Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Awareness Policy

Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

A child or young person has special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) if they have a learning difficulty or disability that means they require additional or different educational provision or support to meet their individual needs.

The SEND Code of Practice 0–25 (2014), alongside the Children and Families Act 2014, provides guidance to education, health and social care services and local authorities to ensure that children and young people with SEND receive appropriate support.

The Equality Act 2010 also protects disabled children and young people from discrimination and places duties on organisations to make reasonable adjustments to ensure they can access services and opportunities.

Gloucestershire County Council provides a 'Local Offer', which details the provision available for children and young people with SEND and their families. This can be accessed at:

www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/localoffer

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is a legal document that describes a child's special educational needs and identifies the additional support they should receive.

If the Local Authority issues an EHCP, it will have considered recommendations from the reports and evidence gathered during the statutory assessment process. A school, setting or parent can request a statutory assessment. Where a school or setting makes a request, parents must be informed.

Parents are invited to contribute their views to the EHCP process, including their preferences regarding the educational provision they feel would best meet their child's needs.

Our Approach to SEND and Inclusion

As a setting, our education team includes an experienced Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Working in partnership with parents, schools, consultants, educational psychologists and external agencies, we aim to develop a detailed Provision Plan that reflects the individual needs, strengths and aspirations of every child attending Manor Farm.

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We recognise that every child is an individual and that SEND can present in many different ways. Children may have a combination of learning, communication, developmental, physical, sensory, emotional or social needs.

Our approach is child-centred and recognises that behaviour can be a form of communication. We seek to understand the reasons behind a child's presentation and consider the impact of their individual circumstances, experiences and additional needs.

All key staff have experience and training in supporting children who have attachment and behavioural challenges associated with early life trauma.

We recognise that trauma, attachment difficulties, neurodevelopmental conditions and learning disabilities can overlap. We therefore take care not to make assumptions about a child's behaviour or abilities and consider their individual circumstances when planning support.

Disability Awareness: Learning Disabilities and Autism

Manor Farm is committed to developing an inclusive environment where children with disabilities feel understood, respected, valued and supported. We recognise the importance of disability awareness and understanding that a disability does not define a child or limit their potential.

Staff aim to develop an understanding of different disabilities and how these may affect a child's learning, communication, emotional regulation, sensory processing, social interaction and everyday experiences.

Learning Disabilities

We recognise that children with learning disabilities may experience differences in how they process information, understand instructions, develop new skills and retain knowledge.

Some children may require additional time, repetition, simplified instructions, practical demonstrations or alternative ways of accessing learning.

Our approach will include:

- Adapting activities to suit individual abilities and developmental levels.
- Breaking instructions and tasks into smaller, manageable steps.
- Using visual resources, practical activities and repetition where helpful.
- Allowing additional processing time.

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- Recognising and celebrating individual achievements and progress.
- Promoting independence, confidence and self-esteem.
- Avoiding assumptions about a child's potential or ability to learn.

We recognise that learning disabilities are different from specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, although children may experience overlapping needs.

Autism Awareness

We recognise that autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition and that autistic children may experience the world, communicate and interact differently from their neurotypical peers.

Autism presents differently in every individual. Some children may experience differences in social communication, interaction, sensory processing, flexibility, routines and emotional regulation.

We understand that autistic children may:

- Prefer predictable routines and clear expectations.
- Experience anxiety or distress when routines change unexpectedly.
- Have differences in verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Require additional processing time when receiving information.
- Experience heightened or reduced sensitivity to sounds, lights, textures, smells or other sensory experiences.
- Have specific interests, strengths and areas of expertise.
- Find certain social situations or group activities challenging.
- Communicate distress or unmet needs through behaviour.

Our approach will include:

- Providing clear, consistent communication and instructions.
- Using visual timetables and other visual resources where appropriate.
- Preparing children for changes and transitions wherever possible.
- Considering individual sensory needs and making adjustments to the environment.
- Providing access to quieter spaces or opportunities for sensory breaks where appropriate.

- Respecting individual communication styles.
- Recognising and valuing individual interests, strengths and abilities.
- Avoiding unnecessary demands that may cause sensory or emotional overload.

We recognise that autism is not a learning disability, although some autistic children may also have a learning disability or additional needs.

Our priority is to understand each child's individual profile rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

Understanding Disability and Individual Differences

We recognise that disabilities are not always visible or immediately apparent. Some children may have physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, autism, communication difficulties or other neurodevelopmental conditions.

We aim to create a culture where differences are understood and respected and where children are not judged, excluded or disadvantaged because of their individual needs.

Staff will be encouraged to:

- Use respectful, appropriate and inclusive language.
- Recognise that children may communicate and experience the world differently.
- Understand that behaviour may reflect an unmet need, sensory difficulty, communication barrier or emotional challenge.
- Avoid making assumptions about what a child can or cannot achieve.
- Respect each child's dignity, individuality and personal preferences.
- Challenge discriminatory language, attitudes or behaviour.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disability and difference.

We aim to ensure that all children attending Manor Farm feel safe, accepted and able to participate in activities in a way that is appropriate to their individual needs.

Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility

As an inclusive setting, Manor Farm will make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of children with mental and physical disabilities.

We will work closely with our SENCO, facilities and health and safety manager, parents, schools and relevant external professionals to identify and implement appropriate adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Adapting activities, expectations and resources.
- Providing additional adult support where appropriate.
- Making adjustments to the physical environment.
- Providing alternative communication methods and visual supports.
- Allowing additional time for activities and transitions.
- Considering sensory needs when planning activities and using different areas of the setting.
- Providing appropriate equipment or resources to support accessibility.
- Reviewing individual needs and adjustments regularly.

We recognise that our historic building presents some limitations in terms of physical accessibility. However, we are committed to exploring reasonable adjustments and alternative arrangements wherever possible to support inclusion and participation.

Accessibility and inclusion will remain priorities within all planning, risk assessments and individual provision arrangements.

Partnership with Parents, Schools and External Professionals

We recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers, schools and external professionals to ensure that children receive consistent and appropriate support.

We value the knowledge and understanding that parents and carers have of their children and encourage open communication about their child's strengths, difficulties, diagnosis, individual preferences and support requirements.

Where appropriate, we will work with professionals including:

- Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs).
- Educational psychologists.
- Speech and language therapists.
- Occupational therapists.

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- Autism and learning disability specialists.
- Health and social care professionals.
- Other relevant specialist services.

Information will be shared appropriately and in accordance with our safeguarding and confidentiality procedures.

Staff Training and Development

Manor Farm recognises that effective inclusion relies on staff having the knowledge, understanding and confidence to support children with a range of additional needs.

We aim to ensure that staff receive appropriate guidance, training and opportunities to develop their understanding of SEND and disability awareness.

This includes developing awareness of:

- Learning disabilities and individual learning differences.
- Autism and neurodiversity.
- Communication and interaction needs.
- Sensory processing differences.
- Emotional regulation and behaviour as communication.
- Trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice.
- Equality, inclusion and reasonable adjustments.

Staff will be encouraged to reflect on their practice and seek advice from the SENCO and relevant professionals where additional guidance is required.

Monitoring and Reviewing Individual Needs

Every child's needs will be considered individually and reviewed regularly to ensure that the support provided remains appropriate and effective. Provision Plans will be developed identifying individual strengths, areas of need, agreed strategies and intended outcomes. We recognise that children's needs can change over time and will aim to adapt provision accordingly.

Our overall aim is to ensure that every child attending Manor Farm has the opportunity to develop, achieve, build confidence and work towards positive educational and personal outcomes.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

Policy Last Reviewed: 12th November 2026

Next Review Due: 12th November 2027

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