

SEND Policy

Purpose of the policy

Our SEND policy outlines our approach to providing provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Wildwood Nature School's ethos is all about personalising children's learning experiences so that they feel good about themselves. Our approach to SEND provision is rooted in our ethos of valuing and meeting each child's unique needs.

Contents

1. What is SEND?
2. SEND provision at Wildwood Nature School
3. Roles, responsibilities and training
4. School contacts
5. Admissions
6. Types of SEND at Wildwood Nature School
7. Identifying children with SEND
8. Providing for children with SEND
9. Reviewing a child's SEND provision
10. Working with families
11. Transition to another setting
12. Reviewing the SEND provision at Wildwood Nature School
13. Complaints about SEND provision

1. What is SEND?

From the SEND code of practice:

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.

A learning difficulty or disability is defined as:

- having a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or*
- having a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age.*

2. SEND provision at Wildwood Nature School

At Wildwood Nature School we want all children to benefit from our unique approach to schooling. Every child, no matter what their circumstances, deserves to feel good about themselves and to be part of a community based on compassion and caring for each other. This is a core part of our mission and something that is understood by every member of the team.

In practice, practical and financial constraints mean we will not be able to provide for children with certain severe learning difficulties or disabilities. As an independent school, Wildwood Nature School will, in most cases, be unable to access outside local funding (eg. through the local education authority) to support children with SEND. We always try our best to provide a place for every child who wishes to attend and will only refuse a place when, after we have explored all options for reasonable adjustments to the provision, we believe the child will not benefit from being at Wildwood Nature School or would be unsafe.

3. Roles, responsibilities and training

Providing equal access for children with SEND is the responsibility of all staff at Wildwood Nature School. Staff at Wildwood Nature School are selected primarily because they understand and fully support our ethos, which at its core is inclusive of all people. All staff understand the importance of equal access to our community and curriculum, and are fully committed to making the adjustments and delivering the strategies needed to ensure this access.

The SEND lead attends SEND training on a yearly basis and is responsible for inducting all new teaching staff, to ensure they have a basic level of training and can effectively deliver our SEND provision.

The Wildwood Nature School SEND lead is responsible for leading on all SEND matters including coordinating assessments and determining what adjustments and strategies need

to be in place to support children with SEND. Such adjustments and strategies are detailed in individual support plans.

The SEND lead holds all the information about children with support plans or EHCPs. They are responsible for maintaining all records for each child in a secure and organised fashion and for making them available on request to that child or their family. Also, they are responsible for making SEND data available to the local authority as required.

The school has a board of trustees, one of whom is the lead trustee for SEND.

4. School contacts

Parents can contact the SEND lead at any time to discuss their child or the school's SEND provision.

Head of school: Tara Royle

SEND lead teacher:

Lead trustee for SEND:

5. Admissions

Parents with children who have SEND are encouraged to apply to the school in the regular way (see our *Admissions Policy*) and to submit whatever detailed information about their child's needs as part of that application process. The SEND lead and head of school will review this information and in discussion with the parents decide on the best next steps – in most cases this will involve meeting the child and determining what adjustments, if any, would be needed for the child to join Wildwood Nature School. In rare cases, we may suggest a trial period (usually 2 weeks) after enrolment to assess whether they would be happy and safe at Wildwood Nature School.

6. Types of SEND at Wildwood Nature School

There are four broad types of SEND:

- communication and interaction needs
- cognition and learning difficulties
- social, emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties

- sensory and physical needs.

At Wildwood Nature School we provide for children with mild to moderate needs in any of these categories. If a child has severe needs, we will assess them (working with the parents and relevant outside agencies) to determine if they would enjoy being at Wildwood and benefit from their time there, and whether it would be safe to provide a place for them. We will then make a decision about whether to offer or continue to provide a place.

7. Identifying children with SEND

All staff at Wildwood Nature School have at least basic training in identifying SEND, meaning they have a good understanding of the types of SEND and how to identify them.

At Wildwood Nature School it's part of our ethos that we strive to understand all our children as deeply as possible. We have high staff ratios so that teachers have time to properly assess the children in their care, in terms of where they are against age-related expectations in their learning, but also their emotional profile and needs. In addition, we operate a key person system, much like in Early Years provisions, meaning that one staff member knows their few key children extremely well.

As part of the above processes it's the responsibility of all teaching and learning staff at Wildwood Nature School, but in particular a child's key person, to identify possible SEND. If a staff member thinks that a child may have SEND they inform the SEND lead straight away.

Additionally, teaching staff at Wildwood Nature School have regular (once per half term) supervision meetings with their lead teacher. Supervision meetings follow a set structure, with one of the main aims being to review the teacher's key children – their learning, well-being and enjoyment at Wildwood Nature School. Supervision meetings are also used to discuss possible SEND within the teacher's key children and are crucial in ensuring that SEND needs are identified early.

The SEND lead is then responsible for assessing the level of need, working with the whole team, families and, depending on the needs in question, outside agencies and professionals. Typically, for children already attending, this assessment is based mainly on in-class observations by the SEND lead and other professionals, as well as a review of the child's learning outcomes and emotional well-being.

8. Providing for children with SEND

After an initial assessment, the SEND lead will decide on the level of intervention required. In all cases the objective is to enable the child to enjoy all aspects of the school provision with the other children.

School support

In most cases this will mean additional support from the regular Wildwood Nature School team. This means adapting the usual learning with measures such as:

- Increased support and provision in class from the normal class teachers. This is made possible by our small classes and our commitment to quality mixed ability teaching.
- Adapting teaching using the STEP approach - changing the space, task, resources or people as necessary to make the learning more accessible or challenging.
- Additional support in class in the form of additional skills sessions (assuming that needs cannot be met within the whole class teaching) for those children who have self-identified difficulties and for those children for whom the teacher has identified prior knowledge gaps.
- Having extra support skills sessions as a 1:1 tutorial with the class teacher, pastoral support or other appropriate staff.
- Having a flexible timetable, tailored to work around difficulties in accessing the normal subject provision.

1:1 support

In some cases an adult dedicated to supporting the child on a 1:1 basis is the only way that the child will be able to engage with the same activities as the other children. This is particularly true of Forest School sessions in public woodland, which is a large part of the Wildwood Nature School provision.

If 1:1 support is deemed to be the only option for the child to have a safe and enjoyable experience, the SEND lead will meet to discuss this with the family. 1:1 support without an EHCP (see below) is very expensive and as a private school Wildwood Nature School has no recourse to public funding to support this. If possible, families pay for the cost of 1:1 support. If families are unable, the SEND lead will discuss with the head of school and trustees to determine if Wildwood Nature School is able to provide this support at no additional cost to the family.

For new children, Wildwood Nature School will usually only admit a child needing 1:1 support if the family is able to pay for this additional cost.

Outside agencies

In certain cases the SEND lead may decide that the input of outside professionals is needed (eg. speech and language therapists, educational psychologists) in assessing or providing for the child. As a private school, Wildwood Nature School must pay to access such services, which means there is a limit to how often such support can be sought. If possible, families pay for the cost of these services. If families are unable, the school will pay, whenever possible.

In addition we will direct families to appropriate outside agencies (eg. speech and language therapy, CAMHS) that they can access directly or through their GP.

Support plans

In the above cases, the support strategies, along with ongoing assessments are detailed in an individual support plan. The SEND lead will meet with the child's key person and families to write the support plan together.

EHCPs

In rare cases, for a child with more severe needs, the school will apply to the local authority (LA) for an Education and Health Care assessment, with a view to implementing an Education and Health Care plan (EHCP). Unlike a support plan, an EHCP is a statutory document, issued by the LA. This is the mechanism by which the LA provides support and in some cases funding for children and young people with more severe SEND. The plan details the strategies, services and funding allocated to support the child at their setting. In these cases the Wildwood Nature School SEND lead will work with the LA SEND lead on the EHC assessment, but the final decision about whether to grant an EHCP rests with the SEND team at the LA.

Emotional and social support

Care for the emotional well-being of every child at Wildwood Nature School is one of key values, with our mission being that children feel good about themselves.

To support this teachers have regular 1:1 meetings with their key children. The purpose of these meetings is to allow the child time to talk about how they are feeling, across all aspects of life – at school, with their friends, at home. It is also to agree changes or adaptations to the provision or to the way the child accesses the provision to support their emotional development.

Teachers also use the Boxall Profile for each of their key children which is a targeted tool that gives a picture of the child's social, emotional and behavioural development.

Teachers therefore have a good understanding of the social and emotional well-being of their key children, including children with SEND. And all children, including those with SEND, have a regular opportunity to explore how they feel, anything that is troubling them, and to effect change that will support their emotional development.

This support is enhanced for some children with SEND, depending on their specific needs. They might meet with their key teacher more often or for a longer period, and the teacher will consider making more significant changes to the provision or to how the child accesses the provision.

9. Reviewing a child's SEND provision

The SEND lead is responsible for ensuring that progress of each child with a support plan is reviewed once per term. The basis for this is a review, with the child's key person and family. At the meeting the progress of the child against the objectives in the support plan is reviewed and adjusted objectives and strategies are agreed. The overall level of support is also reviewed, with a view to moving the child off the support plan, in cases of good progress and an assessment that there is no longer any significant additional need.

As often as possible, the child with SEND will be included in support plan reviews. This is beneficial for some children but not others, depending on the needs and emotional profile of the child. In general, our ethos is for the children at Wildwood Nature School to have a level of involvement in reviewing their own progress that leads to feelings of security and value, but without undue pressure to perform. With SEND reviews we will invite the child whenever we think this will be the case, to give them an opportunity to talk in general about how they are feeling rather than to review specific objectives in the plan.

The child will also be asked what they would like to change about themselves and their experiences. This will feed into the objectives of the support plan. They will be encouraged to think about their whole life, not just in terms of their specific difficulties at school. And for children leaving the school, they and their families will be encouraged to think about what changes would make the transition a happy and successful one.

10. Working with families

At Wildwood Nature School it is part of our community ethos that families are deeply involved in the school and in their children's provision. For children on support plans, the full involvement of the family is an integral part of the process.

We understand that for families, having their child identified as having SEND can be very emotional and can feel very negative. In talking with families, part of our goal is to help them understand that the SEND process is a positive one, and that their child is no less able or valued than other children.

We know that it is important to listen to families as they know their child best and often provide valuable insights and a view of their child not seen at school. We know also that transparency and honesty are essential in communicating with families, and that addressing the matter sooner rather than later is best in the long term.

The SEND lead has an initial meeting with the family as soon as a possible SEND need is identified – to explain what has been observed by the teacher and to get the family's view. They will explain the process of assessing and determining strategies to support the child. From then on the family are involved at each step, including reviewing any assessments and meeting to produce or review the support plan.

11. Transition to another setting

At Wildwood Nature School we have the opportunity to know and care for all our children on a very personal level. But we know this is not so easy at, for example, a large secondary school. For children with SEND who are leaving the school, it is the responsibility of the SEND lead to be proactive in opening a dialogue with receiving settings – to ensure that all the necessary information is received and understood by the receiving SEND lead (or relevant person), and whenever possible to go further and arrange visits or meetings so that their needs of the child are fully understood.

As the child approaches the end of their time at Wildwood Nature School the SEND lead will implement an enhanced level of transition (relative to other children) with specific work in school and possibly additional visits to their next setting. This could start as early as a year before leaving, depending on the child's needs.

Receiving SEND leads or class teachers will be invited to attend a final support plan review, with the aim of producing an agreed transition plan, with strategies that will go with the child to their next setting.

12. Reviewing the SEND provision at Wildwood Nature School

Our overall approach to SEND provision is reviewed once a year. The SEND lead informally gathers views from teachers, and invites all families of children with support plans or EHCPs to attend a review meeting to give their views of the provision overall. The SEND lead then meets with the head of school and trustee responsible for SEND to review the school approach.

Any changes are reflected in this policy, which is amended and published. Families are informed and teachers given training on the changes at the next opportunity – usually a whole staff meeting or training day.

13. Complaints about SEND provision

If a child with SEND or their family is unhappy with an aspect of the school provision, no matter what it is, they should first talk to their key teacher. The key teacher will do their best to resolve the issue, where necessary with the support of the SEND lead or head of school.

If this outcome is not satisfactory to the child or family, they should then contact the SEND lead teacher or the head of school. They will arrange for a formal meeting to take place with the child, their family, SEND lead, the head of school and the key teacher. The child and the family will be shown all relevant information that is held about the child, what provision has been made and any outcomes of that provision. Detailed notes will be taken of the meeting and any outcomes agreed will be noted. Where confidentiality allows, the case may also be discussed at a whole staff meeting and the key teacher will outline the plan of action as agreed in the formal meeting.

If, after this process, the outcome is still not satisfactory, the parent should contact the lead trustee for SEND.

The school will do their utmost to ensure adequate provision for the child, but it may be that ultimately the decision is taken by the head of school and trustees that the school is unable to adequately meet the needs of the child and that an alternative school would be

the best option. In the event that the complaint remains unresolved, please refer to our general *Complaints Policy*.

Policy review

Policy created: October 2022

Last reviewed:

Last modified:

Next review date: October 2024