**Special educational needs and social needs meetings – A guide for parents and carers**

This summary should answer a number of frequently asked questions about meetings in school about special educational needs or social needs.

*Definitions:*

Special needs (SEND): A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability that make it more difficult for them to learn than most children their age. They may have problems with schoolwork, communication or behaviour. Parents can get help and advice from specialists, teachers and voluntary organisations.

SENDco: This is the schools’ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator. We have two at The Grove- Jo Counter and Tonya Stirrup and between them they work 4 days a week. On days when they are not in work the Headteacher will pick up Urgent enquiries.

Special needs register: A school holds a register of the children they agreed have Special Educational Needs. This register is not published. Children can come on and off the register at any time. Parents will be informed of whether their child have moved on or off the register by the SENDco. A child may have one or more types of special needs recognised by the school. Children can be on the school’s ‘on-watch’ list when we are monitoring children who may potentially show a special need, parents aren’t necessarily informed of this stage as this is just part of the school monitoring processes we do for every child.

There are four types of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as defined by the Department for Education:

* Communication and interaction.
* Cognition and learning.
* Social, mental and emotional health.
* Sensory or physical.

Social needs: Social needs refers to psychological and emotional needs. A child may be struggling with their mental health, with issues at home or school, they may have support of a social worker, the school nurse, a therapist or other outside school agencies to support them and their family. The school can keep a list of those children with these additional social needs for the school’s own use only.  *There are different reasons for social needs support*

* Meeting a child’s basic needs eg housing, food, cleanliness, adult care etc
* Meeting a child’s emotional needs
* Meeting a child’s physical needs and the need to feel safe, secure and unharmed

TAFs: A Team Around the Child/Family is a network of practitioners from school and outside school who work together to agree a plan and delivery of support to meet a child or young person's assessed needs, and to some extent, needs of the family where these impact on the child or young person. They work directly with the family or young person. Notes are taken.

Parent Consultations: These are formal meetings but which only occur between the school and the parent/carers and no other professional are involved. They occur twice a year between parents and the class teacher but can also occur due to additional needs of the child. We would generally ask at least two school professionals to attend these around SEND or Social needs and parents can bring additional support if they wish. These do not have minutes taken but notes are made of the main points.

CIN: Child in need is a Social services category often post Child protection to support a family to continue on an agreed path of action. This can involve other professionals eg health and a social worker. Notes are taken

Child Protection: this is a social services category in which the Local Authority support a family to meet a child’s needs. This is a formal process and involves a number of professionals including social workers, police, health and education. Formal minutes are taken

Early Help: this is the formal name given to any additional support requested to support a family using professionals external to school eg family practioners, school nurse etc

Pupil Premium: The school gets some additional funding to support children who are registered as Pupil Premium. This can be due to low household income leading to receipt of Free School Meals, or it can be due to a child once being in care of the local authority eg for adopted or looked after children. There is a register of Pupil Premium children and a careful monitoring of their needs, barriers to learning and academic achievements in school. This is not published.

Support children receive in school: All children in school may receive additional support at any time depending on their personal educational requirements. The teacher will update parents on these in parent consultations but not in advance as this is usual school practice. Eg additional maths or literacy support, pre or post teaching sessions, use of phonics interventions, additional time with the class teacher and Teaching assistant, additional pastoral support, time with the school therapy dog etc

Play therapy: The school pays to buy in professional play therapy support for some children with social needs. We only have capacity for a small number of children and so have a waiting list. When a place becomes available decisions are made as to priority of children’s needs not the length of time on a waiting list. Parents will be informed and verbal permission sought before a child starts with play therapy and the play therapist will try to arrange a meeting with parents a few weeks into the weekly sessions.

Lola our school therapy dog: Lola is cared for by one of our teachers but she spends her days in school. She is a black Labrador with low malting fur. Children will see her around school and in their classes and can sometimes be involved in walking her and snuggles.

*Frequency of meetings:* If a child has an Education and Health Care Plan then the school will meet with the parents at least annually for a review, but no more than three times a year.

If a child is on the Special Needs School Register then the school will meet with the parents when they initially go on the register and then meet only when requested by school or parent no more than three times a year. Updates will be given by the class teacher at parent consultations twice annually and also in the end of year school report.

If a child is on the Social Needs School Register then the school will meet with the parents when they initially go on the register and then only request by school or parent no more than three times a year. Updates will be given by the class teacher at parent consultations twice annually and also in the end of year school report.

Eg of letters/ emails to use:

Dear parent/carer,

I am writing to you to invite you to a meeting to talk about your child ------------‘s needs in school.

We have placed them on our School Special Needs Register and wanted to discuss this further with you so we can work together to support your child’s progress.

Please email sendco@the-grove-primary.devon.sch.uk to make an appointment. We can do face to face meetings, telephone meetings or meetings on Zoom or Teams. If we don’t hear from you then we will assume you don’t feel a meeting is necessary but you should know that your child in on the register and may be receiving some additional support.

Kind regards

The SEND team at The Grove School.

Dear parent/carer,

I am writing to you to inform you that you child ------------ has made such great progress they have been removed from our Special Needs Register. We will continue to monitor their progress and let you know should this change.

Please email sendco@the-grove-primary.devon.sch.uk for any additional information you may want.

Kind regards

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I am writing to you to invite you to a meeting to talk about your child ------------‘s needs in school.

We have placed them on our School Socail Needs Register and wanted to discuss this further with you so we can work together to support your child’s progress.

Please email head@the-grove-primary.devon.sch.uk to make an appointment. We can do face to face meetings, telephone meetings or meetings on Zoom or Teams. If we don’t hear from you then we will assume you don’t feel a meeting is necessary but you should know that your child in on the register and may be receiving some additional support.

Kind regards

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