📘 Stowey Bears Preschool – Inclusion Policy (2026 Update)

1. Policy Statement

Stowey Bears Preschool is committed to providing an inclusive, nurturing environment where **every child**, including those with **SEND**, **emerging needs**, **disabilities**, or **vulnerabilities**, can thrive. Our practice reflects the **updated SEND Code of Practice**, **National Inclusion Standards**, and the government's **Best Start in Life** and **Every Child Achieving and Thriving** strategies.

We ensure early identification, timely support, and strong partnership working with families and professionals.

2. Legislative & Statutory Framework

This policy is shaped by:

- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **SEND Code of Practice (Updated version announced for consultation 2026)**
- **National Inclusion Standards (2026)**
- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework**
- **Schools White Paper: Every Child Achieving and Thriving (2026)**
- **Best Start in Life Strategy (2025–2026)**
- **Local Authority SEND and Inclusion Guidance**

3. Principles of Inclusion

We uphold:

- **Early identification** of needs through observation, progress checks, and partnership with families.
- **High expectations** for all children, including those with SEND.
- **Adapted provision** that removes barriers to learning.
- **Child-centred planning**, respecting each child's voice and family context.
- **Equity**, not equality — ensuring children receive the support they need.
- **Strong multi-agency collaboration** with health, SEND teams, SALT, HV, and Best Start Family Hubs.

4. Updated National Requirements (2024–2026 Reforms)

4.1 Universal Inclusive Offer

All early years settings must provide a **baseline level of inclusive practice** for children aged 0–5, ensuring consistent support nationally.

At Stowey Bears, this includes:

- Adapted routines and environments
- High-quality interactions
- Visual supports
- Inclusive continuous provision
- Staff trained in early identification and SEND strategies

4.2 Individual Support Plans (ISPs)

New **digital ISPs** are required for children with identified additional needs at **Targeted** or **Targeted Plus** levels.

Our ISPs include:

- Strengths and needs
- Agreed strategies
- Multi-agency input
- Review cycles
- Parent partnership

4.3 Specialist Provision Packages

For children with **complex needs**, Specialist Provision Packages outline required interventions, resources, and standards. These may fast-track children under 5 to EHCP assessment.

4.4 Early Identification Tools

National early identification tools must be used consistently, including during the **two-year progress check**.

4.5 Inclusion Funding

From 2026–2027:

- **£47 million additional early years inclusion funding** nationally

- New **Inclusive Early Years Fund** to improve SEND support in settings

Stowey Bears will work with Somerset Council to access and allocate this funding appropriately.

4.6 Experts at Hand Programme

Settings will have access to:

- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Educational Psychologists via the **Experts at Hand** initiative.

5. Identification of Needs

We identify needs through:

- Daily observation
- Parent discussions
- Progress check at age two
- Monitoring of communication, behaviour, social interaction, and physical development
- Use of national early identification tools
- Collaboration with Best Start Family Hubs and health professionals

6. Levels of Support

Universal

Inclusive practice for all children.

Targeted

Children needing additional strategies or adaptations.

Targeted Plus

Children requiring structured support and a digital ISP.

Specialist

Children with complex needs requiring Specialist Provision Packages or EHCP pathways.

7. Working with Parents & Families

We ensure:

- Transparent communication
- Co-production of ISPs
- Respect for family culture, language, and priorities
- Support through Best Start Family Hubs and local SEND services

8. Multi-Agency Collaboration

We work with:

- Somerset SEND Team
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Health Visitors
- Early Help
- Educational Psychology
- Best Start Family Hubs
- Local schools for transition support (funded partnerships now nationally encouraged)

9. Staff Training & Development

All staff receive:

- Updated SEND and inclusion training (part of the national £200m package)
- Training in early identification
- Training in inclusive practice and scaffolding
- CPD through local networks and national RISE Reception Networks (for transition alignment)

10. Transition to School

We ensure:

- Strong partnerships with local schools
- Shared transition documentation
- Joint meetings for children with SEND
- Use of Specialist Provision Packages where needed
- Enhanced transition funding where available

11. Accessibility

We comply with the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring:

- Reasonable adjustments
- Accessible environments
- Inclusive resources
- Adapted communication methods

12. Monitoring & Review

The Manager/DSL and SENCo will:

- Review ISPs termly
- Monitor inclusion practice through learning walks
- Review this policy annually or when legislation changes
- Report inclusion outcomes to Ofsted during inspection

13. Complaints

Concerns about inclusion or SEND provision follow our Complaints Policy and may be escalated to:

- Somerset SEND Team
- Ofsted