

## Responsibilities of the SENCO

The numbers refer to sections of Chapter 5 in the SEND Code of Practice 2014.

The sections in italics are suggested best practise.

**5.53** The EYFS framework requires other early year's providers to have arrangements in place for meeting children's SEN. **Those in group provision are expected to identify a SENCO.**

### **SENCO Responsibilities: Documentation – what you should have and your duties**

- SEND policy - Make sure the policy is reviewed and updated annually with the manager and your colleagues and that it reflects how you support children in your setting and adheres to any new legislation.
- Access Audit - To ensure an inclusive environment; the setting environment and resources should be appropriate and available to support children with a range of special educational needs and disabilities.
- Individual children's Graduated Response File (GRF) - Ensure that all information in the file sections has up to date information. This should include names and contacts of the professionals involved, medical reports, recommendations and advice from professionals, targets and teaching programmes, records of meetings, referral documents and a file log. Always document conversations and telephone calls. Save emails and copies of any letters you send/receive; you may need to refer to them at a later date. You may be approached by paediatricians to provide information/reports on a child in regard to their development, play and communication skills. Parents should have given their consent but it is wise to inform them that you have been approached and give them a copy of any information you send off as well as keeping a copy for your own records.  
**Do not dispose of relevant historical information such as diagnosis letter.** When the child leaves your setting, their GRF contents should be passed to the follow-on setting as part of the transition process. Refer to guidance found in Graduated Response section on the Portal.
- It could be beneficial to save any written information on activity suggestions/strategies you have been given regarding any children you have supported in the past; often these support systems are transferable when working with other children (you may want to get advice from the professionals involved or from STePS if you are unsure if the support systems will suit the child you are going to be working with, before you implement them. You must delete the name and any other personal information from any documents you take information from that may lead to identifying the children

## **SENCO Responsibilities: Advising and supporting colleagues**

**5.54 The Role of the SENCO involves: Ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEN.**

- Inform colleagues of their responsibilities to children with SEN and of the need to inform you of any concerns they have noticed around a child's development; they should record these concerns and keep you updated.
- Plan regular meetings for colleagues to share information with each other regarding any children they have concerns about or who require additional support and make sure each staff member is familiar with any strategies' and targets that have been set for a child and is aware of how to implement these.
- Ensure staff members working with a child with SEN have read the child's current reports and information- signpost them to the child's Graduated Response File and support them in keeping the file up to date. To promote a supportive and inclusive environment all staff should have understanding of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle.
- Support the key worker in preparing resources to help a child to be included in the daily activities, such as visual aids
- Ensure that all colleagues are aware of and have access to relevant reference books and Early Support booklets. This should include information on child development and reference materials for supporting children with different disabilities such as physical, visual and hearing impairment and communication difficulties.
- Support colleagues to access training relevant to supporting the children they are working with.

**Please note: we are unable to offer the Initial SENCO training to additional staff members. If this is required, for example in order to share the SENCO responsibilities across the setting units, then the SENCO will need to share the information from the SENCO File with those colleagues and oversee and support them. There are several additional supplementary SEN courses that staff can access - see STePS Upcoming Training Page and independent training organisations on the Portal.**

## SENCO Responsibilities: Steps to implementing a graduated approach and making onward referrals

**5.45 The graduated approach should be led and co-ordinated by the setting** SENCO working with and supporting individual practitioners in the setting and informed by EYFS materials, the Early Years Outcomes guidance and Early Support resources, information is available at the National Children's Bureau website – see the References section under Chapter 5 for the link.

- Refer to the Graduated Response File sections on the Portal – Guidance and templates can be found here - <https://schoolsportal.derby.gov.uk/steps/graduated-response/> and <https://schoolsportal.derby.gov.uk/sen/early-years-settings/>
- Discuss concerns with parents and the child's key worker and refer to the '**SEN Support Checklist**' and '**SEN Support Questions**' documents, they will guide you. ( These are found in the SENCO and Managers section, located on the Portal)
- Support the child's key worker in setting appropriate targets for a child and in implementing them into the daily routine. Think about the longer term outcomes that parents and you want the child to achieve and set the targets to reflect those outcomes. ( Templates and guidance notes are found in the Target Setting section on the Portal)
- Ensure that targeted activities are carried out regularly and as specified on the child's target sheet and that the child's responses are recorded by the person working with the child at that time. Feedback from this information will be needed when reviewing the targets.
- If external agencies are involved such as Speech and Language or Physiotherapy/Occupational therapists, familiarise yourself with their recommendations and treatment programmes and seek further advice if needed. Familiarise yourself with the child's medical needs if they have them.
- Familiarise yourself with referral processes; all referrals require accompanying copies of development profiles which show evidence of the concerns you are highlighting; you also need to provide information on the support and strategies you have already put in place. **For referrals to the Early Intervention Team you should first follow the procedures highlighted in the 'SEN Support Checklist' and 'SEN Support Questions' documents.**
- In some cases if a child's needs are more complex and the support is expected to be longer term you may agree with parents to make a referral for an **Educational Health Care (EHC) plan assessment**. Forms and Guidance documents on this are located on the Portal. The Early Intervention Team can support you with the process and check through your completed referral forms before submitting. It would be expected at this point that health professionals

would have already been involved with the child; if this is not the case you would need to refer to them before starting the EHC process. It is expected that you will have collated documents via the child's Graduated Response File to evidence the referral.

### **SENCO Responsibilities: Ensuring parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting**

- Inform parents you are the SENCO and ask them if you can be a named person to receive copies of any reports from any professionals who are involved with their child. Parents need to inform the relevant professionals that they have consented to this.
- Keep parents informed of any professionals visiting their child in your setting and of any new or different ways you are working in order to support their child.
- Always involve parents in target decision making regarding their child and invite them to target reviews and child/person centred meetings.
- Invite parents to join you/key worker and their child in an activity session where you can demonstrate strategies and how you work with the child. This could be when you move onto new targets or have new recommendations from health /educational professionals to implement. Having practical demonstration is easier for parents to then be able to put things into place at home and makes for consistency of support in both settings.
- Support the key worker in giving regular feedback to parents on how their child is progressing, or on new difficulties that may have been observed. Remember to keep meetings as positive as possible with sensitive handling of difficult issues to encourage a good working relationship with parents.
- In some cases you may have concerns around the child's home environment and/or feel that parents could benefit from support in the home. In this case you could make a referral for an **Early Help Assessment (EHA)**. This will help draw together information from different agencies and a decision can be made as to which services would be best suited to provide support for the family. You can find information and referral details on the EHA form <http://www.derbyscb.org.uk/staff-and-volunteers/info-and-resources/> Click onto Early Help section.

### **SENCO Responsibilities: Liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the setting**

- Make sure that all professionals involved with a child are aware of who else is supporting them, for example, the Early Intervention Practitioner and Speech and Language Therapists.

- Share information with involved professionals regarding any hospital appointments or further referrals that you know of. Make sure they are invited to meetings such as Target Review, Team around the Family, or Child/Person Centred meetings.
- Log all visits, action points and next appointments from professionals in the Log Sheet you have placed in the child's Graduated Response File.
- Help to co-ordinate time for the key worker to be free to share information and engage in activities with the Early Intervention Practitioner and other professionals during their visits.

### **SENCO Responsibilities: Transition Planning**

**5.47 SEN support should include planning and preparing for transition**, before a child moves into another setting or school. This can also include a review of the SEN support being provided or the EHC plan. To support the transition, information should be shared by the current setting with the receiving setting or school. The current setting should agree with parents the information to be shared as part of this planning process.

- When a child leaves your setting inform parents that it is usual practice to pass their child's Graduated Response File onto the next setting. This will include a summary record of the child's on-going support needs and strategies you have been using to support the child, together with updated developmental profile records and target sheets. The most recent medical reports and professionals reports should also be included. You may also decide to arrange a face to face meeting with the receiving setting. Parents will need to consent to this sharing of information and may wish to accompany you to any meetings. Refer to **Guidance for Transition** found on the Portal.
- Arrange transition visits for the child with the receiving setting. The visits will be more successful if the child's current key worker can accompany the child on the visits. Invite school staff to come to see the child at your setting.
- If a child has an Educational Health Care plan in place, you will need to call a review meeting around the time it states on the plan – this is usually six months' time for a preschool child. If the child is due to transition at or near to that point you should invite the receiving setting staff to the meeting as well as the current professionals and parents.

**Further information such as guidance, templates and suggested ways of working related to the above can be found on the Portal**

**<https://schoolportal.derby.gov.uk/sen/early-years-settings/>**

**or by emailing one of the Early Intervention Team at [stepsadmin@derby.gov.uk](mailto:stepsadmin@derby.gov.uk)**