INCLUSION, EQUALITY AND SEND POLICY

Policy effective from: September 2026

Policy review date: September 2027, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or nursery practice changes

Policy lead: Nursery Manager / SENCO

Applies to: All children, parents/carers, staff, agency staff, students, volunteers and visitors

Purpose and Statement of Intent

At St Nicholas Nursery , we believe that **every child has the right to belong, participate, be listened to, feel safe and achieve their potential**.

Inclusion is the process of identifying, understanding and reducing barriers to participation, learning, development and belonging. Inclusive early years practice means anticipating individual needs, listening to children and families, adapting the environment and curriculum, and responding appropriately to children's strengths, interests and needs.

We recognise that every child is unique. Children may have different abilities, developmental pathways, communication styles, cultures, languages, family circumstances, health needs and experiences.

Our commitment to inclusion and equality is therefore embedded throughout the nursery, including:

- leadership and management;
- curriculum and educational programmes;
- SEND provision;
- assessment and planning;
- safeguarding;

- behaviour support;
- the physical environment;
- resources and activities;
- relationships and interactions;
- admissions;
- staff recruitment and development;
- partnerships with families and professionals.

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children, families and staff.

Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation has no place at St Nicholas Nursery Nursery.

Legislative and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by and should be read alongside the most current versions of relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers – September 2026**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years**
- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014**
- **Childcare Act 2006**
- **Children Act 2004**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**
- relevant local authority SEND, inclusion and safeguarding guidance.

The EYFS 2026 requires early years providers to have arrangements in place to support children with SEND. Group providers are expected to identify a SENCO, and providers

funded by the local authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice.

The SEND Code of Practice provides statutory guidance on identifying and supporting children with SEND and applies to relevant early years providers in England

Our Inclusion and Equality Principles

St Nicholas Nursery Nursery will:

- value every child as an individual;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- identify and reduce barriers to participation;
- challenge discrimination and stereotyping;
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and adults;
- provide appropriate support for children with SEND;
- maintain high expectations for every child;
- promote positive attitudes towards difference and diversity;
- ensure children have access to an inclusive curriculum;
- recognise and celebrate children's cultures, languages, identities and family backgrounds;
- listen to children's views and take them seriously;
- work in partnership with parents/carers;
- work with other professionals where appropriate;
- monitor whether inclusion is making a meaningful difference to children's experiences and outcomes.

Equality does not always mean treating every child in exactly the same way. **Equitable practice means identifying individual barriers and providing the support or reasonable adjustments needed for each child to participate successfully.**

Equality and Protected Characteristics

St Nicholas Nursery Nursery will not unlawfully discriminate against any individual on the grounds of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

We will also consider other circumstances which may create barriers to participation, including disadvantage, poverty, family circumstances, language, health needs or other individual circumstances.

We promote dignity, respect and positive relationships and will not tolerate:

- discriminatory language;
- prejudice;
- harassment;
- bullying;
- victimisation;
- stereotyping;
- exclusionary practice.

Any concerns will be investigated appropriately and dealt with under the relevant nursery or organisational procedure.

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

St Nicholas Nursery Nursery recognises that a child has special educational needs where they have a learning difficulty or disability which requires special educational provision.

SEND may include needs relating to:

- communication and interaction;
- cognition and learning;
- social, emotional and mental health;
- sensory and/or physical development;
- speech, language and communication;
- developmental differences;
- medical or health needs where these affect access to care or learning.

A child does **not** need a formal diagnosis for the nursery to identify a concern or provide appropriate support.

Our starting point is:

> **What does this child need to participate, communicate, learn, feel safe and thrive?**

We focus on children's strengths as well as their areas of need.

SENCO

St Nicholas Nursery will identify a suitably experienced **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)**.

The SENCO will coordinate the nursery's SEND arrangements and will:

- support early identification of additional needs;
- advise practitioners on inclusive strategies;
- coordinate SEND support;
- oversee the graduated approach;

- work in partnership with parents/carers;
- liaise with the local authority and other professionals;
- support appropriate referrals;
- contribute to applications for additional support or funding;
- maintain appropriate SEND records;
- support transitions;
- monitor the impact of SEND provision;
- contribute to staff training;
- support curriculum adaptations;
- work with the Nursery Manager to ensure SEND responsibilities form part of quality assurance.

The SENCO will work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead because children with SEND may be particularly vulnerable and may experience additional barriers to recognising or reporting abuse.

Early Identification

St Nicholas Nursery Nursery believes that early identification and appropriate support can improve children's outcomes.

Practitioners will know their key children well and remain alert to possible differences in:

- communication;
- language;
- physical development;
- social interaction;
- emotional regulation;
- behaviour;
- sensory responses;
- attention;
- independence;

- play;
- learning and participation.

Concerns may be identified through:

- observation;
- assessment;
- developmental reviews;
- the two-year progress check;
- parent/carer information;
- children's behaviour or communication;
- information from previous settings;
- health professionals;
- specialist professionals;
- local authority services.

Staff must not make diagnostic assumptions. Concerns should be discussed with the Room Leader and SENCO so that appropriate support can be considered.

SEND Graduated Approach

St Nicholas Nursery Nursery follows the **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** approach recommended through the SEND Code of Practice.

Assess

We consider:

- the child's strengths and interests;
- developmental information;
- progress;
- communication;
- learning;
- behaviour and emotional wellbeing;
- sensory and physical needs;

- environmental factors;
- information from parents/carers;
- professional advice.

Plan

Where additional support is required, we agree:

- the child's identified needs;
- desired outcomes;
- appropriate strategies;
- environmental adaptations;
- resources or equipment;
- adult support;
- responsibility for implementation;
- arrangements for review.

Parents/carers should be involved in planning wherever reasonably possible.

Do

Agreed strategies are implemented within everyday nursery practice.

Support should be embedded within normal routines, relationships and learning wherever possible rather than unnecessarily separating children from their peers.

Review

The effectiveness of support is reviewed regularly.

We consider:

- progress made;
- the child's voice;
- parent's/carer's views;
- practitioner observations;
- professional advice;

- whether strategies remain appropriate;
- whether further assessment or referral is needed.

Where progress remains limited despite appropriate support, the SENCO will work with the family and relevant professionals to consider the next appropriate step.

Reasonable Adjustments

St Nicholas Nursery will make reasonable adjustments to reduce or remove barriers experienced by disabled children and adults.

Adjustments may include:

- adapting activities;
- adapting resources;
- modifying routines;
- changing the physical environment;
- providing additional preparation;
- using visual supports;
- using alternative communication methods;
- making sensory adjustments;
- allowing additional time;
- adapting the way information is shared;
- providing appropriate equipment or specialist resources where available.

Adjustments will be considered individually.

A diagnosis or label will not automatically determine the adjustment required.

Inclusive Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on the **EYFS 2026** and is designed to be ambitious, inclusive and responsive to children's individual needs and interests.

Children learn through play, exploration, relationships, routines, interactions and carefully planned experiences.

Our curriculum supports children to develop across the seven areas of learning:

Prime areas

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The curriculum will provide opportunities for children to develop:

- communication;
- confidence;
- emotional wellbeing;
- independence;
- physical skills;
- early literacy;
- mathematical understanding;
- curiosity;
- creativity;
- problem-solving;
- critical thinking;
- relationships;
- respect for others.

For children with SEND, the curriculum will be adapted where required.

Adaptations may include scaffolding, modelling, repetition, visual resources, sensory support, alternative communication approaches, additional time, environmental adaptations and changes to how children access an experience.

We will adapt to the curriculum without unnecessarily lowering expectations.

Equality, Diversity and Representation Within the Curriculum

Our curriculum and environment will positively reflect the diverse communities in which children live.

Resources, books, displays, music, stories, role play and learning experiences should reflect:

- different cultures;
- races and ethnicities;
- religions and beliefs;
- disabilities;
- family structures;
- genders;
- occupations;
- languages;
- different ways of communicating and living.

We will provide positive, non-stereotypical representations and challenge discriminatory or prejudicial messages.

Children will be supported to recognise both similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Fundamental British Values

St Nicholas Nursery Nursery promotes the four fundamental British values through everyday practice:

- **Democracy**
- **The rule of law**
- **Individual liberty**

- **Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs**

These values are not taught as an isolated subject. They are incorporated into children's everyday experiences, relationships and learning.

Democracy

Children are encouraged to:

- express their views;
- make appropriate choices;
- listen to others;
- contribute ideas;
- understand that people may have different opinions.

Rule of Law

Children are supported to understand:

- boundaries;
- expectations;
- why rules help keep people safe;
- consequences of actions;
- acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Individual Liberty

Children are encouraged to:

- make choices;
- develop independence;
- express preferences;
- develop confidence;
- take appropriate risks within safe boundaries.

Mutual Respect

Children learn that:

- everyone matters;
- everyone deserves kindness;
- people can be different and still be friends;
- differences should be respected.

Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs

Children are supported to develop respect for people whose:

- cultures;
- faiths;
- beliefs;
- languages;
- traditions;
- family lives

may differ from their own.

Discriminatory or prejudicial attitudes are challenged appropriately.

Children's Voice

Children's views are central to our inclusive practice.

Children may communicate through:

- speech;
- gestures;
- facial expressions;
- play;
- behaviour;
- movement;
- symbols;
- photographs;
- visual communication;
- communication aids.

Staff will ensure that children with communication difficulties or SEND have meaningful opportunities to express preferences, feelings and views.

English as an Additional Language

Learning English as an additional language is not, by itself, a special educational need.

We will support children through:

- valuing their home language;
- communicating with families about their child's language experiences;
- using visual and practical communication;
- modelling language;
- repeating and extending vocabulary;
- providing meaningful opportunities for interaction;
- including children's home languages and cultures where appropriate.

Where concerns remain across a child's languages, these will be discussed with the SENCO and appropriate professionals where necessary.

Disadvantaged Children

We recognised that disadvantages can affect children's access to learning, wellbeing and participation.

Where barriers are identified, we will consider appropriate support, including:

- targeted communication with families;
- additional support within daily routines;
- partnership with external agencies;
- transition support;
- signposting to relevant services;
- appropriate early help.

We maintain high expectations for all children regardless of their circumstances.

Safeguarding and SEND

Children with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect and may face additional barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting concerns.

Staff must therefore:

- know the individual child's communication methods;
- recognise changes in behaviour;
- avoid assuming that concerning behaviour is simply related to SEND;
- consider whether a child is able to communicate a concern;
- provide safe and accessible ways for children to seek help;
- follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately in accordance with nursery procedures.

The updated EYFS and inspection framework recognise the particular vulnerability of babies and young children with SEND and the responsibility of adults to identify and respond to concerns.

Admissions and Access

St Nicholas Nursery operates an inclusive admissions process.

A child will not be refused a place solely because they have SEND or a disability.

Before or during admission, we will work with parents/carers to understand:

- the child's strengths;
- needs;
- communication;
- health requirements;
- developmental information;
- previous support;
- reasonable adjustments required.

Where additional staffing, specialist equipment, funding or professional input may be required, we will work with parents and relevant agencies to determine appropriate provision.

Working With Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are valued partners in their child's development.

We will:

- listen to parents' knowledge and concerns;
- involve parents in SEND planning;
- provide clear and accessible information;
- share children's progress;
- discuss concerns openly and sensitively;
- support parents through referrals where appropriate;
- involve parents in reviews;
- respect cultural, linguistic and family differences.

A parent does not need to have a diagnosis before the nursery can respond to concerns.

Partnership With Other Professionals

With appropriate consent or other lawful basis, we may work with:

- health visitors;
- speech and language therapists;
- occupational therapists;
- physiotherapists;
- paediatricians;
- educational psychologists;
- local authority SEND services;
- Portage;
- social care;

- children's centres;
- other relevant professionals.

Professional advice will be considered within the child's provision and reviewed as appropriate.

Education, Health and Care Plans

Where a child has an **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)**, St Nicholas Nursery Nursery will work with parents, the local authority and other relevant professionals to support the outcomes identified.

We will:

- understand the child's identified needs and outcomes;
- implement provision within our responsibilities;
- monitor progress;
- contribute to reviews;
- share relevant evidence;
- support transition planning.

Early years settings are expected to cooperate with EHCP reviews and contribute information about the child's progress and provision.

Assessment and the Two-Year Progress Check

Assessment will be used to understand each child's development, interests, strengths and next steps.

Where a child is aged between two and three, the nursery will complete the required progress check and share an appropriate written summary with parents.

Where significant concerns or identified SEND are present, the nursery will consider targeted support and, where appropriate, involve the SENCO and other professionals.

Assessment will not be used to label children or create unnecessary comparisons.

Inclusive Environment

We will regularly consider whether the nursery environment creates barriers to participation.

This includes:

- physical accessibility;
- room layout;
- access to resources;
- noise levels;
- sensory experiences;
- lighting;
- quiet spaces;
- communication supports;
- toileting and personal care;
- outdoor access;
- safe movement around the setting.

Risk assessments will take individual needs into account.

Transition

Transitions will be planned according to individual needs.

This includes:

- joining St Nicholas Nursery;
- moving between rooms;
- changes in key person;
- changes in routine;
- returning following extended absence;
- moving to another setting;
- transition to school.

Where appropriate, transition arrangements may include additional visits, photographs, visual supports, meetings with parents, professional meetings and information sharing.

Staff Recruitment and Equality

St Nicholas Nursery Nursery is committed to fair and inclusive recruitment.

Recruitment, selection, promotion and development will be based on the requirements of the role and objective criteria.

We will:

- avoid discriminatory recruitment practices;
- make reasonable adjustments during recruitment where required;
- comply with safer recruitment requirements;
- provide appropriate support for staff with disabilities;
- ensure relevant health information is requested only where lawful and necessary.

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25. Staff Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote inclusion.

Staff must:

- know their key children well;
- recognise emerging needs;
- follow individual support plans;
- use inclusive language;
- challenge discriminatory behaviour;
- implement agreed adjustments;
- communicate concerns;
- work with parents and professionals;
- maintain confidentiality;
- attend relevant training;

- reflect on their own practice.

No child should be unnecessarily excluded from an activity because of SEND.

Where staff believe a child's needs cannot be safely or effectively met, this must be escalated to the Room Leader, SENCO and Nursery Manager.

Training and Professional Development

All new staff will receive induction relating to equality, inclusion, SEND and the nursery's expectations.

Training and professional development may include:

- SEND awareness;
- communication and language;
- autism;
- sensory needs;
- neurodiversity;
- positive behaviour support;
- equality and diversity;
- anti-discriminatory practice;
- safeguarding children with SEND;
- communication systems;
- medical needs;
- inclusive curriculum practice.

Training needs will be identified through supervision, observations, SEND reviews, staff meetings and quality assurance.

Challenging Discriminatory Behaviour

Discriminatory behaviour will be addressed promptly and appropriately.

Staff will:

1. ensure everyone is safe;

2. challenge inappropriate behaviour;
3. support the child or adult affected;
4. help children understand why behaviour is inappropriate;
5. record significant incidents;
6. inform the appropriate leader;
7. work with families where appropriate;
8. escalate safeguarding concerns where necessary.

Adult discrimination, harassment or victimisation may be managed under organisational disciplinary or safeguarding procedures.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information relating to SEND, disability, health or family circumstances will be treated sensitively and stored securely.

Information will be shared appropriately in accordance with:

- data protection requirements;
- privacy procedures;
- safeguarding responsibilities;
- lawful information-sharing arrangements.

Confidentiality does not prevent lawful sharing of information when necessary to safeguard a child or promote their welfare.

Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Review

The Nursery Manager and SENCO will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through:

- SEND reviews;
- observations;
- supervision;
- assessment;

- children's voice;
- parent feedback;
- staff feedback;
- training records;
- incident and behaviour records;
- transition information;
- professional feedback;
- monitoring of reasonable adjustments;
- curriculum evaluation.

The focus will be on **impact**, including whether children are:

- included;
- participating;
- making progress;
- developing independence;
- developing positive relationships;
- having their individual needs met;
- experiencing reduced barriers.

Where weaknesses are identified, an action plan will be implemented and monitored.

Complaints and Concerns

Any parent/carer, member of staff or professional who believes that the nursery is not meeting its responsibilities under this policy should raise the concern with the Nursery Manager.

Concerns will be dealt with fairly, sensitively and promptly.

The nursery's complaints, safeguarding, whistleblowing or disciplinary procedures will be followed where applicable.

Staff will be supported to raise concerns about discrimination, unsafe practice or failures to meet children's needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Nursery Manager

The Nursery Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that:

- this policy is implemented;
- statutory requirements are met;
- appropriate resources are available;
- SEND and inclusion are reflected in quality assurance;
- staff understand their responsibilities;
- concerns are addressed.

SENCO

The SENCO coordinates the nursery's SEND arrangements and supports staff, children and families.

Room Leaders and Key Persons

They are responsible for:

- knowing children well;
- implementing agreed strategies;
- monitoring progress;
- communicating concerns;
- contributing to Assess, Plan, Do, Review;
- working with parents.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for creating a welcoming, respectful and inclusive environment and for challenging discriminatory practice.

Our Commitment

At St Nicholas Nursery:

Every child is welcomed.

Every child is valued.

Every child is listened to.

Every child is safe.

Every child is supported to participate.

Every child is offered appropriate challenge and high expectations.

Every child receives support according to their individual needs.

Every family is treated with dignity and respect.

Inclusion is not an additional activity or separate programme. It is **the way we operate, teach, care, communicate and build relationships every day**.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier where required by:

- changes to the EYFS;
- changes to SEND legislation or guidance;
- changes to equality legislation;
- safeguarding updates;
- local authority requirements;
- Ofsted requirements;
- identified areas for improvement within the nursery.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
Sept 2026	*Anjana Shah*	*August 2027*