Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Policy first produced: February 2025

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To be approved by the Governing body: February 2025

SECTION 1: SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of SENCO: Natalie Nichols

National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCO) Status: achieved November 2015

Contact Details: Tel: 0151 709 5114, Email: sendco@abercromby.liverpool.sch.uk

The SENCO can be contacted during school hours and will use their best endeavours to respond within 24 hours of contact being received by the school, please expect any responses to be made during working hours and in term time.

The role of the SENCO at Abercromby Nursery School is as a member of our Senior Leadership Team. The policy was developed in collaboration with staff, families and governors to promote the Inclusive practice and approach we have in our school. It is important to recognise that all our teachers are teachers of all our children and we use reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to children's learning and development so they can achieve their full potential and meet their very best outcomes. By teachers, we include all those who work with our children, including our Nursery Officers.

The Head Teacher Natalie Nichols, who is also the SENCO, advocates and works closely with the school staff, to ensure reasonable adjustments are made to the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, and that there is equal accessibility of opportunity for all children including those with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disability (SEND).

SECTION 2: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction, Rationale and Compliance

This policy complies with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25 (Department of Health, Department for Education, 2015) and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools (DfE, Feb 2013)
- Schools SEND information report regulations (2014)
- Statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions (DfE, August 2017)
- Child Protection Policy Sept 2022
- Accessibility plan

Aim

At Abercromby Nursery School we aim to create an inclusive environment that celebrates the strengths whilst recognising the needs of children with SEND, and provides a broad and fulfilling education, which prepares each individual for the next stage of their life and

education. We aim to raise the aspirations of and expectations for all pupils with SEND, by focussing on their outcomes, identifying the support they need to help them succeed.

Objectives

At Abercromby Nursery School we will fulfil our aim through the following objectives:

1. To identify and provide for children who have SEND
2. To work within the guidance provided by the SEND Code of Practice (DoH, DfE, 2015)
3. To operate a holistic approach to the management and provision of support for special educational needs
4. To provide a trained, knowledgeable and effective Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) who will work with teachers, support staff and other key individuals or services
5. To provide support and advice for all staff working with children who have SEND.

SECTION 3: IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WHO MAY HAVE SEND

Disabled children

Many children who have SEND may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is "…a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". The term "long-term" is defined as "a year or more" and "substantial" is defined as "more than minor or trivial". This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children with such conditions do not necessarily have SEND, but there is significant overlap between disabled children and those with SEND. Where a disabled child requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEND definition.

Children who are risk of developing SEND

According to the SEND Code of Practice, "A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her."

At Abercromby Nursery School we recognise the importance of early identification of children who may be facing challenges or difficulties in accessing the curriculum and/or in their personal and social development. Before the SENCO becomes involved we expect our teachers and key people to deliver high quality first teaching, use regular assessment, monitoring and observation and work with the head teacher in Pupil Progress Meetings to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances. This can be characterised by progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline,
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress,
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers,
- widens the attainment gap.

We also recognise that slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child has SEND and should not automatically lead to a pupil being recorded as having a SEND. However, the school may use this as an indicator of a range of learning difficulties or disabilities. Equally, we do not assume that attainment in line with chronological age means that there is no learning difficulty or disability for that individual child. Some learning difficulties and disabilities occur across the range of cognitive ability and, if left unaddressed, may lead to frustration and the child becoming disaffected from education, or resulting in emotional or behavioural difficulties both within school and at home. We will continually work with parents/carers to listen to them and hear concerns they may have in regards to their child's development and progress towards outcomes.

The SEND Code of Practice (DoH, DfE, 2015) specifies 4 Broad Areas of Need and this includes more specific needs;

- **Communication and Interaction** – including Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Autism Spectrum Conditions

- **Cognition and Learning** – including Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia)

- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health** – including ADHD, ADD, Attachment Disorder or an underlying mental health need such as anxiety, depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms not medically explained.

- **Sensory and/or Physical Needs** – including hearing impairment, visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment and any physical impairments.

At Abercromby Nursery School, key people will spend time getting to know their children really well, developing secure attachments, through home visits, talking with their families, settling the child into Nursery, playing alongside, talking and listening to them and observing them. We use the OP&L assessment system which assess children against developmental milestones for their age. Children at risk of developing SEND may be identified at this point.

Observations of child initiated and adult directed learning through 6 monthly OP&L Spotlight observations and incidental story observations will be ongoing and continue to identify the child's stage of developments and learning needs. Key people meet for pupil progress meetings with the head teacher, who is also the SENCO, at three points in the year. During these meetings, children who are at risk of developing SEND are also identified.

However, practitioner knowledge of the child is key and if at any point there are concerns that a child may have SEND, this will be referred to the SENCO.

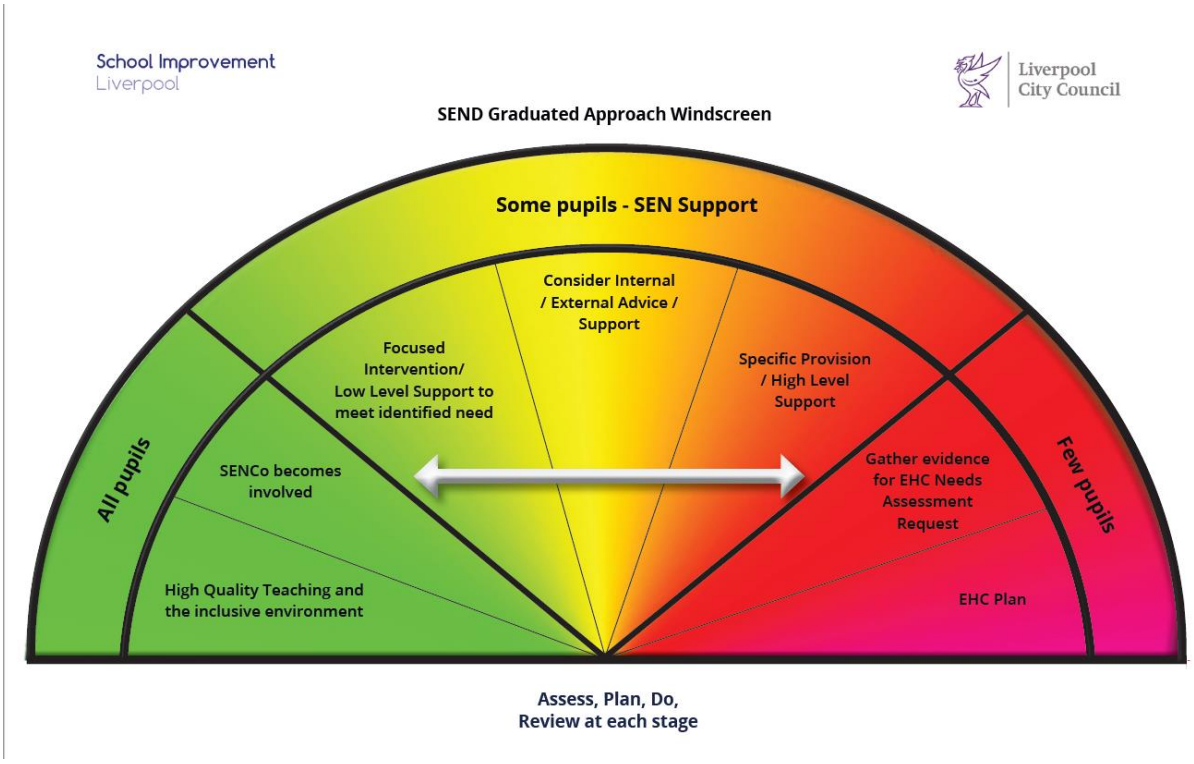
Other factors may affect a child's progress and attainment, but may not necessarily be due to a child having SEND such as:

- Disability (the Code of Practice outlines the “reasonable adjustment” duty for all settings and schools provided under current Disability Equality legislation – these alone do not constitute SEND),
- Attendance and Punctuality,
- Health and Welfare,
- English as an Additional Language (EAL),
- Being in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium,
- Being a Looked After Child,
- Being a child of Service personnel.

SECTION 4: THE GRADUATED APPROACH

<u>Procedures when a child has been identified as at risk of developing SEND</u>

At Abercromby Nursery School, we use the Liverpool Local Authority windscreen model to guide us in our approach to working with children who may have SEND:



When a concern has been raised about the development of a pupil:

- The class teacher will discuss this with the SENCO.
- The class teacher and/or SENCO will then meet with the child's parents, where possible, to discuss their concerns to develop an understanding of the pupil’s strengths and difficulties.
- Next steps and outcomes will be agreed together.
- The SENCO will keep a record of the meeting in the SEND file

Prior to placing a child on the SEND register, a number of factors will be considered:

- High quality first teaching – the role of the class teacher and key person, in individual planning and support given to children,
- Provision and impact of wave 2 interventions (e.g. social skills, targeted group interventions),
- Engagement of outside services if necessary,
- Other factors which may be affecting children's progress.

We adapt the curriculum and the learning environment for children with SEND by:

- Adhering to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, which placed a duty on all schools and Local Authorities to improve the accessibility of schools for disabled children over time. In line with this there is a fully developed Accessibility Plan which is available on the school's website.
- The school is proactive in removing barriers to learning. The school increases and promotes access for disabled children to the school curriculum. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in curriculum enhancements e.g. Beatlife music sessions, Forest School, PE and educational visits.
- The school continues to evaluate how best to improve access to the physical environment of the school. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.

The Assess-Plan-Do-Review Cycle

The Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle for children with SEND unfolds as follows (referring to the graduated approach as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice):

ASSESS
In assessing a child, the school will carry out an analysis of the child's needs, which draws on the key person's observations and assessments, including any concerns expressed by parents, which are actively listened to and recorded. The child's own views are sought (often through their families) as are those of external support services if involved. The child's individual's development is compared to that which is typical of their peers. The school may utilise expertise from outside agencies to conduct specialised assessments e.g. educational psychology.

PLAN
Families are formally notified if their child is being provided with SEND support. The teacher and SENCO will consult with families and decide together on the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, outcomes, development or behaviour, along with a clear date for review. This is encapsulated in our own school format Play Plan, which captures a child's interests and strengths and describes their next steps with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) targets.

DO
The SENCO supports the class teacher and key people on the effective implementation of the Play Plan. The teacher has overall responsibility for working with the child and must work closely with support staff and/or specialist staff involved to plan and assess the impact of support. Where the interventions involve group work or one to one teaching away from the rest of the class, the teacher has a responsibility to oversee this.

REVIEW
Progress reviews are carried out on a termly basis; the child and their family, SENCO, class teacher and key people evaluate together the effect of the "additional and different" support.

At this point the need for a referral to an external agency such as Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) or Educational Psychology may be identified.

Criteria for leaving the SEND Register

During the Review phase, it may be decided together that the child has made such good progress, that they no longer need to be on the SEND register, as they have closed the gap in attainment and have caught up with their peers. However, if after some time, during Pupil Progress Meetings it becomes apparent that the child is once again experiencing difficulties, they can of course return to the SEND register, and additional support actioned once more.

For children with MLD (moderate learning disabilities) or SpLD (Specific Learning Disability): during the year some pupils will make enough progress to close the gap with expected attainment levels for their age. This means they can now be supported by high quality first teaching to boost their learning further to meet national expectations.

For children with Speech, Language or Communication needs: some will make sufficient progress with their Speech and Language targets that they no longer need intervention from therapists and are removed from the SALT caseload. Sometimes children may still participate in SALT activities, under advice from SALT, within school to help sustain their progress.

For children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs: some may have made progress by reducing the frequency of unwanted behaviour, learning to manage their emotions in a better way so they may be discharged from services. Sometimes children may still participate in social skills groups within school to sustain their progress.

SECTION 5: CHILDREN WITH MORE COMPLEX SEND NEEDS

Some children and young people on the SEND Register may have more significant or complex SEND. There may be a number of specialist services involved with the child and their family. These can include specialists from services externally commissioned directly by the school, or services that are commissioned through the Local Authority or local Primary Consortia such as Outreach, Specialist Teachers from SENISS (Special Educational Needs Inclusion Support Service) or Educational Psychology Services.

If after using the graduated approach, and opening an EHAT (Early Help Assessment Tool) to support the family, it is felt that a child is still not making the expected progress towards the identified outcomes, despite the relevant and purposeful action taken to meet their needs, then the school can ask for further support from the Local Authority (LA). This could take the form of either applying for High Needs Top-Up Funding (if for example a 1:1 supporting adult is needed) or requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Assessment of Need.

This assessment would involve consultation between the child, families, and all agencies involved with the child, and may lead to the LA issuing an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This EHCP will bring together the health and social care needs of the child, as well as their special educational needs and outline the provision planned for them. Children with an EHCP continue to be the responsibility of the teacher and may access some further

intervention or support within school. Their progress will be monitored by the school and also through an Annual Review, conducted jointly with the Local Authority, where the outcomes on the EHCP will be considered.

SECTION 6: SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SEND AND THEIR FAMILIES

Building warm and strong working relationships with all our families is at the heart of all we do at Abercromby Nursery School and it is no different for families of children who may have SEND. We do this with our effective key person approach (see our Settling In and Key Person policy). Home visits and our online Learning Journals system help families to understands their child's developmental stage, supporting close links between home and school. Regular family consultation is built in to the OP&L assessment system, where families will be able to chat to their child's key person about their child's progress and learning needs.

However, we recognise that families of children with SEND may need more from us in terms of information, support, reassurance and time. We aim to work in partnership with our parents and families and to ensure that they are fully informed about all matters relating to their child's SEND. Our open door policy enables families to speak to the teacher or key person as soon as they have concerns and our SENCO is available to speak to families at any point.

There are many places to get further information and our SEN Information Report is published on our website (available as a printed copy from the office) and is updated annually.

We guide parents towards the LA Local Offer for information about wider services which can be found across Liverpool and the wider Merseyside Area. In addition to information about the personalised support we offer children, we also provide information about:

- How we admit children on our website, both for 2 year olds and for 3-4 year olds.
- Our links with other agencies
- Our curriculum

We also refer families who are looking for further support to specialist support agencies including the following:

- Granby Children's Centre
- ADDvanced Solutions

If a child has been seen by our educational psychologist, families can make an appointment with her to talk through the report.

SECTION 7: SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL NEEDS

The school recognises that pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and PE. Some pupils with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. When pupils also have SEND and a

statement or EHCP, which draws together a pupils educational, health and social care needs, the SEND Code of Practice 2015 is followed.

Teaching staff are deemed competent to administer medication in tablet or liquid form but must have received training in any medical techniques required, e.g. use of EPI-PEN for anaphylaxis, use of blood tester and/or insulin pen for diabetes. A Health Care Plan for the pupil will be prepared. This will indicate the date of request for administration and approval and will provide as much information on the medical condition as is available. The health plan follows a standard format but will vary dependent on the medical needs, e.g. short term or specific condition. Usually a health care plan will be drawn up with a health practitioner, who will regularly review them. Health Care Plans will need regularly updating to ensure information is current.

SECTION 8: MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF SEND

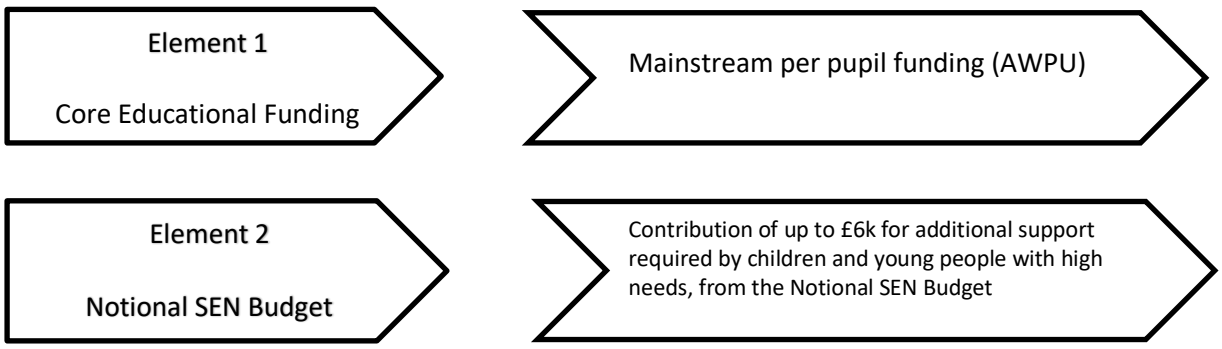
The SENCO monitors and evaluates the practices of teachers and provision for pupils including those with SEND, then feeds back to staff about strengths and areas to develop. This is done in a number of ways through observations, learning walks and monitoring of Learning Journals. The SENCO formally observes support staff at least annually; informal observations are also carried out. Feedback is given about their practice, including strengths and areas to develop. As part of their Performance Management, all staff are set goals to work towards to improve their practice. The progress and attainment of pupils with SEND is monitored termly by the SENCO and feeds into whole school monitoring.

The Governing Body has final responsibility for SEND at Abercromby Nursery School, and this will be a regular agenda item. The SEND link governor will meet regularly with the SENCO and monitor provision, reporting back to the Governing Body.

SECTION 9: RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Funding for SEND in Mainstream

All schools receive an amount of money to support children and young people with special educational needs. This is provided as part of the schools' block formula allocation. It is the responsibility of each school to have a 'notional SEN budget' which caters sufficiently for the special educational needs of the children and young people within their school. This is often managed by the Head Teacher with advice for its deployment coming from the SENCO. The Education Funding Agency describes the funding available within schools for SEN pupils as being made up from 3 elements:



The money in the schools' block funding identified for Element 2 is based on a formula which is agreed between the schools and the Local Authority; different Local Authorities have their own methodology and operational guidance which our school is aware of. Schools receive an annual school block allocation made up of a number of elements in order to enable them to support special educational needs within the school and specifically to fund the first £3,600 of a nursery child's SEND support. Additional resources for EHC plans - Element 3 can be allocated through top-up funding from the High Needs block budget. The level of top up funding for each pupil is allocated within bands i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 depending on the type and level of need of each pupil and the provision that is made available. High Needs pupils with or without statements or EHC plans are therefore supported by a combination of school block funding (Element 2) and high needs top-up funding (Element 3).

Workforce Development and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

All new staff have an Induction Programme in place. For permanent and long-term temporary staff, (including Initial Teacher Trainees) this includes a session with the SENCO that is designed to explain the systems and structures in place to support the needs of individual children and young people. The training needs of all staff are identified, a programme of professional development is in place, and all staff are encouraged to access this. This may include staff meeting time to increase knowledge and skill around a particular area of need.

The school's SENCO has achieved the Masters Level National Qualification for SENCOs, facilitated by School Improvement Liverpool and accredited by Liverpool John Moores University in November 2015. They also hold a Post Graduate Certificate for Advanced Educational Practice (November, 2011) accredited by Liverpool John Moores University in addition to National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). She regularly attends the School Improvement Liverpool's SEND Briefing in order to keep up to date with local and national issues in SEND as well as attending the local Primary Consortia Meetings to access support and share good practice with other SENCOs and Schools.

A Nursery Officer, Mandy Corrigan has been trained to deliver the Derbyshire Language Intervention programme for children needing extra support with their communication and language. She has also achieved a Level 3 qualification on supporting children with SEND in Early Years. Another Nursery Officer, Salma Mohamed, has achieved a SEND qualification through the Open University, whilst another, Vicky Bromsgrove, has also achieved an online level 3 qualification in supporting SEND in Early Years.

SECTION 10: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As previously stated within the SEND Policy we promote the responsibility of our teachers to support children with SEND and the use of high quality first teaching. We recognise how the SENCO will coordinate and monitor the quality of the support and progress children make. The SENCO's role is summarised as follows (from the Code of Practice, p 108-109):

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND policy,
- co-ordinating provision for children with SEND,
- liaising with the relevant designated teacher where a looked after pupil has SEND,
- advising on the graduated approach to providing SEND support,
- advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively,
- liaising with families of pupils with SEND,
- liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies,
- being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services,
- liaising with potential next providers of education to ensure a pupil and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned ,
- working with the head teacher and school governors to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements,
- ensuring that the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up to date.

There are other key colleagues that have a significant impact on the progress and development of our children and young people and these include:

- The SEN Governor, Jo Eyles, who meets with the SENCO termly and monitors the progress of children with SEND
- The Nursery Officers who carry out a range of roles across the school such as that of key person for a number of children. This involves building warm and trusting relationships with their children and families, observing and assessing their children and planning their next steps for learning. They are line managed by the class teacher and head teacher. They work as a team within their classes.
- The Designated Teacher for Safeguarding, Natalie Nichols
- The member of staff responsible for Looked After Children Natalie Nichols.

SECTION 11: STORING AND MANAGING INFORMATION

Please see our Data Protection Policy for more information about how we process and store sensitive data. All computers are password protected and any paper information e.g. Pupil Progress Profiles and the SEND file is stored in a locked cupboard, with the key kept in a key safe. Play Plans need to be accessible to be used effectively and parental permission is sought for this.

SECTION 12: REVIEWING THE POLICY

We will review this Policy within our school policy review cycle. This may be brought forward at any time to reflect any Local or National recommendations or changes to policy and guidance. We involve our stakeholders in policy development and make sure the SEND Policy reflects our current working.

SECTION 13: ACCESSIBILITY

We have an Accessibility Plan that addresses the improvement of access to:

- The curriculum
- The physical environment
- The provision of information sharing and communication

This plan is reviewed annually, barriers are identified, and plans put in place to remove them.

SECTION 14: OTHER POLICIES RELATING TO SEND

Below is a list of other policies that should be taken into account when considering our approach to SEND:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- SEN information on the school website (SEN Information Report)
- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Care and Control Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- English as an Additional Language Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Home Visit
- Supporting Good Attendance Policy
- Settling In and Key Person Policy

SECTION 15: DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

We hope to deal with any concerns families may have in an appropriate and timely way. However if families are not satisfied with that response we refer them to our Complaints Policy which describes the further action that can be taken.

Authored by: Natalie Nichols, Head teacher and SENCO
Co-produced by: Samantha-Jane Ofoegbu, SEND Governor