



**St Mary's Preschool and Playscheme
Child Care Policy and Practice**

**for Children with Additional Needs
SEND**

Approval by Trustees

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1 Introduction

At St MaryIslington PCC we welcome children with special educational needs as part of our community and we aim to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to access and engage in the Early Years Curriculum and primary holiday provision.

We work with the belief that all children and their families have the right to be part of their local community and to be welcomed and included in our services.

Special educational needs (SEN)

1. A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
2. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
 - has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
 - has a disability that prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.
3. For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, 'special educational provision' means educational provision of any kind.

Disabled children and young people

Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is '...a physical or mental impairment that has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as a 'year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people.

2 Aims

- St Mary's recognises that we will need to consider the individual needs of children when planning our curriculum and holiday play provision. We aim to provide accessible services which meet the individual needs of all our children.
- St Mary's recognises that some children will need additional support to access the whole curriculum for preschool 2–5yrs and play provision for children 6-12yrs old in the school holidays. We will ensure that the developmental needs of children are identified early and where needed, the appropriate support is sought. We aim to provide appropriate support and strategies to achieve this in partnership with other multi-agency stakeholders.
- St Mary's recognises the importance of early identification and assessment of children with special educational needs. This is particularly important in the area of early years care and education. We have a statutory duty to complete a progress check for two year olds. This is always shared with parents and a written summary is completed. The progress check will be carried out by a person/key person that knows the child well. If there are any areas where progress is less than expected we will agree to further action in partnership with parents..
- We believe in the involvement of the child and the importance of taking their views into account. We will make every effort to involve children in a manner appropriate to their stage of development, understanding and communication style by e.g. using Makaton¹/symbols/pictures/pecs/objects of reference, when making choices, participating and interests.
- We are committed to effective collaboration using a multi-disciplinary approach to meet the needs of children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). We will actively support the children and families and maintain close links with all agencies working with the child.
- We will make reasonable adjustments to our provision and practice to meet the needs of individual children with SEND in line with the SEND code of practice and the Equality Act (2015). For example, providing a standing frame for a child with cerebral palsy, working in line with Islington's 'local offer'. (SEN support in Islington - Local Offer October 2017).
- We will make sure our planning and our environment is differentiated to meet the individual needs of children which enables them to participate fully within the early years foundation stage and during the holiday provision.
- We aim to consider and will always seek to capture the child's voice. We will do this by using methods such as observation, following a child's interests, level of attention and engagement and one page profiles as well as evaluating provision using the child's voice.

¹ Makaton is a language programme using signs and symbols.
PECS - Picture Exchange Communication System

- *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 states 'Children who are capable of forming views have a right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter affecting them. The views of the child should be given due weight according to the age, maturity and capability of the child'. The child's views will be sought whenever possible, by asking, listening, observing, and in a variety of ways through play and through collaboration with parents, carers, key persons and Team Around the Child or family meetings (TAC/TAF).*

3 Designate person for SEND

The name of St Mary's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is Iris Suarez. She holds a strategic role in coordinating the provision of education for children with SEND alongside our management team.

Staff roles and responsibilities:

All staff in the setting are responsible for meeting the needs of children with SEND. The SENCO will support staff and coordinate the SEND provision across the setting. The SENCO will share information with all staff on the identified needs of individual children and any agreed strategies to support them.

Role of the SENCO

- Supporting colleagues in planning to meet the needs of a child with SEND.
- Advising colleagues about the range of strategies available to use.
- Identifying staff training needs and encouraging colleagues to attend relevant training
- In our setting we give all children a six-week settling in period with a level of flexibility to meet the needs of children accessing nursery provision on a part time basis. We identify children's needs both through observation and by talking to their parents. We monitor the progress and development of individuals through ongoing observation using the cycle of Assess, Plan, Do and Review.
- We share any concerns about the development of individual children with all staff within the setting at team meetings.
- We support staff in differentiating the curriculum for individual children whilst planning.
- If we feel that the provision in our setting does not meet the needs of an individual child we will adapt it accordingly differentiating the curriculum for the individual child for example: accessing the water tray if it is too high or too low
- The SENCO is responsible for organising a number of meetings such as the Settling in review (SIR), Team around the Child (TAC), Short Term Plan (STP), SEN Support Plan (SSP), Education and Health Care Plan (EHC) and Transition Plan (TP) with parents, key worker and other outside agencies/professionals where appropriate. She will also organise meetings to review the STP every six to eight weeks using a review cycle.
- Will follow the Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015).
- The SENCO will set up a confidential file for each child and ensure all records and assessment reports are filed and kept securely in line with Data Protection (2018).
- We work closely with partner agencies including those in education and health and social care. We work in partnership with parents/carers to make referrals where

necessary. This may include contributing to or initiating an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP)

Contact details for St Mary's SENCO

iris.suarez@marys.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7704 2873 and ask to speak to Iris

4 Admission arrangements

Generally speaking, it is not expected that there will be any different admission arrangements for children with special educational needs. St Mary's will make every effort to meet the individual needs of a child with SEND in line with our 'settling in' policy. We will assess children's needs and if we reach an unsafe level, we may have to refuse to have a child attend either the preschool or playscheme.

St Mary's admission forms include a space to capture information about:

- GP
- Health Visitor.
- Any SEND needs emerging or otherwise
- Parental concern.
- 2yr checks
- Previous setting
- TAC involved
- Vision, hearing test and other health checks
- Additional information about your child.

This information is important in order to fully support the needs of any children attending the setting.

Most of St Mary's buildings is fully accessible for both children and adults. Staff are trained in Safer Manual Handling and support is given to children if necessary to access the sports hall which has a small section of steps. All other emergency exits are step-free. All doors are wide enough for wheelchair/walking frame access.

Funding for children with SEND is applied for with support through the local authorities 'Area SENCO' if deemed necessary. This is for specific support for the setting to better support the needs of the child. This is done in consultation with staff who gather observations of the child and the child's parents/guardians. Parent consent is not needed for this. Other applications such as DAF (Disability Awareness fund) funding can only be applied for by the parent. Once they are successful, with parents' consent proof of being in receipt of the allowance can be given to the setting who can then claim a further £615 from the local authority.

St Mary's has a system in place for monitoring allocated finance and consideration is given in order to identify what proportion of funding, however small, might be identified to meet children's special educational needs. This funding might be for some extra staffing for small group or individual needs, or for resources or adaptations to improve access for children. The staff of St Mary's recognises there is a duty under the Equality Act (2010) therefore a proportion of the setting's budget will be allocated to meeting the needs of individual children with special educational needs. This will be done regardless of whether we have a child with special educational needs on roll at that time.

For example, we will use this allocated funding to:

- Employ an additional part-time member of staff
- Buy soft furnishings to reduce background sound for children with a hearing impairment.

St Mary's staff recognise the importance of observing all children on a regular basis, and we use these observations to inform planning for the children's learning experiences. We plan for individual children with special educational needs so that they can access the curriculum fully, in a way that is appropriate to their stage of development and age.

Some ways we do this include:

- Ensuring that a child with a physical disability has some adult support (but not intrusive) support when using the climbing frame.
- One-to-one adult support for 10 minutes during a session to support turn-taking and sharing. We then evaluate our planning to ensure that children are able to fully access the broad and balanced curriculum we provide.
- At St Mary's, we plan for and use additional adult support at key times during the day when children find a transition, activity or attention difficult for example.

Children attending the playscheme will be entitled to a discount when being booked by the parent. However parents when registering, will need to inform the children's booking admin so further instructions can be given to ensure the correct support is in place for the child.

Parents will be asked for their consent should there be a need to contact the child's school and other professionals working with the child and asked to send their child's EHCP if they have one in place. If a child has additional respite support in place parents will also need to ensure the correct information is shared in order for 'St Mary's' to access this funding to support the child within the playscheme.

5 Access, Plan Do, Review

Children with special educational needs are regarded as full members of the community. Our provision is inclusive, and children have full access to the environment, resources, staff and activities. High-quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of children and young people. Through a cycle of assessing, planning, teaching and reviewing, actions are reviewed and refined as understanding a child's needs and the support required helps them secure good outcomes increases. This is known as the graduated approach as part of the Early Years Framework.

At St Mary's our practice supports:

- the participation of children, their parents and young people in decision making
- the early identification of children and young people's needs and early intervention to support them
- greater choice and control for young people and parents over support
- collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support
- high-quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN
- a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment

At St Mary's, we aim to develop our inclusive practice in everything we do.

For example

- Using Makaton and other argumentative communication resources with all children, not only those with language difficulties.
- Using visual timetables to support all children.

- Use of books, small world play and other resources to explore physical differences and challenge stereotypes.

Within the preschool, parents' views are important during the process of carrying out an EHC needs assessment (Early Health Care) and drawing up or reviewing an EHC plan in relation to a child. We at St Mary's enable parents to share their knowledge about their child and give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon. At times, parents, practitioners and others may have differing expectations of how a child's needs are best met. Sometimes these discussions can be challenging but it is in the child's best interests for a positive dialogue between parents, practitioners and others to be maintained, to work through points of difference and establish what action is to be taken.

Staff will gather information from parents regarding their views about the service we offer and what improvements or suggestions could be implemented in order to enhance the service quality further. This information is further shared with the trustees. Trustees are key contributors to the implementation of this policy and take on a further role in ensuring it is implemented and evaluated and reviewed regularly.

Within the playscheme, more detailed views will be gathered from the children and parents about the needs of the children and how these were met or unmet in order to improve the service further. Children's views will be gathered in a number of ways including, video, pictures, drawings and arts and crafts as well as writing.

6 Complaints Procedure

At St Mary's, we recognise the sensitive and emotive nature of special educational needs. We have therefore implemented arrangements for dealing with complaints or concerns about SEND provisions that are over and above the setting's general complaints procedure. Any concerns or complaints about SEND provision should be addressed to the key person, service lead or SENCO in the first instance; they will respond by meeting with the parent or carer to discuss the situation. If this does not resolve the issue, the complaint will then pass to the first level of St Mary's complaints procedure which can be found in the Policies section on St Mary's webpage.

7 Arrangements for ongoing staff training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

St Mary's values the importance of and is committed to providing and facilitating attendance at in-service training in the area of SEND through ongoing training and information sharing. An annual action plan addresses staff training needs in order to fulfil specific roles, e.g. the SENCO nominated person, and training for new members of staff. Though training is first addressed as part of the staff induction process and supervision/appraisal targets; the training needs of the whole setting is reviewed yearly with the objectives outlined within St Mary's Childcare action plan which gives the fine details of what needs to be addressed. This is done in order to enable staff to meet the needs of individual children. We will review the staff training needs on an annual basis and plan training accordingly.

8 Agreed arrangements for developing parent partnership

St Mary's build partnerships with parents, which is a two-way process. Parents' and carers' views and suggestions are valued and are listened to as we recognise that parents know their children best and have a great deal to contribute to their well being and learning dispositions.

At St Mary's we work with parents in many ways including the following statements which are applied in practice:

1. An 'open-door' policy. This means parents can approach us at St Mary's whenever they have a concern and time will be made for them.
2. Key worker system
3. Scheduled meetings are made for parents to meet and discuss their child's progress, keeping them involved and informed at every stage of their child's learning and development, and inviting them to all SEND review meetings within the preschool.
4. There are opportunities for parents and carers to come and work with or observe their child in the setting.
5. Social opportunities such as children's celebration times sharing tea, coffee and children's homemade biscuits.
6. Information about special support groups held locally and national support groups are passed on to parents, encouraging them to make contact.
7. We value the contributions of parents on all levels, including their contributions towards short term plans, one-page profiles, and transition plans at all times valuing their expert knowledge of their child, some of which are gathered through home visits and registration times.
8. Sharing knowledge with other professionals involved with the family e.g. disabled social workers during playscheme times.

9 Protocols for establishing links with other settings

Local special schools, especially those with early year's provision, can be excellent sources of specialist support and advice for early year's settings as well as links to other extended day provisions. At St Mary's we endeavour to link with Children Centre Services such as parent support groups, speech and language therapy and community child psychology. We also link with special schools in the borough for advice and support for children with specific needs as well as building connections with out of school provisions in order to support children attending our holiday provision.

All children leaving St Mary's Pre-School will be a part of a transition process to school whereby information will be shared with the receiving setting e.g. SEND records, end of year reports and children's profiles. If a child with SEND is going to a setting from St Mary's, we will make personal contact with schools receiving the child as part of a transition meeting/visit. St Mary's staff will also be available for telephone contact after the child begins school.

As additional support where possible, staff will visit settings with parents as part of a transition process and invite school teachers to visit children attending the preschool as part of a transition plan.

We have a good working relationship with our local primary school St Mary's C of E and William Tyndale through arranged visits which help to build a sense of community. We feel that good transition procedures for children with special educational needs have a positive impact on the transition to school for all children.

Guidance is taken from:

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015) Copies can be obtained

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Equality Agency (2010) <https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance>

SEN Support - Local offer for Early Years and Primary issue 1 October 2017

For further information and advice contact: The Islington Area SENCO Team 020 7527 5599

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