



**St. Joseph's RC Primary School**



# **Special Educational Needs Parent handbook**

## 1.1 Special Educational Needs- a definition

The term 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) has a legal definition, referring to children who have learning differences that make it harder for them to learn or access education than most children of the same age.

Many children will have SEN of some kind at some time during their education. Help will usually be provided in their ordinary, mainstream early education setting or school, sometimes with the help of outside agencies.

If your child has special educational needs, they may need extra help in a range of areas, for example:

- reading, writing, number work or understanding information
- expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying
- making friends or relating to adults
- behaving properly in school
- organising themselves
- some kind of sensory or physical needs which may affect them in school

It is important to recognise that although these differences may affect a child at home, they may actually only affect them in an educational setting.

## 1.2 What help can I expect for my child?

Children make progress at different rates and have different ways in which they learn best. When planning lessons based around the National Curriculum, your child's teacher will take account of this by looking carefully at how they organise their lessons, classroom, resources and prompts. The teacher will then choose suitable ways to help your child learn from a range of activities (often described as 'differentiating the curriculum'). Your child's class teacher will inform you of any initial concerns or difficulties your child maybe experiencing (this may be an informal discussion).

If your child is having particular difficulties in one area, they may work with the class teacher or the support assistant in class more frequently or be involved in an intervention to meet their particular needs.

*However, just because your child is making slower progress than you expected or the teachers are providing different support, help or activities in class, this doesn't necessarily mean that your child has SEND.*

## **1.3 What if more help is needed?**

There are occasions when differentiating the curriculum and providing interventions is not enough to meet the needs of a child. If this is the case with your child, then the Graduated Response will begin. (See Appendix 1 for a summary)

### **2.1 The Graduated Response**

The Graduated Response to special educational needs involves intervention, evaluation and a progression through different stages. These stages include:

#### **2.2 Initial meeting**

This meeting may be arranged by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) after they have a discussion with the class teacher. However, you may also request a meeting with the class teacher and the SENCo if you have SEND concerns of your own through the main office and we will arrange a meeting as soon as possible within 1 week (circumstances permitting).

At this meeting, any concerns about your child's educational needs will be discussed and the next steps will be identified. If these next steps include an approach that is additional to, or different from that which the teacher is normally able to provide, then the school will take action to put this in place. This might involve additional adult time in planning and monitoring the impact of a particular intervention or strategy, the provision of different learning materials or special equipment, or individual or group support (that go beyond differentiation in the classroom discussed in 1.2). Normally an approach will be planned in consultation with the school's SENCo and recorded as a Learning Passport (see 3.2). At this point your child's name will be included on the SEND profile for our school.

Your child's progress will be monitored and another meeting arranged to discuss progress and the next steps (this maybe your child's Learning Passport review meeting- see 3.2). One of these next steps may include a referral to another agency (see 2.2)

#### **2.2 Referral to another agency**

At the initial meeting or at your Learning Passport review meeting, one of the next steps may be to refer to another agency. That is in some cases, if your child's needs are still not being met despite the support offered previously, the SENCo may ask for help and advice about an individual pupil from a member of the outside agency (known in our Local Authority - LA as SENDS - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Service). This will often involve the pupil being observed or interviewed and suggestions or changes made to the Learning Passport. In a few cases direct support may be offered. Educational psychologists may also be consulted or Health Services (such as Speech and Language therapy or a Paediatrician).

Your written consent is of course necessary before a referral can be made. Once we have your consent a referral will be made.

Within approximately 3 - 4 weeks an Initial Involvement meeting will be arranged by the agency we have referred you child to (except in Health Service referrals-you will be contacted directly to attend an appointment). This meeting will involve the SENCo informing the

agency about your child's needs, their progress and why we need additional support. At this meeting the agency and school may arrange for observations/assessments to take place. These observations/assessments will be arranged in accordance with the schedule of the professionals from the agency. This can be over a period of 2-3 weeks.

### **2.3 Feedback meetings**

Once the other agency has observed/assessed your child and had further discussions with the class teacher, they will prepare a short report and strategies for school to use (this may take some time 2 – 6 weeks).

The findings of the agency are usually fed back to the SENCo at the feedback meeting. These meetings usually take place during the school day. In order to keep the process speedy, you would not normally be invited to the meeting but you will receive a copy of the report which the SENCo will be happy to discuss with you should you require any clarification.

### **2.4 Monitoring**

The strategies will then be used in the classroom to support your child, monitored and evaluated. If these strategies are successful, they will continue to inform your child's Learning Passport. Your child's progress will be monitored and no further involvement from another agency may be necessary. However, if the strategies are not having sufficient impact another referral will be made to another agency (and the process described in 2.2-2.4 will be repeated).

Although more than one agency can be involved at one time, the time-scale for the involvement of all necessary professionals may take several terms.

### **2.5 Multi-agency meetings**

If necessary, a meeting with all of the agencies that have been involved with your child may be arranged. This could be arranged for many reasons but particularly if additional adult support is a strategy that is necessary for your child. At this meeting all of the agencies (including both parents and school) will discuss whether to make a request to the LA panel for an Education Health Care plan (see 2.6). Please note that there are strict criteria to be met before an application can be made.

## 2.6 Education Health Care plans

If a child's needs are significant and school cannot support them using their own resources, then, in consultation with the class teacher, parents and other agencies an application for an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) will be made by the SENCO to the Local Authority (LA).

The focus of these plans is on the long-term outcomes to be achieved as opposed to the provision to be made.

1. Has the young person had access to all relevant resources available, including Elements 1 & 2 from their educational setting, universal & targeted health services and social care input?
2. Has the referrer co-ordinated the involvement of the young person, their parents/carers and all relevant professionals in seeking to meet the needs of the young person?
3. Is there evidence to indicate that the special educational needs of the young person are exceptional relative to others of the same age within the LA?

If the answer to all three criteria is yes, the panel will discuss the needs of the child further and decide upon the top-up funding required to support your child.

If you would like a more detailed description of the process, please ask the office for a copy of the *Education, Health and Care Panel Guidance*.

The EHCP process should only take 20 weeks to complete once it is started. After an EHC has been awarded, time must also be allowed for successful recruitment (if this is how the additional funding is to be spent).

## 3.1 Learning Passports/PIVATS

Once your child has been identified as having an educational need that is additional to or different from their peers they will begin to work towards targets on their Learning Passport. This plan may be informed by targets given by another agency or from assessments or from a PIVATS profile. A PIVATS profile is a small-step approach to assessment. This allows for all progress to be acknowledged (however small) and provides a profile of your child's strengths and areas for improvement. These areas for improvement provide the targets on your child's Learning Passport. Not all children on the school's SEND profile will have a PIVATS profile.

The Learning Passport targets will be discussed and shared with both you and your child (if appropriate) at your SEND review meeting which are usually held termly. (see 3.2)

## 3.2 Learning Passport review meeting

If your child has a Learning Passport it will be discussed with you at the Learning Passport review meeting. Progress against previous targets (if it is a second or subsequent meeting) will be reviewed. The class teacher will inform you of how far your child has gone towards meeting the target, then new ones will be proposed and discussed with you before we finalise them. We may suggest or you may request the involvement of other specialist agencies if

progress is poor or limited. We may also discuss transition to a new class / or new school in the case of a Year 5 or Year 6 pupil. Interim and final reports can also be used to keep you informed of your child's progress. You are of course welcome to ask for an update at any point during the year.

### **3.3 Review meetings**

If your child has an EHCP, an annual review meeting is required by the LA to monitor progress and use of funding, which you will of course be invited to attend.

## **4 Acronyms, agencies and their advice**

At St. Joseph's we strive to use full descriptions and no acronyms or jargon in our reports and at meetings (unless we know they are familiar to everybody involved). However, just in case .....

**4.1 A.S.D- Autistic Spectrum Disorder.** Please note, school cannot diagnose this, any official diagnosis must come from a Health Care professional after a meeting with other professionals who have observed and assessed your child and had discussions with you and school.

**4.2 Clinical Psychology-** Clinical psychologists aim to reduce psychological distress and enhance and promote psychological well-being.

They work with people with mental or physical health problems - which might include anxiety and depression, serious and enduring mental illness, adjustment to physical illness, neurological disorders, addictive behaviours, childhood behaviour disorders, personal and family relationships.

School is unable to make a direct referral to Clinical Psychology services. A referral will be made by the Educational Psychologist (after they have been involved with your child and with your consent) or your G.P (after discussions with school).

### **4.3 Educational Psychologist ('Ed psych')**

The Educational Psychologist will consider: how your child plays and learns; how they grow and develop skills; how they behave and relate to one another; and how they learn about and manage their feelings.

Our current Educational Psychologist is Anne Ford, who can be contacted on (01254) 666887

### **4.4 EHC plans**

**Education, Health and care plans-**These replace 'Statements' and 'Learning Difficulty Assessments'. If a child's needs are significant and school cannot support them using their own resources, then, in consultation with the class teacher, parents and other agencies an application for an Education, Health and Care plan will be made by the SENCo to the LA. The focus of these plans is on the long-term outcomes to be achieved as opposed to the provision to be made.

If the Education, Health and Care panel finds that a child has significant difficulties; the school has sought advice from the relevant professionals; and is spending above the £6,000 expectation, then top-up funding will be made available.

This plan is reviewed annually. An annual review will, when possible, be attended by all agencies involved with the child, parents/carers and the child themselves (where appropriate). The findings at the annual review are reported to the LA and copies made available to all relevant parties.

**4.5 ELCAS-** The aim of this service (East Lancashire Child and Adolescent Service – ELCAS) is to provide a assessment, treatment, advisory and consultative service for children and adolescents suffering mental health disorders, or where their mental health and related levels of functioning gives cause for concern. Although school cannot refer to Clinical Psychology, we can refer to ELCAS (who work with Clinical Psychologists).

#### **4.6 I.S.S**

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Service (SENDS)** - This service involves advisory teachers and specialists who observe and assess a child in their school setting. They consider the work of other agencies who have been involved with your child (including other teams within SENDS) and provide strategies for school to use.

The specialist teams within SENDS include

- Speech, language and communication
- Social, Emotional and Behaviour difficulties
- Physical Difficulties (including motor skills)
- Visual Impairments
- Hearing Impairments
- Cognition and Learning (used when barriers to learning are not obvious)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder

**4.7 Paediatrician** If your concerns about your child are with regard to a physical or mental condition, then your G.P could make a referral to a paediatrician, who will liaise with both yourself and school to gain a rounded picture of your child.

#### **4.8 S.E.B.D. - Social, Emotional and Behaviour difficulties**

**4.9 SENCo- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.** This person is responsible for the development of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy and provision in the school to raise the achievement of children with special educational needs.

**4.10 SEN profile-** A record kept in school of children with Special Educational Needs. This record includes a child's name, the nature of the need, their stage in the Graduated Response and the support/provision/strategies a child requires. This is circulated to all staff in school (this maybe presented in different ways to different members of staff).

**4.11 Sp.L.D-** Specific Learning Difficulties. This includes a learning difficulty such as Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia

**4.12 Speech and Language-** Although the SENDS can provide strategies to support children with Speech and Language difficulties in the classroom, sometimes it is necessary to refer to the N.H.S Speech and Language therapy service.

Speech therapy involves support with how your child speaks, whereas language therapy involves support with how your child understands language.

The therapy can be at a clinic and the therapist will also send resources home and to school to reinforce learning.

### Other information

- Our SEN officer for the Helen Chadwick who can be contacted on (01254) 666604
- The Parent Partnership team provide impartial information, guidance and support to parents of children with special educational needs. Their website is <http://www.bwdpip.org.uk/> They can be contacted on 07923252483 or by e-mail [bwdpip1@gmail.com](mailto:bwdpip1@gmail.com)
- If you require any further details, a copy of our SEN policy or have any questions please do not hesitate in contacting school.
- Please check the leaflet board at Reception for any S.E.N updates (newsletters provided by the authority etc).

If you have any concerns with regards you your child, please do not hesitate in getting in contact with school. You can

- ask to speak to your child's class teacher
- ask to speak to the acting SENCo / Headteacher (Mrs Anne O'Brien)



## Appendix 1: A guide to the graduated response for parents

1

### Targeted classroom intervention

- Parents, teachers or teaching assistants notice that the child is having some difficulties.
- The teacher plans something that might be a little bit different for the child but the learning is broadly the same as the other children's.

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### SEN support (Special Educational Need)

- If the child's progress is still slower than expected, school staff will start to check if the child has a barrier to their learning. Evidence might be - things that parents have told us about the child at home, samples of their work, teacher's marking records, notes and observations, specific assessments that are carried out by school staff
- School will work with parents to develop a plan for support. This might include the child learning some things that are different to the other children, like in a special phonics session, extra reading with an adult, or a 'good' behaviour chart
- School staff will talk about the child's progress each term with parents and share ideas.

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### SEN support with external specialist(s)

- If the child's progress is still slower than expected, after a child has been given long enough, school staff might ask for help from an external specialist.
- We can only do this if you give us permission.
- External specialists would include speech & language therapists; specialist advisory teachers for children who have specific learning difficulties, physical difficulties, autistic spectrum characteristics, visual or hearing impairments or professionals like the Educational Psychologist
- We might ask you to take your child to the GP to discuss your concerns with them. They might refer your child to the paediatrician for expert advice
- External specialists usually give us extra advice - such as strategies that we can use with your child in class, and sometimes activities that would be best carried out outside the classroom. Sometimes this might include equipment that might help too.
- School staff, including the SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) will talk about the child's progress each term with parents and share ideas.

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### Education , Health & Care plans (EHCP)

- An EHCP is applied for to the Local Authority (LA). Lots of evidence is needed. Children will need to have had support at the earlier three stages. The evidence must show that despite everyone's intervention, the child has not made good progress and the gap between them and other children has widened significantly
- The LA will also need information about other significant physical, health or social care needs.
- The process should only take 20 weeks to complete, once it is started.