



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy **Including the Local Offer**

AIM

Living Spring actively promotes inclusion and equality of opportunity within our nursery for all children. All children have the right to be cared for and educated to achieve the best possible outcomes, to share opportunities and experiences and to develop and learn alongside their peers. We provide a positive and welcoming environment where children are supported according to their individual needs. We have clear arrangements in place to support children with SEND. These procedures build on the Living Spring Montessori Nursery's organisational policies and have regard to the statutory guidance set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015).

General

At Living Spring, we are aware that all children are unique and we therefore use a holistic approach which is tailored to plan for each child's individual needs and interests. We recognise that some children may have additional needs that may require particular help, intervention and support. These needs may be short-lived for a particular time in a child's life or they may require longer-term or life-long support. At all times we will work alongside each child's parents and any other relevant professionals to share information, identify needs and to help the child and their family to access the support they need.

To define Special Educational Needs and Disability, we use the definitions set out from the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years (2015).

- A child has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.
- A learning difficulty or disability means that a child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other children of the same age; and/or has a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the sort of facilities generally provided for others of the same age.

- For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children of the same age. For a child under two, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.
- A child under compulsory school age has SEN if he or she is likely to have a learning difficulty or disability when they reach compulsory school age or would do if special educational provision was not made for them.
- A disability is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. ‘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 with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is significant overlap between disabled children and those with SEN. Where a disabled child requires special educational provision, they are also to be covered by the SEN definition.

The role of the Special Education Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCO)

The SENDCO for Living Spring is Junette Salonga. The role of the SENDCO is to provide a lead for staff in relation to SEND and to make sure procedures are followed, appropriate records kept and parents involved. The child’s key person will normally remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis and will plan and deliver an individualised programme with the support of the SENDCO and other team members. The particular responsibilities of the Living Spring SENDCO are:

- Ensure that all teachers in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEND with regard to the statutory guidance as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015).
- Ensure that all teachers understand Living Spring’s approach to identifying Special Educational Needs and in supporting any identified needs a child may have.
- Advise and support colleagues.
- Ensure that parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting.
- Liaise with outside professionals and agencies.

Aims

- Recognise each child's individual needs through gathering information from parents and others involved with the child on admission and through our procedures for observation and assessment.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities to children with SEND and have regard to the guidance given in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015. A copy of this document is available in the staff room and in the office.
- Include all children and their families in our provision, making reasonable adjustments, where needed.
- Identify any emerging concerns that might suggest a child has special educational needs/disabilities at the earliest opportunity and plan for those needs through a range of strategies.
- Monitor and review our practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments and seek specialist equipment and services if needed.
- Ensure that all children are treated as individuals/equals and are encouraged to take part in every aspect of the nursery day according to their individual needs and abilities.
- Ensure that gifted and talented children who learn more quickly are also supported.
- Encourage children to value and respect others.
- Challenge inappropriate attitudes and practices.
- Promote positive images and role models during play experiences of those with additional needs wherever possible.
- Celebrate diversity in all aspects of play and learning.
- Staff are aware that children can be harmed by the behaviour of other children; for example, by bullying or by discriminatory behaviour. We encourage children to develop a positive self-image by celebrating the wide range of ethnicities, languages, religions, cultures and family units which make up our school community and indeed the world. We also acknowledge that there are many different styles of learning and different ways of relating to the world. We value, protect and support everyone's unique contribution to our community (See Behaviour Management Policy and Equality of Opportunity).
- A child centred approach is paramount. Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs. (Working Together to Safe Guard Children, 2018). Always listen to children. We train and support our staff

to listen to children and to engage in dialogue with them, in ways appropriate to their age and understanding.

Process

In accordance with our admissions policy, we are committed to providing a childcare place, wherever possible, for children who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities according to their individual circumstances, and the nursery's ability to make any reasonable adjustments in order to provide the necessary standard of care.

Where we believe a child may have learning difficulties and/or a disability that has not previously been acknowledged, we will work closely with the child's parents and any relevant professionals to establish the child's needs and to put in place any action which may be required. We recognise that children with disabilities may not have SEN but may need the nursery to make reasonable adjustments to enable them to make full use of the nursery facilities.

Where we have emerging concerns about a child and/or where a child has identified additional needs or a disability, we will find out as much as possible about the needs of the child and any support the child or family may need to ensure the child makes the best progress in their learning and development. Every child is allocated to a specific member of staff as their key person and who is then responsible for monitoring and recording the progress of that child. If a child is identified as potentially having a special need the key person will ask the SENDCO to carry out an initial assessment of the child based on the guidelines provided by the Code of Practice. Should the child appear to require particular help or intervention, the SENDCO and Key person will provide appropriate support for that child in liaison with the child's parent/carer, nurses, doctors, educational authorities and other specialists as appropriate.

We do this by:

- Working closely with the child's parents
- Observing each child's development and monitoring such observations regularly
- Liaising with any other relevant professionals engaged with the child and their family
- Seeking any specialist help or support
- Researching relevant publications/sources of help
- Reading any reports that have been prepared
- Attending any assessments or review meetings with local authority/professionals.

Graduated Approach

We use the graduated response system for identifying, assessing and responding to children's special educational needs.

This approach includes:

- An analysis of the child's needs including whether we should seek more specialist help from health, social services or other agencies.
- An agreement about the interventions and support needed and the expected impact on progress and a date for review.
- Implementation of the interventions or programmes agreed, including assessing the child's response to the action taken.
- A review of the effectiveness of the support and its impact on the child's progress by the key person, SENDCO, the child's parent(s) and the views of the child, including any agreed changes to outcome and support.
- Revisiting this cycle of action in increasing detail and frequency including seeking further specialist help to secure good progress until the SENDCO, key person, the child's parent(s) and any other professionals involved agree intervention is no longer needed or decide to request an education, health and care needs assessment (see below).
- We inform parents as soon as we begin to use a graduated response.
- We provide parents with information on sources of independent advice and support.
- We liaise with other professionals involved with children with SEND and their families to meet their individual needs.

Education, Health and Care Assessment

We use a system of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing individual targets for children with SEND. In instances where purposeful action has not met the needs of the child, and the child has not made expected progress, we will consider requesting an Education, Health and Care assessment (EHC). The purpose of an EHC is to make special educational provision to meet the special educational needs of the child or young person, to ensure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care, as they get older and prepare them for adulthood.

Early Help Assessment

If we believe a child and their family would benefit from support from more than one agency, for example where a child may have difficulties linked to poor housing or difficult domestic

circumstances, we may request or carry out an interagency assessment to get early help for the family. This early help assessment aims to ensure that early help services are coordinated and not delivered in a disjointed way. This approach reflects the Signs of Safety (SoS). The SoS approach is a risk-based assessment process being used across all Children and Young People services to help families achieve positive outcomes. At Living Spring, we use the Brent Early Help Assessment (EHA). Information regarding the Brent Early Help Assessment, along with thresholds of need, can be found in in the Living Spring Safeguarding Folder which is available in the Office and the Staff Room.

We ensure that children with SEND and their parents/carers are appropriately involved at all stages of the assessment, taking into account the child's level of ability.

All records are maintained of the child's progress and we ensure that when the child leaves the nursery, the records are passed to the school or appropriate authority. All information regarding a child's assessment is kept confidential at all times.

A record will be kept on the personnel files of attendance of staff at special needs training courses and seminars. The SENDCO will also keep a diary record of all meetings in respect to special needs matters.

Compliments and complaints in respect to all special needs and disability matters should first be discussed with the SENDCO or the Manager. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, then it may be progressed through the nursery complaint procedure (See Complaints policy).

Legal Framework guidance:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability, Code of Practice: 0-25 years statutory guidance 2015
- The Children and Family Act 2014, Part 3
- The Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Early Years: guide to the 0-25 SEND code of practice: Advice for early years providers that are funded by the local authority, January 2015
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children and young people, parents and carers (2017)
- Brent Early Help Assessment (EHA)
- Early Years Inspection Handbook (2022)
- Inspecting Safeguarding in the Early Years (2021)

Links to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017: Section 3 – The safeguarding and welfare requirements:

- Suitable people
- Staff qualifications, training, support and skills
- Key person
- Managing Behaviour
- Special educational needs
- Information and records
- Information for parents and carers

Living Spring Montessori – Local Offer

1. What is a local offer?

A local offer gives children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families information and support services that are available in the nursery and in the local area.

2. How does Living Spring Montessori know if children need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

At Living Spring, we pride ourselves in embracing each child as a unique individual. Our staff are highly qualified, and have good understanding of child development. Each child's development and progress is tracked through observations, planning and assessments. Staff apply their sound knowledge of child development to identify children who may be experiencing developmental delays as well as those at risk of delay.

- All parents complete an 'All about Me' form when they join the nursery. This describes the parents' view of the child's development in the Prime Areas: physical development; personal, social and emotional development; and communication and language development. The information provided includes an overview of the child's interests and abilities and all information obtained feeds into a personal plan for the child.
- During the course of the term, the child will have regular observations (focused, spontaneous, photos, videos...). The child's key person monitors the child's progress, with ongoing input from parents. A progress summary is produced at the end of each term, and any concerns about the child's development are addressed through a graduated approach.

- Where necessary, a ‘Team Around the Child’ meeting will be arranged with the parents, the key person, the SENDCO and a member from the inclusion team from Brent, to support early intervention; effective information sharing and to seek appropriate additional support for the child.
- All parents are actively encouraged to raise concerns about their child’s development early, so that appropriate steps can be taken to support early intervention.

3. How will Early Year’s staff support my child?

- All staff at Living Spring are attentive and loving towards each child. They continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of child development through ongoing training and professional development.
- Each child has a designated key person who meets with the parents to discuss their child’s progress. All the staff work closely with the children and ensure that they share knowledge, observations and experiences concerning the child. The manager/SENDCO works closely with staff members to monitor children’s progress and development and they raise concerns when these are identified.
- Living Spring works in close partnership with the Brent Inclusion Support Team to access additional training and support as required.

4. How will the curriculum be matched to my child’s needs?

The EYFS affirms that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the child’s development and learning in the early years. Maria Montessori believed that the classroom or what she called “the prepared environment” should be set out in such a way that it allows the child to make his or her own independent choices. The child develops and grows from being engaged in constructive activities of his or her own choice, within this ‘enabling environment’ (Living Spring Guiding Principles and Montessori Curriculum, October 2020). The environment is prepared to be child focused, with low shelves, child sized materials and resources that are readily accessible to the children, thus supporting their functional independence and interest.

- At Living Spring we adopt a holistic approach of support, which is tailored to meet individual needs, through the Montessori philosophy.
- Plan activities appropriate for the child’s age, abilities and development, and interests based on direct observations and input from parents (revolving around the 7 areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage).

- Support observations with detailed analysis, including next steps to extend learning and development.
- Age appropriate and planned activities according to what the child is expected to achieve through the development matters.
- Target orientated activities (Individual Learning Plans).
- Activities based on the child's voice as well as the parents' contributions.
- A commitment to the provision of an environment where each person is treated as an individual, with equal rights and responsibilities, regardless of whether they are adults or children.

5. How will both you and I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

Parent partnership is a strong area of our working at Living Spring Montessori. We believe that children benefit most from an Early Years education in which parents and the setting work in partnership. We acknowledge the integral role that parents play as their child's first educators, so we engage parents in dialogue about their children's development and progress by listening and responding to their views to ensure a two-way communication and information sharing process (Parent Partnership Policy).

- Tools such as our observation, planning and assessment forms are used to track each child's development (see above).
- We use the seven areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); Every Child a Talker (ECAT); Characteristics of Effective Learning; The Involvement and Wellbeing Scale and the EyLog (an electronic parent portal system, which enables parents to receive information from the nursery and also share their own observations of their child).
- We hold termly parent meetings, and regular daily feedback, thus ensuring that parents are up-to-date about their child's development.
- We hold regular parent workshops, to increase parent's knowledge and understanding of child development.

6. What support will there be for my child's overall well-being?

Provide support to parents, through regular parent education workshops and ongoing parent-

teacher meetings each term.

- Collaborate with the Brent Inclusion Support Team to establish regular learning plans.
- A commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practices for all children and their families, according to their individual needs (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy).
- We ensure that all children's voices are heard, and that they and their parents are actively involved in all matters concerning them.
- We seek to promote positive behaviour in all of our children, and we work with all the children and their parents to build self-esteem and to instill a positive self-image. We discourage negative behaviour by focusing on what children can do, rather than what they cannot do. We support all children in our care by helping them to feel secure, make friends and to develop positive dispositions to learning through our positive language training for staff and parents.
- Adults model positive behaviour and language through their interactions with one another, as well as the children – thus acting as effective role models (Behaviour Management Policy).
- All families attend an induction meeting and plans are tailored to support and meet each child's needs, as part of the settling in period.
- We work with the parents, external agencies and the community to ensure that we can effectively support the children's learning and development.
- We ensure that children grow up in a healthy, safe environment and that they are protected from harm, through rigorous implementation of our Safeguarding policy and procedures (Safeguarding Children Policy).
- Our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, and they support the delivery of our operational plans, and day-to-day management of the setting.
- Staff members update their professional knowledge through training, mentoring and supervision, and we ensure that our Safeguarding duties are regularly reviewed and further developed as necessary.

7. What specialist services and expertise are available or accessed by the setting?

- As part of the induction process, all staff members receive in-house information regarding all policies and procedures, and these include the settings expectation of staff regarding managing and supporting children and families.

- All staff members have strong knowledge of child development and EYFS through their professional qualification and ongoing training and workshops delivered internally and externally.
- Staff members receive formal SEND training as part of their professional development.
- The setting works in close partnership with the Early Years Inclusion Support Team in Brent to access training and guidance on best practice.
- The setting accesses multi-agency support by networking with other professionals in education, health and social care within the community...such as Occupational Therapist; Speech and Language Therapist; Children's Centers; other local schools and nurseries to share professional expertise and best practice.

8. What training are the staff supporting children with SEND, had or having?

- Nursery SENDCO is undergoing SEND training and shares information as well as knowledge with other staff.
- In house SEND training.
- Reviewing and updating policies.
- Positive language training.
- Health and safety and safeguarding training.
- Promoting inclusion and equality discussions.
- Continuous professional development of each staff member is highly encouraged.

9. How will my child be included in activities outside the setting including trips?

- Each child will be welcome to join any activities outside the setting with parents signed consent.
- A risk assessment of the activity and location will be completed.
- We also consider accessibility: walking; taking babies in buggies and discussions on road safety with older children.
- The risk assessment for transportation such as the bus or coach is also included.
- The child's key person and other staff members understand and are able to attend to all the needs of children.
- Parents and volunteers are included to actively participate in school outings.
- At all times, appropriate teacher: child ratio is considered.

10. How accessible is the setting?

- Living Spring is a purpose built setting with large airy rooms with plenty of natural light.
- Activities are kept at the children's eye level within low shelves, thus facilitating easy and independent access.
- The furniture are child sized, including the sinks and toilets.
- All the children's classrooms are all on one level, thus facilitating easy free flow from one room to another, and into the garden.

11. How will the setting prepare and support my child to join the pre-school or transfer to a new setting or school?

- We work together with parents, Early Years Inclusion Support Team and local schools to support the child's transition to a new class or new school.

To a new class:

- Induction meetings are arranged for parents whose child will be transitioning into the next class.
- Parents get to meet the staff in the class and share information about the child.
- Previous reports, plans and observations are shared with the new class teachers during meetings with the previous key person.
- A settling in period is arranged in line with the needs of the child, with contribution and input from the child and their family.

To a new school:

- An Early Years Foundation Stage Report is completed with links to the child's abilities and interests.
- This report contains an overview of achievements in the prime and specific areas of the EYFS.
- A Transition Passport is completed (with input from the parents; key person; SENDCO) and shared with the next school.
- A face-to-face meeting with the new school supports a smooth transition.
- Information sharing is key, so we encourage transition meetings, photo books and visits to the new school.
- We prepare the children and their parents for the transition through group discussions

about new schools and we highlight similarities and differences.

- Where a child's needs require one, an application is made for an EHC Plan (Education Health and Care Plan).

12. How are the setting's resources allocated and matched to children's special educational needs?

- The specially prepared Montessori environment supports all children, including those with additional needs.
- Activities are planned and tailored to support the individual, and targets and objectives are developed with input from the child; parents; key person and specialists where appropriate.
- Parent's collaboration and information sharing helps to tailor resources and ideas to support the child more effectively.
- Collaboration with other professionals and services within the local and wider community ensures effective use of expertise and resources.

13. How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child will receive?

- We strive to meet the needs of every child with SEND. As indicated within the SEND Code of Practice, a graduated approach is employed.
- The graduated approach of Assess-Plan-Do-Review enables deep reflection as actions and interventions are revisited to assess their effectiveness.
- Revising plans and interventions leads to greater understanding, and reflecting on the most effective interventions results in the best outcomes.

14. How are parents involved at the setting? How can I be involved?

- Termly parent meetings
- Parent Collaboration form
- Comments/Suggestion Box
- School events such as; the Christmas concert, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Summer Party.
- Daily feedback and messages.
- EyLog (electronic information sharing system)
- Spontaneous one to one meetings to discuss concerns/ advice on issues such as toilet

training or behaviour management etc....

- Parents coming to observe.....
- Parent training/information sharing – positive discipline workshops.
- Outings and trips.
- Community Cohesion/ parent participation – inviting parents into the class to read books, talk about celebrations and festivals around the world, and show and tell.

Who can I contact for further information?

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