**The Montessori School Special Educational Needs Code of Practice**

All children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, gender, or ability, should have the opportunity to experience a challenge and enjoyable programme of learning and development. All children access a full range of activities through which they can develop and learn through play and sensitive introduction to the Montessori materials.

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (2010) we seek to be truly inclusive and non-discriminatory towards children with additional needs.

We work in partnership with parents/carers enabling them to play an active role in their child’s education. Before admission, this will involve a meeting to define how the child’s best interests will be met and which professionals will be required to have both occasional and regular input. The settling in programme will follow our usual school routine but might need to be extended and altered to meet the needs of the child. This might also include which classroom will best suit their needs, and how we will alter current arrangements to accommodate this.

Partnership with Children – The interests and motivation of the child will be considered at all time and achievements acknowledged to promote future learning. Children are encouraged to celebrate their own success as well as that of others and are encouraged to comment on what they enjoy doing.

Partnership with Parents – Parents / carers will be kept closely informed of their child’s progress through regular formal meetings and informal chats. Any concerns will be recorded and acted upon and included in any assessments and reviews. In some cases, home visits from the SENCo, teacher or Head of School might be appropriate to ensure continuity between the home and school environments.

Parental Consent – Gaining consent is an important ethical principle recognising the right of parents to exercise control over the services they receive. Consent is not a one-off event but a continuing process. Information will never be shared without written parental consent unless a child is considered to be at risk of serious harm.

Partnership with External Support Agencies – The setting is committed to joint working with agencies appropriate to the child’s individual needs. The setting will use any advice to provide suitable strategies/targets for children.

Partnership with Other Schools – with the consent of the parents and any involved external professionals, relevant information about the child’s progress and needs will be given to the next school. The SENCO from the next school will be invited to observe the child in the Montessori school setting in order to help ensure a smooth transition.

A minority of children will have particular learning requirements which go beyond the provision described in the EYFS which are likely to arise as a consequence of a child having a special educational need. If a child has a special educational need, the following points must be recorded in the child’s individual learning plan:

* Nature of the difficulty
* Level of support being provided
* Review feedback forms
* Action plan developed as a result of any review meetings.

The school’s differentiated curriculum and strategies will address the needs of most of the children, but some elements will require a level of intervention that is additional to or different to these. Suitable challenges which reflect the children’s diverse needs and aim to overcome or reduce potential barriers to learning should be implemented. Differentiation should ensure that:

* The attainment gap is reduced as much as possible in relation to the child’s peers.
* The attainment gap does not grow wider unnecessarily.
* Progress is similar to those starting from the same baseline
* Matches or betters the child’s previous rate of progress
* Ensures full access to the curriculum
* Demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social and personal skills
* Demonstrates improvement in the child’s behaviour when appropriate

**Note**: Not all children with difficulties or disabilities have Special Educational Needs. Many learn alongside their peers will little need for additional resources beyond the aids they need as part of their daily life, such as a wheelchair or hearing aid. It is also true that a child for whom English is a second language does not, on that basis, have special educational needs. Certain areas of the curriculum may need to be taken at a slower place until the child become fluent in English.

The key to effective planning for children with special educational needs is to retain as much flexibility as possible. Parental and appropriate professional input will help to ensure the progress of the child is maximised.

The role of the school SENCO is to:

* Liaise with parents/carers
* Liaise with professionals
* Advise and support other practitioners in the setting
* Ensure that Individual Education Plans are in place
* Take the lead in monitoring and reviewing any action taken to support the child
* Ensure appropriate records are kept at all stages of intervention

The SENCO and Head of School will decide, informed by evidence, when Early Years Action should be instigated. This will be triggered when a child makes little or no progress even with a targeted response.

The Early Years Action will constitute:

* Planning and developing an individual education plan (IEP)
* Devising strategies and identifying appropriate methods for accessing the curriculum
* Facilitating further assessment
* Collecting information
* Liaising where appropriate with a professional such as an area SENCo, educational psychologist or external specialist concerning strategies for the child

If the individualised programme or concentrated support does not show evidence of having helped the child to make progress in specific areas over a reasonable amount of time, it might be necessary, with the consent of the parents to instigate an Early Years Health Assessment.

The Early Years Health Assessment will constitute:

* Seeking advice from external support services with specialist knowledge relevant to overcoming the child’s barriers to learning. When such support is involved on a regular and frequent basis, then all outcomes must be recorded as an Individual Education Plan.