Special Educational Needs Policy and Procedures

Kells & Connor Pre-School is committed to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, which offers equal access for all children. We recognise that some children may have special educational needs and / or a disability and we will make every necessary arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

It is the policy of this pre-school to provide places for the integration of children with special educational needs subject to:

● The view of the child’s parents.
● The ability of the pre-school to meet the child’s needs.
● The efficient education of the other children in the pre-school being assured.
● The efficient use of resources.

Definition

The code of practice (COP) for Special Educational Needs (SEN) defines ‘special educational needs’ as:

"A learning disability which calls for special educational provision to be made"

The COP adopts the definition of SEN as laid down in the 1981 Education Act and subsequently in the 1993 Education Act. Our aim is to ensure that “Special Educational Provision” will be made for any child who has a “Special Educational Need”.

“Learning difficulty means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children his or her age, and/or has a disability which hinders his or her use of educational provision which is different from, or additional to, the provision made generally for children of comparable age.”

Code of practice paragraph: 1:4

A child is deemed to be in need when;

● The child’s developmental progress in the pre-school will be affected by their general health status.
● His or her health, or development, is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without such provision.
● A Health and Social Services Trust (HSST) considers that a child has special educational needs.
● The development progress gives rise to concern.
● A child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children his or her age.
● Has a disability which hinders his or her use of educational facilities.
● Is specially gifted.

Rationale

The purpose of education for all children is the same, the goals are the same. But the help individual children need in progressing towards them will be different. The pre-school is sensitive to the needs and feelings of children with SEN and their families, and will ensure individual needs are recognised and addressed. Parents / carers will be involved at every stage and in any plans that are made to meet a child’s individual special needs.

If a child has special needs of any kind, we will discuss;

● How the child and parent can be helped.
● How the staff can help.
● What advice and practical help we can get from outside agencies.
● What adaptations may need to be made.
● How we can support and help the parent.
● What behavioural and/ or educational plans need to be devised, with outside agency help, tailored to each individual child.

When applying for a pre-school place, parents should state if their child is receiving help from any of the following;

● Child Development team.
● Educational Psychologist.
● Occupational Therapist.
● Speech Therapist.
● Social Services.

Contact may be made to any of the above with parental consent if deemed appropriate.

The successful integration of children with special educational needs requires careful and detailed planning before admission.
Procedures

If a child enrolls at Kells & Connor Pre-School and has already been identified as SEN, we will firstly discuss with the parent and other supporting professionals, if Kells & Connor Pre-School can offer the appropriate care and education for their child.

Every consideration of the child and the other children’s attendance will be taken into consideration. If the child does come to Kells & Connor Pre-School we will appoint a suitably qualified member of staff to work 1:1 with the child. If there is no one suitable we will recruit for a suitable person. This person will be responsible, in conjunction with the Leader, to work in partnership with the parents and other professionals, and to set up individual learning plans.

It is vitally important that children with SEN are identified as early as possible and that an awareness of their possible difficulties are discussed. If we observe a child is experiencing difficulty we will discuss this with the parent/carer. We will request permission to consult the appropriate external support agency;

- Child Development team.
- Educational Psychologist.
- Occupational Therapist.
- Speech Therapist.
- Social Services.

We will work in partnership with the parent to ensure that every possible assistance be given to the child.

Prior to admission.

- It is important that the child’s parents are willing to use this place.
- It is essential for the leader and staff to gain as much information as possible from the child’s parents and other professionals involved with the child.
- It is essential to ensure that extra classroom assistance or equipment is available, if necessary.

Admission of child with special educational needs.

After consultation with all concerned with the child, the child will usually be admitted into the pre-school in the same manner as the other children, keeping in mind;

- The child’s reaction to previous experiences of separation from parents.
- The extent of the special educational need.
- That it may be preferable not to admit a child with special educational needs until most of the other children have been settled, depending on the particular need. It may be possible to admit them earlier if classroom assistance is available.
- That the child’s admission may have to be more gradual than usual, with the parent perhaps having to stay longer. The length of stay shall be increased, as the child is ready.

It is important that the parents of the children with special educational needs should be seen as active educators of their children and be very involved with the education of their child in the pre-school. There will be regular contact with the leader to exchange information and extra support shall be given to those parents, if necessary.

Integration of a child with special educational needs.

- It is recommended where possible, the child with special educational needs will follow the same routines and have access to the same experiences and materials as other children. It is however recognised that those needs may result in him/her having additional attention and/or the use of special facilities and equipment.
- The identification of special difficulties may result in the leader devising individual learning programmes for the child and the special educational needs.
- It is important that good working relationships are established between professionals working with the child in order to share information and appropriate skills.
- Care will be taken to ensure that the child is socially integrated with the help from all members of staff.
- Systematic observations and records are especially pertinent for children who have special educational needs.
They are necessary for the children who already have been, or are likely to be, statemented. Procedures laid down by the board will be followed.

THE FIVE STAGE PROCEDURE

Stage 1
The pre-school leader raises a concern that a child may have special educational needs. They then consult with the child’s parents.

The playgroup staff will;
- File a record of concern.
- Offer differentiated teaching strategies.
- Monitor and review progress.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) shall;
- Ensure the child’s name is included in the SEN register.
- Discuss with the child’s key worker and assess the child’s needs.
- Offer advice and support as necessary.

Stage 1 action should be reviewed to see if the child’s difficulties have been resolved. If the strategies have been successful in addressing the difficulties then the child’s name shall be removed from the register. If the child’s progress is still unsatisfactory after 2 reviews then the child should progress to stage 2.

Stage 2
The key worker shall;
- Be responsible for working with the child in the classroom carrying out an individual education plan (ACTION STAGE 1) arrived at in conjunction with the SENCO and shall monitor on a regular basis in the educational plan.
- The child’s parents should be involved a much a possible and given on how they may contribute to their child’s educational plan.

The SENCO shall;
- Work with the key worker in assessing the child’s difficulties and offer advice on a suitable educational plan.
- Work with key worker in planning, monitoring and reviewing the child’s progress.
- Seek advice, having sought agreement with the child’s parent/carer, from the child’s health visitor/GP to ascertain if there are any medical reasons for the child’s educational difficulties.
- Keep the child’s educational plan under review in the consultation with the child’s key worker and parents where possible.

If the strategies employed in stages 1 and 2 haven’t been suitable to meet the needs of the child, then the pre-school, by agreement with the parents, will discuss with the leader of the accessibility of the child getting support from services outside the pre-school (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Child Development team.). If this is accessible the child will move onto stage 3.

Stage 3
Provision at this stage involves support and advice from agencies outside the pre-school. However, the emphasis is still upon providing support in the classroom context.

The key worker will:
- Draw up a new educational plan for the child.
- Monitor and review progress.

The SENCO will:
- Support the key worker and liaise with external agencies with regards to a new educational plan.
- Initiate a stage 3 referral.

Support services for the child include the following:
- Support service for pre-school children.
- Support service for children with specific speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Support service for children with specific learning difficulties and with pervasive development disorder.
- Curriculum advisory and support service.
Educational psychology service.

Stage 4 - statutory assessment
The key worker and the child's parents at this stage continue to work together to implement individual educational plans.

Requests for statutory assessment can be requested by:
- Designated officer within the Health and Social Service Trust.
- Educational Psychologist.
- Leader following stage 3 assessment.
- The child's parents.

Advice shall be sought from:
- SCMO – medical and social.
- Principal of the child’s school – educational.
- Educational Psychologist – psychological advice.
- Such other services as may be prescribed.

Children will not usually be eligible for stage 4 assessment unless earlier stages have been completed, and the actions and strategies employed at the earlier stages have been documented.

Stage 5 – statements
On receipt of advice from all concerned the Board will decide whether or not a statement is required.

Sometimes a child will start pre-school with a statement already in place. These children will need to be reviewed annually to make sure the needs of the child are being met and to consider the appropriateness of future provision.

In the pre-school the key worker and SENCO will carry out the review. The annual review process may be divided into the following basic stages;
- Seeking advice and gathering information.
- Preparation for the meeting.
- The review meeting.
- The meeting.

This policy has been adopted by the pre-school committee at a meeting on:

Date: ____________________________

Signed: ____________________________

(Chairperson)