

Innsworth Preschool SEND Policy

Last Updated: June 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Overview: This policy sets out Innsworth Preschool's commitment to identifying, assessing, and providing high-quality, inclusive support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), within the practical and operational capabilities of our setting.

1.2 Aim: Our aim is to ensure that every child, regardless of their needs, is supported to make strong progress, achieve their potential, and participate as fully as possible in preschool life, provided their needs can be reasonably and safely met within our established group-based provision, staffing model, resources, and legal duties.

1.3 Scope: This policy applies to all children attending or applying to attend Innsworth Preschool where SEND, emerging needs, disability, medical needs, developmental delay, additional support needs, or significant barriers to participation are known, suspected, or identified during attendance.

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

2.1 Compliance: This policy is underpinned by and ensures compliance with:

- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0–25 Years (2015).
- The Children Acts 1989 and 2004.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

3. Core Principles

3.1 Approach: Our approach to SEND provision is guided by clear principles that define both our commitment to inclusion and the practical legal boundaries of our offer. We aim to support children well, while ensuring that support remains safe, proportionate, properly assessed, and manageable within a mainstream group-based early years setting.

3.2 Child-Centred Practice: We recognise and value every child as a unique individual. Support and interventions are tailored to the child's specific strengths, interests, developmental stage, and identified needs.

3.3 Early Identification: We prioritise the earliest possible identification of emerging or changing needs so that support can be considered, planned, and reviewed promptly. We recognise that many children's needs can be met effectively at SEN Support level and do not require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

3.4 Partnership and Disclosure: A successful placement relies on an honest and practical partnership between parents and the setting.

- Parents must provide full and accurate information about any known needs, medical conditions, diagnoses, developmental concerns, support arrangements, previous setting difficulties, or professional involvement at the point of application.
- Parents must update the setting promptly where needs are emerging, undiagnosed, or change over time.
- The setting must have accurate information so that it can assess risk, plan support, maintain safe staffing, and meet the child's needs as safely and appropriately as possible.

3.5 Non-Disclosure: If information is withheld, incomplete, inaccurate, or provided late, and this affects risk assessment, staffing, supervision, care planning, or the setting's ability to meet the child's needs safely, the setting may take protective action. This may include:

- Pausing admission
- Arranging an urgent review meeting
- Implementing interim control measures

- Delaying a start date
- Reducing or restricting attendance while assessment takes place
- Declining, withdrawing, suspending, or ending a place

Any such decision will be based on documented risk assessment, the safety of the child and others, and the setting's ability to meet needs within its operational capacity.

3.6 Reasonable Adjustments: We proactively consider and make reasonable adjustments to support access and inclusion.

Reasonableness is assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering:

- Effectiveness
- Practicability
- Health and safety
- Staffing and supervision requirements
- Available resource
- The needs of the child
- The needs and safety of other children and staff
- The setting's operating model and premises

We are not required to make adjustments where doing so would:

- Compromise the safety or welfare of the child, other children, or staff
- Prevent the setting from maintaining statutory staff-to-child ratios
- Require a level of staffing, supervision, or provision that is not reasonably achievable within the setting's resources and operating model
- Place a disproportionate or unmanageable operational burden on the setting

All decisions regarding reasonable adjustments are based on documented risk assessment and operational feasibility.

3.7 Safety Override: Our primary duty is to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all children and staff. Safety is the overriding consideration where risks cannot be reduced to an acceptable level through reasonable adjustments.

4. Admissions and Limits of Provision

4.1 EHCP Applications: Families may apply directly to the setting. Where an EHCP exists or is being sought, we will engage with the Local Authority consultation process as required.

4.2 Conditional Offer: Any offer remains subject to our ability to meet the child's needs safely and to have appropriate support, information, staffing, resources, and risk controls in place.

4.3 Group-Based Provision: Innsworth Preschool is a mainstream, group-based early years setting. The setting is not a specialist therapeutic, clinical, medical, or continuous 1:1 provision.

4.4 1:1 Support: Where safe participation would require continuous 1:1 support, we will explore options with parents and the Local Authority, such as inclusion funding, phased attendance, targeted support, reduced hours, or other reasonable adjustments.

4.5 Funding and Staffing: We cannot guarantee the provision of additional staffing beyond our standard model without agreed funding, support, staffing availability, and appropriate risk assessment. If adequate support cannot be put in place without compromising safety, supervision, ratios, or creating an unmanageable operational burden, we may be unable to offer or continue the place.

4.6 Initial Settling/Probation and Ongoing Review: All new placements are subject to the 6-week settling/probation period. SEND, medical, developmental, or support needs may continue to be assessed and reviewed after this period through the graduated approach, risk assessment, support planning, and placement review where necessary. The 6-week period is the initial settling/probation period and is not the end of SEND review.

4.7 Placement Review: Decisions regarding the viability of the placement will be based on documented risk assessments, professional observations, incident records, supervision impact, parent engagement, and support strategies attempted.

4.8 Ending a Placement: If professional assessment and documented evidence show that the child's needs cannot be safely met within our environment, the

placement may be ended. This decision will be based on objective evidence, such as impact on safe supervision, ratios, staff deployment, significant injury risk, repeated serious incidents, or the inability of support strategies and reasonable adjustments to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

4.9 Alternative Provision: If we determine that our setting cannot meet a child's needs safely or appropriately, we will support the family by signposting to more suitable specialist or alternative provision where possible.

5. Safety in Specialist Areas

5.1 Risk Assessment: Access to specialist areas, including Farm Experience, animal areas, outdoor growing areas, tools, uneven ground, and other higher-risk areas, is subject to individual risk assessment.

5.2 Restrictions: If a child's specific needs, such as severe mobility restrictions, lack of danger awareness, sensory needs, medical needs, impulsivity, or animal safety risks, mean that accessing Farm Experience or another specialist area would be unsafe for them, other children, staff, or animals, we reserve the right to restrict access to those zones.

5.3 Alternative Experience: Where access is restricted, an alternative experience will be offered where practicable.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 SENCO: The SENCO coordinates SEND provision, supports staff with strategies and planning, maintains relevant SEND records, liaises with parents, and acts as the primary contact for external agencies where consent and appropriate information sharing arrangements are in place.

6.2 Key Person: The Key Person implements the child's daily support plan, observes progress, communicates relevant information to the SENCO and Manager, and supports the child's emotional security and day-to-day inclusion.

6.3 Manager: The Manager ensures statutory duties are met, staffing and operational decisions are safe, risk assessments are completed where needed, and placement decisions are properly evidenced and recorded.

6.4 Parents and Carers: Parents and carers are expected to provide accurate information, attend meetings where needed, engage with reasonable support steps, follow agreed plans, and update the setting promptly about changes to the child's needs, health, behaviour, medication, professional involvement, or support arrangements.

7. The Graduated Approach

7.1 Assess, Plan, Do, Review: We use the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle.

7.2 Assess: Needs are identified through observation, parent discussion, staff input, records, developmental information, risk assessment, and external advice where appropriate.

7.3 Plan: An Individual Support Plan (ISP) or other agreed support plan may be developed with clear strategies, responsibilities, and review dates.

7.4 Do: The agreed plan is implemented within daily routines and group provision.

7.5 Review: ISPs are reviewed termly as a minimum. Review frequency increases where needed, for example every 2–6 weeks for emerging, complex, or high-risk needs.

7.6 Escalation: If progress stalls, concerns increase, or support strategies are not effective despite our best endeavours, we will seek external specialist advice where appropriate and where consent allows.

7.7 Formal Placement Review: If, after reasonable support options and adjustments have been explored, the child's needs still cannot be met safely, or risks remain at an unacceptable level, we reserve the right to proceed to a formal placement viability review in line with the Suspension and Termination of Place Policy.

8. Managing Expectations

8.1 Mainstream Setting: We are an independent mainstream early years setting, not a specialist therapeutic, clinical, or medical facility.

8.2 Medical Needs: Complex medical needs, such as tube feeding or specialist medication, are managed under our Illness, Medication and Medical Equipment

Policy. This is subject to risk assessment, staff training, appropriate clinical input, and the agreement of an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP).

8.3 Realistic Goals: We cannot promise outcomes that may be developmentally, physically, or medically unachievable for a child, such as independent toileting where a child has significant physical, developmental, or medical barriers.

8.4 Balancing Risk: We cannot prevent every bump, fall, conflict, or incident for a child with reduced danger awareness without restricting access or changing provision. We will not restrict access unnecessarily, but we will do so where safety is compromised.

8.5 Ongoing Suitability: Acceptance of a place does not mean that all needs can be met indefinitely without review. Ongoing placement depends on the setting's ability to maintain safe, appropriate provision within its staffing, ratios, resources, premises, and legal duties.

9. Services and Adjustments

9.1 Optional Services: Our setting offers optional services, such as Brunch, Lunch, Farm Experience, Wellbeing Club, and the Nappy and Wipes Service, that may support some families. Optional services are separate from statutory provision.

9.2 Funded Entitlement: Access to funded entitlement is not conditional on the purchase of additional services.

9.3 Reasonable Adjustments: Reasonable adjustments are considered separately from optional services and are not dependent on whether a family purchases optional services.

9.4 Opting Out: Where parents opt out of optional services, they must follow the alternative safety requirements set out in the Meals and Enhancement Services Policy and other relevant safety policies so that the setting can manage risks effectively.

9.5 Dietary Needs: Our kitchen operates robust allergen management controls which support children with dietary needs, allergies, and food-related health needs.

9.6 Skin Conditions: Any setting-provided or parent-provided care items must be suitable for the child and chosen to minimise reaction risks. Where parent-provided products are required, they must meet allergy, storage, labelling, and safety requirements.

10. Working with External Agencies

10.1 Partnership: Where a child is not making expected progress, or where staff identify emerging or complex needs, the SENCO will, with consent where required, seek advice from appropriate external agencies and signpost parents to the Local Authority's Local Offer.

10.2 External Support: This may include health visitors, speech and language therapists, inclusion teams, Portage, paediatricians, educational psychologists, or other relevant professionals.

10.3 Parental Engagement: Parents are expected to engage constructively with recommended support, meetings, referrals, and advice. If parents decline to engage with reasonable support steps, this may limit the setting's ability to meet the child's needs safely and effectively.

10.4 Safeguarding: We usually seek parental consent to share information. However, where safeguarding requires information sharing, we may share without consent in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

11. Transitions

11.1 Support: We work with receiving schools and settings to support smooth transitions for children with SEND. This may include sharing relevant information, arranging visits, preparing transition summaries, and supporting emotional preparation.

11.2 Information Sharing: Information is shared in line with data protection requirements and safeguarding duties.

12. Training

12.1 Skill Development: Staff receive regular training in supporting children with SEND. The SENCO identifies specific training needs, such as Makaton, autism awareness, communication strategies, sensory needs, behaviour support, medical needs, or other relevant training.

12.2 Cohort Needs: Training needs are reviewed in line with the needs of the current cohort and the operational capacity of the setting.

13. Data Management

13.1 Records: SEND records, including ISPs, risk assessments, meeting notes, professional reports, review documents, communication records, and support plans, are maintained accurately, dated, and stored securely in line with UK GDPR and our Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.

13.2 Access: Access is restricted to staff who need the information to support the child safely and appropriately.

14. Managing Parental Communication and Conduct

14.1 Partnership: We are committed to working in partnership with parents. Raising concerns in good faith will not affect a child's place.

14.2 Conduct: The setting must protect staff wellbeing, operational stability, and the safe running of the provision. Behaviour that is aggressive, intimidating, excessive, unreasonable, or undermines staff wellbeing will be managed under our Parent Partnership and Conduct Policy.

14.3 Communication: We value constructive dialogue. Where correspondence is lengthy, unclear, repetitive, excessive, or unproductive, we may require a face-to-face meeting, telephone discussion, single point of contact, or written summary to clarify the issues, agree actions, and keep accurate records.

14.4 Purpose: This is to ensure that SEND matters are managed clearly, consistently, and without unnecessary disruption to the running of the setting.

15. Decision-Making and Record Keeping

15.1 Decision Standards: All decisions relating to SEND provision, support strategies, adjustments, restrictions, admissions, phased attendance, reduced hours, placement viability, suspension, or termination are:

- Based on documented evidence and risk assessment
- Recorded clearly with rationale
- Reviewed at appropriate intervals
- Linked to the safety and welfare of the child, other children, and staff
- Considered in light of equality act duties and reasonable adjustments

15.2 Purpose: This ensures transparency, consistency, and compliance with statutory duties.

16. Monitoring and Review

16.1 Monitoring: The effectiveness of our SEND provision is monitored by the SENCO and leadership team.

16.2 Review: This policy is reviewed annually, or earlier where there are changes in legislation, statutory guidance, operational practice, or the needs of the setting.

