Ashbridge
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL & NURSERIES

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES POLICY

Approved by: SLT

Approved date: APRIL 2025

Review date: April 2026

Accessibility: Available to parents/guardians on the website and as a paper copy on request

Scope: Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery, Ashbridge on-Ribble Nursery, Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm, The Fledglings Nursery

Introduction

At Ashbridge School and Nursery, we are committed to the inclusion of all children. Every child has the right to high-quality care and education that supports them to achieve their full potential, share opportunities and experiences, and learn and grow alongside their peers. We provide a high quality, positive and welcoming environment in which all children are supported in line with their individual needs.

We recognise that some children may have additional needs that require specific support or adjustments, either on a short-term basis or as part of ongoing, long-term provision. Where additional needs are identified, we work in close partnership with parents or guardians, as well as relevant external professionals, to ensure appropriate support is in place. This collaborative approach helps us to understand the child's needs, share information effectively, and help the child and their family to access the right support at the right time.

As a childcare provider and school, we have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure children with special educational needs and disabilities who attend or apply to attend can access our provision under the Equality Act of 2010. This includes access to the physical environment, the curriculum, and the full educational experience we offer.

We will consider a child's needs and will assess whether we can meet them with reasonable adjustments, before offering a place in school or nursery. Reasonable adjustments include taking positive actions or modifications to ensure that children can participate and enjoy all the benefits and services offered by us. See also Reasonable Adjustments Policy. As part of initial or subsequent assessments, we also consider the place request in terms of times of requested patterns of attendance.

If we are unable to offer a place, as we cannot meet a child's needs despite reasonable adjustments, support will be given to families to find a more suitable provider. Once a place is offered and a child is attending, we then work with families to determine and agree the reasonable adjustments that are to be made.

After the offer of a place, if we identify that a child attending nursery or school may have emerging learning difficulties, special educational needs, a disability or a medical/dietary need that has not previously been recognised, we will work closely with the child's parents/guardians and any relevant professionals to support the child and the family to establish the child's needs and secure any action that may be required to ensure the child makes the best progress in their learning and development.

At no time will children be discriminated against for any other reasons, including discrimination based on disability, age, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

In accordance with our Admissions Policy, we consider all applicants for places in school and nursery in a fair and consistent way, regardless of any special educational need or disability. Where a child with SEND is applying to join the nursery or school, a meeting will take place with the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the SENCO, and the child's parents or guardians. This allows us to gather relevant information, including any reports or input from other professionals, and may include offering visits or sessions to help us assess how best to support the child.

If, after a reasonable period of review and the implementation of agreed adjustments, it becomes clear that we are unable to meet a child's needs effectively, we reserve the right to withdraw the place or, in the case of nursery provision, to reduce the agreed days or hours of attendance. This would always be considered carefully and in close consultation with the family.

Legal framework, definitions and procedures

The relevant legislation underpinning this policy includes:

- **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2014, updated April 2020)**
- **The Equality Act 2010**

- **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – September 2021**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015, updated July 2022)**

We use the definitions set out in the SEND code of practice:

- A child has **SEND** if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for **special educational provision** to be made for them.
- A **learning difficulty or disability** means a child:
    - Has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
    - Has a disability which prevents or hinders them from accessing facilities typically provided for others of the same age.
- For children **aged two or more**, special educational provision is that which is **additional to or different from** what is provided for other children of the same age.
- For children **under two**, any form of educational provision qualifies as special educational provision.
- A child under compulsory school age is considered to have SEND if they are likely to have a learning difficulty or disability when they reach compulsory school age, or would do so without special educational provision.

Definition of Disability (Equality Act 2010)

A **disability** is defined as a *"physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."*

- *"Long-term"* is defined as lasting 12 months or more.
- *"Substantial"* means more than minor or trivial.
- This includes sensory impairments (e.g., visual or hearing) and long-term health conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, cancer).

Not all children with a disability have SEND, but there is a significant overlap. If a disabled child requires special educational provision, they are also considered to have SEND.

We have regard to the statutory guidance set out in the 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2014 and updated 2020)'and have clear arrangements in place to support children with SEN and disabilities. In addition, we ensure we meet all aspects of the EYFS statutory Requirements relating to SEND, and work also within Local Authority procedures.

Our aims are to:

- Treat all children as individuals and support full participation in every aspect of education according to their unique needs and abilities.
- Recognise and respond to individual needs by gathering information from parents/guardians and professionals on admission, and through ongoing observation and assessment.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities towards children with SEND and are familiar with this policy and the SEND Code of Practice.
- Support families to access external services and provision beyond the scope of universal settings when needed.
- Identify emerging SEND concerns as early as possible and take timely action.
- Share assessment outcomes with parents/guardians and work collaboratively to determine next steps and access appropriate support.
- Work in close partnership with parents/guardians, health professionals, local authorities, and other agencies to meet children's needs effectively.
- Monitor, review, and adapt our provision regularly, making reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Provide a physical environment that is, as far as possible, safe and accessible for all children and adults with disabilities.
- Actively seek children's views and promote respect, empathy, and inclusion among all children.
- Challenge and address any discriminatory attitudes or practices observed within the team, setting, or parent community.

Procedures and Methods

In order to deliver our aims, we:

- Employ an experienced Global Company SENCO for nursery who works across the four nursery sites, supported by the Senior Leadership team and Nursery Management team.
- Appoint a SENCO in school, who is also a Class Teacher, supported by the Headteacher.
- Have a well-qualified, experience team knowledgeable in the care and education of children with special educational needs.
- Designate two members of the company SLT as Senior SENCOs for nursery to oversee policy implementation and provide guidance.
- Adapt learning experiences to suit individual children's needs and abilities.
- Regularly consult with parents/guardians, keeping them informed throughout observation, assessment, planning, and review processes.
- Use a Graduated Approach to identify, assess, and respond to emerging needs.
- Provide families with information on external support services and resources.
- Maintain SEND Support Plans, Targeted Learning Plans (TLPs), and detailed records of support provided.

- Publish a Local Offer that outlines the support available in the Early Years.
- Engage with multi-agency partners, including Early Support and Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment services when appropriate.
- Liaise with the LEA Inclusion Service and relevant professionals to ensure coordinated care.
- Coordinate with other educational settings to support smooth transitions for children with SEND.
- Work with the Children and Family Welfare and Wellbeing Service to share updates and resources with families through visits and information sharing.

Graduated approach

In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, we take a graduated approach to working with children with emerging concerns and their families. This approach includes:

1. **Initial Analysis**
    a. Collaborating with families to assess the child's strengths and needs.
    b. Determining if specialist input is required.
2. **Planning**
    a. Agreeing on support strategies, reasonable adjustments, and desired outcomes.
    b. Setting a review date.

3. **Implementation**
    a. Delivering planned interventions and monitoring the child's response.
4. **Review**
    a. Evaluating the impact of the support provided with parents/carers, key persons, and professionals.
    b. Revising outcomes and next steps as needed.

This cycle is repeated in increasing depth until a child makes progress or further intervention, such as an EHC assessment, is required.

Early help assessment

If multiple professionals or agencies are supporting a child and/or their family, we may initiate or contribute to an **Early Help Assessment (EHA)** (formerly known as a CAF). This approach ensures that all involved services are coordinated and effective in meeting the family's needs.

Early Support

Where a child has disabilities, we may seek additional assistance through the **Early Support Programme** to coordinate education, health, and social care services. There is more information on the Council for Disabled Children website: http://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/earlysupport or Lancashire SEND services

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment and Plan

If the support and interventions delivered through the graduated approach do not lead to satisfactory progress and developmental concerns persist, an assessment of the child's needs may be requested. This request can be made either by the parents or by us, in consultation with any external professionals already involved. The assessment is conducted by the local authority to determine the appropriate next steps.

- If agreed, an **EHC Plan** will be developed detailing the educational, health, and care provision required.
- The local authority will consult with parents/ guardians and all professionals involved prior to informing all of the outcome of the assessment.
- As part of the process, we will be consulted as a potential named setting and will carefully consider whether we are able to meet the child's needs and deliver the provision outlined in the plan.
- The final decision on whether to be named in the plan will be made the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The role of the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

Whilst a child's teacher or key person is responsible for supporting them daily in their learning and development, the SENCO's role is to lead and coordinate the overall provision for children with special educational needs.

Our global SENCO coordinates the overall support for the children and their families in the Early Years, with the School SENCO coordinating the overall support for children within school.

Key responsibilities of our SENCOs include:

- Ensuring all practitioners and teachers understand their duties regarding children with SEND and are familiar with our procedures for identification and support
- Providing advice, guidance, and ongoing support to colleagues
- Maintaining close communication and partnership with parents/guardians, ensuring they are informed and involved at every stage
- Liaising with external professionals and agencies to coordinate and enhance provision

Senior SENCOs, who are part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), are responsible for:

- Supporting, guiding, and monitoring the work of appointed SENCOs across settings
- Ensuring the consistent implementation of the SEND policy across the organisation
- Making final decisions regarding placement offers and agreements related to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans

Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm

- Global Company SENCO Lindsey Turnbull
- Senior SENCO Alice Turner (Director of Quality of Care)
- Julie Fazackerley (Head of Nursery)

Ashbridge on Ribble

- Global Company SENCO Lindsey Turnbull
- Senior SENCO Hilary Sharples (Director of Quality)
- Emma Newlove (Nursery Manager)

The Fledglings at Myerscough

- Global Company SENCO Lindsey Turnbull
- Senior SENCO Alice Turner (Director of Quality of Care)
- Charlotte Twist (Nursery Manager)

Ashbridge Nursery, Hutton

- Global Company SENCO Lindsey Turnbull
- Senior SENCO Hilary Sharples (Director of Quality)
- Chelsea Mounsey (Head of Nursery)

Ashbridge School

- SENCO Caroline Bird (Class Teacher), supported by Karen Mehta (Headteacher)