



Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

Policy for Progression through the Early Years Department and into Class 1

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Policy Tracker – Responsibility for monitoring this policy: Name (Role)			
Date	Reviewed and Updated By:	Role	Date Approved by the Council of Management
12/03/19	Rebecca Jenkins-Handy	Early Years Lead	
12/03/19	Diana Ball	Education Lead	

Policy for Progression through the Early Years Department and into Class 1

Before a child begins in the Early Years Department at Elmfield, parents/carers will be asked to fill in an extensive form giving a picture of their child's development from (pre) birth to the present. They will then be interviewed before being offered a place. At this interview any additional needs the child might have, or support the child might require, will be discussed. Any support the child is already receiving should also be discussed. It will be made clear in the interview that a place in the Early Years Department does not mean automatic entry to the main school (Classes 1-11); the process for gaining a place in the main school will be explained to parents/carers.

If a child is identified as having additional needs, already has a support plan and is in receipt of funding (i.e. is under 5), the school will comply with the appropriate legislation and guidance when considering if Elmfield can meet his/her needs. For a child aged 5 or over, the school will decide whether the needs of the child can be best met at Elmfield (see our Admissions policy). This decision will be made in consultation with the Early Years teachers, the Early Years Lead, the SENDCo and the Education Lead. The child's parents/carers will be consulted at all stages, and a further conversation may be needed between parents/carers, teachers and SENDCo before a final decision is reached.

Children will normally move from Nursery to one of our three Kindergarten classes after their 4th birthday. The exact timing will be discussed between the Nursery teacher and the parents/carers. If there is a significant delay in transferring, this may be because of a concern about the child's development noted by either the teacher or the parent, and it is expected that both would be working together to support and monitor development appropriately.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Summative Assessment Profile is started as soon as the child joins the department and is updated regularly, with at least one parental meeting contributing to this profile. Where no concerns have been identified and the child is making appropriate developmental steps overall in line with Steiner Waldorf models of child development, it is usual that children will transfer from Nursery to Kindergarten to the Transition group, with approximately a year in each.

Assessments continue throughout the Transition year, and a full picture of the child's development is formed and shared with the parents/carers. Most children show us during this year that they are ready for Class 1 and a picture of the class is presented to College towards the end of the spring term. Following this, places in the main school are formally offered to those children who are deemed to be ready for Class 1. If there is any doubt about a child's readiness for Class 1, the parents/carers would already have been informed by their child's Kindergarten teacher. In these cases the child would normally already be in a process to discern the best support or future steps necessary to meet their individual needs. It will be made clear by the end of the spring term at the latest if there is a serious concern regarding the child's progression to Class 1. This will be based on his/her ability to access and benefit from the curriculum in the main school.

At any point in their journey through the Early Years Department the staff may raise a concern about a child's development. In such circumstances, the following procedure highlights the actions which would be followed to ascertain the best outcome for the child.

1. Kindergarten Readiness

If the Nursery teacher observes that the child may have a difficulty in some area of his/her development, she will note this on the child's profile and inform the parents/carers of her concerns. Together they will decide on a plan of action, which may involve writing a support plan immediately, or the teacher may wish to observe the child for a period of time before reporting back to the parents/carers and deciding on the next step. If the teacher continues to have concerns these will be observed and noted on the profile, and a support plan will be put in place. If the concerns escalate, the parents/carers will be consulted and various options considered, e.g. a referral for Eurythmy Therapy, a referral to Dudley Special Services or a visit to the GP for advice. Parental consent will be sought in each case and the SENDCo will become involved. If parents/carers are not willing to co-operate with the staff at Elmfield for any reason, there may be a possibility that the child's place will be withdrawn (see our Exclusion policy).

With an appropriate Support Plan in place which may include a referral to any of the services mentioned above, or other services, the child will join one of the Kindergarten classes after his/her 4th birthday at a suitable time agreed by the Nursery teacher and parents/carers. The Kindergarten teacher will continue to work with the child, observing and using his/her EYFS profile and Support Plan to track his/her development.

2. Transition Readiness

By the end of the Autumn term in Kindergarten, in their 5th year, if a child has had educational or developmental needs identified in Nursery or in Kindergarten, or if the majority of descriptors or patterns in particular areas show, or continue to show, 'concerns' or 'emerging', staff will hold discussions with parents/carers and consult with the SENDCo to draw up a Support Plan, if this is not already in place.

It may be at this stage that there are strong indicators that we may not be able to meet the child's needs even with increased support and/or an application for an EHCP and we will make this clear to parents/carers.

Full consent and involvement from parents/carers is essential to enable us to investigate the child's needs and provide appropriate support. If this is not forthcoming, it will be made clear that we will not be able to offer a place in the Transition year, and, if the child's needs are severe and/or escalating, and we receive no support or consent for referrals from the child's parents/carers, we may find it necessary to withdraw his/her place immediately. In either case this would be deemed a "required withdrawal" of their child from the school, in line with our Exclusion policy.

If, by the end of the spring term of Kindergarten there is still no significant improvement in the child's development, despite intervention and support, a meeting will be arranged with his/her parents/carers. Using all the evidence gathered, we will discuss the child's ability to access the Transition curriculum, and we may recommend that the child be moved to another setting.

Although there are no cut-off dates for a child moving from Kindergarten to another setting, the sooner an application to another school is made, the sooner the child's needs can be met, and the more likely the parents/carers are to get their first choice.

We will endeavour to be flexible and put the needs of the child at the centre at all times in our processes. We consider children's individual circumstances and varying rates of development. We aim to move on and accelerate where needed and to put appropriate support in place (e.g. referrals or applications for an EHCP), whether the child eventually stays at Elmfield or not. Our ability to meet the needs of every child is something we consider very seriously at Elmfield, but unfortunately we do not have the resources available within our budget to support every child, particularly those with significant needs.

3. Class 1 Readiness

A child who has progressed to Transition who has been identified as having additional needs and requiring extra support will continue to be monitored and assessed in line with the EYFS summative assessment profile which includes 5-6 year old assessments. He/she will also be assessed against the targets set on his/her Support Plan, which may include recommendations made by the SENDCo and/or outside agencies. It is essential that parents/carers continue to be involved with and support the plans put in place, and agree to seek further advice or initiate a referral if school staff deem it necessary to help us meet the needs of the child. This applies equally to any child who joins Elmfield in the Transition year or who the teacher identifies as having a previously unidentified developmental need. Again, if parents/carers will not allow us to seek further advice or make a referral in support of their child's education or development, we may find it necessary to withdraw his/her place altogether. This would be deemed a "required withdrawal" of their child from the school, in line with our Exclusion policy.

If at any point in the Transition year there is doubt about the child's ability to progress to Class 1 the parents/carers will be informed at the earliest opportunity to enable them to seek another setting for their child. Elmfield will continue to work with Support Plans and outside agencies, including applying for EHCPs, whilst such decisions are being made and until the child leaves Elmfield, should that be the outcome.

By the end of the spring term at the latest, parents/carers will be informed whether we will be offering their child a place in Class 1. This decision will be made by the class teacher, Early Years Lead, SENDCo, Education Lead, any relevant outside agencies, and in consultation with the child's parents/carers, and ratified by the College of Teachers.

In rare cases, if there are extenuating circumstances, or if the family is awaiting the outcome of a referral or application for an EHCP, consideration may be given to keeping a place open, or to accepting a child into Class 1 on a provisional basis. This would however be time-limited, and the progress of the child and wellbeing of the class as a whole would be regularly reviewed and monitored. The eventual outcome of the referral or EHCP application might lead us to conclude that we cannot meet the needs of the child at Elmfield, and in this case the child's place would be withdrawn.

In some cases consideration may be given to a child repeating either the Kindergarten or Transition year; this would only be considered as part of a strategy or Support Plan where the potential for positive development is evident to all involved. This decision would be led by the professional judgement of the Kindergarten staff, other professionals working with the child, and the SENDCo, with the agreement of the child's parents/carers. Repeating a year without parental cooperation for appropriate support, including referrals requested by the school to other agencies, is not an option.