Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School
"Nurturing curiosity and inspiring imagination"



2026-27

Support for Vulnerable Children Policy

DOCUMENT STATUS

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GOOD PRACTICE

Legislation

- Data protection legislation

Approval

Governing body free to delegate to the headteacher or a committee of the governing body

Review Frequency

Annual

Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School

Support for Vulnerable Children Policy

Policy Lead: Headteacher/SENCO/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

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1. Policy Statement

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, irrespective of their individual circumstances. We recognise that some children may require additional support to enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes, access a broad and ambitious curriculum, remain safe, develop positive wellbeing and successfully prepare for the next stage of their education.

We are committed to identifying vulnerability at the earliest opportunity, working in partnership with families and external agencies, and providing timely, inclusive and evidence-informed support. We recognise that vulnerability is often complex, may be temporary or long term, and that children may experience multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously.

Our approach is underpinned by the principles of inclusion, equity, early intervention and high expectations for every child.

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2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Identify vulnerable children as early as possible
- Ensure all vulnerable children receive appropriate support to meet their individual needs
- Remove barriers to learning, development and participation
- Promote children's safety, wellbeing and emotional health
- Improve outcomes for vulnerable children across all areas of learning and development
- Work collaboratively with parents, carers and external agencies
- Monitor the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups to ensure they achieve well
- Reduce inequalities and ensure all children can access the full curriculum and wider nursery experiences

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3. Definition of Vulnerability

A vulnerable child is one who may be at greater risk of poor outcomes, harm, exclusion or not achieving their full potential because of their individual circumstances. Vulnerability extends beyond a diagnosed Special Educational Need

or Disability (SEND) and may be temporary, long term or arise from a combination of factors.

Children who may be considered vulnerable include, but are not limited to:

Children with SEND

- Children with an EHCP
- Children receiving SEND Support
- Children with emerging additional needs
- Children with physical disabilities, sensory impairments or medical needs
- Children with developmental delay or neurodevelopmental differences

Children experiencing disadvantage

- Children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium
- Two-year-olds accessing funded childcare through disadvantage criteria
- Children experiencing poverty or financial hardship
- Children living in temporary or unsuitable housing

Children supported by Children's Social Care

- Children in Need
- Children subject to Child Protection Plans
- Looked After Children
- Previously Looked After Children
- Children receiving Early Help

Children with family or social vulnerabilities

- Children living with domestic abuse
- Children whose parent or carer has significant mental ill health
- Children affected by parental substance misuse
- Children who have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect
- Children experiencing bereavement or significant family change
- Children with a parent in prison

Children with medical vulnerabilities

- Children with complex medical conditions
- Children requiring regular medication or medical procedures
- Children with life-limiting conditions

Children at risk of educational disadvantage

- Children with poor attendance
- Children with delayed speech, language and communication
- Children with delayed social, emotional or self-regulation skills
- Children experiencing difficulties with executive functioning
- Children whose independence or toilet training affects access to learning or transition

Other groups

- Children learning English as an Additional Language
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- Refugee or asylum-seeking children
- Children from military families
- Children with limited access to high-quality early learning experiences

4. Principles

We will:

- Maintain high expectations for every child
- Promote inclusive practice across all areas of nursery life
- Identify barriers to learning early
- Deliver support proportionate to children's needs
- Promote strong relationships and secure attachments
- Work in partnership with families
- Seek advice from external professionals where appropriate
- Review the effectiveness of interventions regularly

5. Identification

Children may be identified through:

- Baseline assessment
- Ongoing observations
- Developmental assessment
- Parent/carer concerns
- Health visitor or medical information
- Social care involvement
- Attendance monitoring
- Behaviour and wellbeing monitoring
- Multi-agency meetings
- Professional discussion

Identification is an ongoing process and children may move into or out of vulnerable groups throughout their time at nursery.

6. Support Provided

In addition to high quality teaching and reasonable adjustments,
support may include:

- SEND Support
- Individual Support Plans
- Targeted intervention programmes
- Speech and language support
- Support for communication and interaction
- Specialist emotional wellbeing support
- Executive functioning and self-regulation strategies
- Personal care and independence programmes
- Toilet training support
- Attendance support
- Family support and signposting
- Multi-agency working
- Enhanced transition arrangements

Support will always be proportionate to identified need.

7. Partnership with Parents

We recognise parents and carers as children's first educators.

We will:

- Share information openly and sensitively
- Involve parents in decision making
- Agree shared targets
- Provide practical strategies for home
- Signpost families to appropriate services
- Review progress regularly with parents

8. Multi-Agency Working

Where appropriate, we will work collaboratively with:

- Warrington Early Years Team
- SEND Team
- Educational Psychology
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Schools Link Mental Health Team
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Health Visiting Service
- Family Hubs
- Children's Social Care
- Early Help
- School Nursing
- Paediatric Services
- Voluntary sector organisations

9. Monitoring Progress and Impact

The progress, attainment and wellbeing of vulnerable children are monitored regularly to ensure they achieve well and make the best possible progress from their starting points.

Leaders analyse the progress of vulnerable groups, including children with SEND, children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium, disadvantaged children, children supported by Children's Social Care, and other identified vulnerable groups.

Monitoring includes:

- Baseline and ongoing assessment
- Progress reviews
- SEND reviews
- Intervention impact evaluations
- Attendance analysis
- Wellbeing monitoring

- Learning walks
- Pupil progress meetings
- Transition outcomes
- Parent and child voice

Where monitoring identifies that a child or group is not making expected progress, provision is reviewed promptly and appropriate adjustments or additional support are implemented.

Governors receive anonymised reports on the progress and outcomes of vulnerable groups and provide challenge and support to ensure that resources are used effectively and inequalities are reduced.

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10. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body
- Monitor outcomes for vulnerable groups
- Ensure statutory duties are fulfilled
- Hold leaders to account for improving outcomes

Headteacher
- Promote an inclusive culture
- Allocate resources effectively
- Monitor the impact of provision
- Ensure staff training

SENCO
- Coordinate SEND provision
- Advise staff
- Liaise with agencies
- Monitor interventions

Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Co-ordinate safeguarding support
- Liaise with Children's Social Care
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are followed

All Staff
- Speak promptly with the SENCo and/or DSL to share concerns as they arise
- Deliver high-quality inclusive practice
- Implement agreed strategies
- Work collaboratively with families

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11. Equality and Inclusion

No child will be disadvantaged because of disability, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, family circumstances, language, socio-economic background or any other protected characteristic.

Reasonable adjustments will be made wherever required to ensure equitable access to learning and participation.

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12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or local guidance changes.

The headteacher and governing body will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy by considering:

- Outcomes for vulnerable groups
- Progress data
- Attendance
- Intervention impact
- Parent feedback
- Staff confidence
- Ofsted recommendations
- Safeguarding and SEND audits

Continuous evaluation will ensure that vulnerable children receive timely, effective support and achieve positive outcomes across all areas of learning and development.

Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Equality Policy
- EYFS Policy
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- Accessibility Plan