Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Prepared	September 2026	**Review due**	September 2027 or sooner if requirements change
Responsible manager	Emma Johnson	**SENCO**	Kerri Lancaster Oliver
SENCO contact	senco@heydayspreschool.com	**Applies to**	All children, families, staff and volunteers

1. Our commitment

At Heydays, every child should feel welcome, safe and included. We recognise each child's strengths, interests and individual ways of learning. We work with families to help children take part, build relationships and make progress at their own pace.

We provide support when a need becomes apparent. Children do not need a diagnosis before we begin helping them.

2. What SEND means

A child may have special educational needs when they need educational support that is additional to, or different from, the support usually provided for children of their age.

A disability can affect a child's everyday activities and access to preschool. A child may have special educational needs, a disability, or both.

Learning English as an additional language does not, by itself, mean a child has SEND. We consider the child's communication and development across their languages.

3. Who helps your child?

Your child's key person builds a close relationship with them, notices their progress and shares information with you.

Our SENCO coordinates additional support, helps staff plan suitable approaches and works with families and other professionals.

The manager ensures staff have the time, training and resources needed to put this policy into practice. Supporting children with SEND is everyone's responsibility.

4. Noticing when support is needed

We listen to families from the start. We ask about children's interests, communication, health, development and anything that helps them feel comfortable.

Staff use everyday play, observations and conversations with families to understand each child. We complete the progress check between ages two and three where applicable and discuss any concerns sensitively.

If you are worried, speak to your child's key person or our SENCO. If we notice a concern, we will explain what we have observed, listen to your views and agree what happens next.

5. Planning support together

We use a four-step graduated approach:

Assess	Understand the child's strengths, needs and any barriers to joining in.
Plan	Agree a small number of meaningful goals with the family, the support needed, who will provide it and a review date.
Do	Put support into everyday play and routines. The key person remains involved, supported by the SENCO.
Review	Look together at what is helping and what needs to change.

We record the plan in clear language and give the family a copy. At Heydays, we aim to review plans at least once each term, and sooner when needs change. We value progress in communication, confidence, independence, friendships and wellbeing as well as learning.

6. Making preschool accessible

We make reasonable adjustments so disabled children can access and enjoy preschool without being placed at a substantial disadvantage. We consider possible barriers before they become a problem.

Depending on the child, support may include:

- Pictures, signs, objects or communication aids.
- Predictable routines and extra preparation for changes.
- Quieter spaces, movement breaks or changes to lighting and noise.
- Adapted activities, equipment and adult support.
- Individual arrangements for meals, toileting and personal care.
- Planning that enables participation in outdoor play, outings and celebrations.

We do not refuse a place simply because a child has SEND. We discuss individual needs with families and seek advice where needed. Families are not charged for adjustments we are legally required to make.

7. Listening to children and families

Families know their children well. We involve them in decisions, explain unfamiliar terms and offer accessible ways to communicate.

We listen to children through their words, gestures, play, choices and responses. We respect their dignity and preferred ways of communicating.

When a child becomes distressed, we consider what they may be communicating and adapt our response. We use calm, supportive approaches that help children feel safe and understood.

8. Getting additional help

With families involved, we seek advice from relevant services, such as speech and language therapy, health visitors or Hampshire's early years inclusion team. We explain referrals and obtain consent where required.

We explore available inclusion funding and specialist resources according to local eligibility rules. We continue providing appropriate support while advice, assessments or funding decisions are pending.

Where a child may need more support through an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, we discuss an EHC needs assessment with the family and local authority. Parents can also request an assessment directly.

9. Keeping children safe and information private

We recognise that children with SEND may face additional safeguarding risks or find it harder to communicate worries. Staff follow our safeguarding procedures and do not assume changes in behaviour or wellbeing are simply part of a child's SEND.

Records are accurate, stored securely and shared lawfully with people who need them. We normally discuss sharing with families first. Information may be shared without consent where lawful and necessary to protect a child.

10. Moving on to school or another setting

We plan transitions early with families and the receiving setting. This may include visits, photographs, meetings and sharing agreed information about what helps the child. Our aim is for support to continue smoothly.

11. Questions, concerns and support

Please speak to your child's key person or the SENCO first. If your concern remains unresolved, contact the manager and follow our Complaints and Compliments Policy, available from the Manager or through the preschool's usual contact arrangements.

Hampshire SEND Local Offer: www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/send

Hampshire SENDIASS: free, confidential and impartial information and advice. Telephone 0808 164 5504, email information@hampshiresendiass.co.uk, or visit www.hampshiresendiass.co.uk.

12. Keeping this policy effective

The manager and SENCO review this policy annually, drawing on family feedback, children's experiences and staff observations. We update it sooner when guidance or our arrangements change.

This policy should be read alongside our safeguarding, equality and inclusion, admissions, positive behaviour, medical needs, privacy and complaints policies.

13. Guidance underpinning this policy

This policy draws on the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, the early years guide to the SEND Code of Practice, the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective from 1 September 2026, and the Equality Act 2010.

Approved by		**Date**	
Signature		**Next review**	September 2027