuity of strategies, communication systems, medical arrangements and provision.

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Staff knowledge and training

All staff receive information about SEND responsibilities through induction and ongoing professional discussion. Training needs are identified through supervision, children's individual needs, advice from specialists and review of practice.

Where a child requires a specific communication approach, medical procedure, moving and handling technique or other specialist support, the relevant staff will receive appropriate instruction or training before being expected to carry this out independently.

Monitoring and review

The SENCO and management monitor the effectiveness of SEND provision through children's progress and support reviews, observations, staff and parent feedback, external professional advice, funding or EHCP reviews, complaints and inspection feedback.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner where statutory guidance changes or the setting identifies a need to strengthen its SEND practice.

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