



Wraparound and Preschool Care

Aldermaston Oaks • Big Oaks • Little Oaks • Mini Oaks • Priory Oaks • Silchester Oaks

SPECIAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION POLICY

Introduction

Oaks Childcare Community Interest Company (operating as “The Oaks or the Oaks Group”) aims to support children and parents/carers in the communities we live, and work in, including the children who have special educational needs and/or physical disabilities (SEND), so that they can come to the clubs, be kept safe, and enjoy and learn from our activities to the best of their abilities.

Our Responsibilities

At the Oaks, we are aware of and we recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 for making sure, and being able to demonstrate, that we do not discriminate against any child who has SEND or medical needs. In this we follow the definition of a disability in the Act, which is:

“a person is disabled if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that has a “substantial” and “long-term” negative effect on his/her ability to do normal activities”.

(Please note that we have a separate policy in respect of equal opportunities and dignity at work for our employees.)

We understand that The Oaks may need to consider whether “reasonable adjustments” can be made so that it can accommodate and support the needs of a child or children who have SEND or specific medical needs. A ‘reasonable adjustment’ means that if we do something in the club(s), which places a child with a SEND and/or a medical need at a disadvantage compared to other children in the clubs, then we must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

Informing us of a Medical Condition(s)

If your child has a medical condition(s) then The Oaks needs to know so we can care for your child appropriately. On registration, the child's parent/carer will be asked to provide details of any medical conditions, recurring complaints, allergies, special education needs or physical disabilities. If a new need, condition, complaint, allergy, disability or special need arises for a child who is already attending the club, then please contact us in writing to inform us as soon as you become aware of this need. We may request additional information including supporting information from professionals.

If a child has a condition that we are not equipped to deal with, we may not be able to accept your child into the clubs until we have received more information, carried out an assessment and/or undertaken any adjustments necessary to care for your child properly.

We do not accept responsibility for a child's health care and/or related matters where known medical condition(s) have not been disclosed.

Deciding what is a reasonable adjustment

The Oaks provides breakfast and after school care predominantly from the premises of the local schools, which the children attend. The responsibilities of The Oaks for the children in our care (under the Equality Act, and other standards) are entirely separate to those of the schools in which the clubs are based.

This means that decisions and options for making reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of children who have SEND or medical needs will rest with the Directors of The Oaks. The decisions and arrangements made by the Directors may therefore differ from any provisions put in place by the school(s) the child/children attend, and they will differ for each child.

To decide on whether we can make a reasonable adjustment, we will consider the needs of any child on a case-by-case basis. The decisions and/or adjustments we make will not set a precedent for The Oaks' ability to meet the SEND needs of any other children, either in our care currently or in the future.

In considering what and whether any adjustments can be made the Oaks Directors will use the following factors to guide their decision:

- The extent to which support can be provided for the child through the statutory SEN framework, as it operates currently and as it may be amended from time to time;
- The financial resources of The Oaks at any given time, and the availability of external funding or other forms of assistance;
- The financial and other costs of implementing a reasonable adjustment(s), including but not limited to staff-related costs (e.g. providing 1:1 support, other specialist support or appropriate staff on the rota), the costs of training, and the physical resources required (for example specific equipment, access arrangements or play items);

- The extent to which taking any particular step would be effective in reviewing the disadvantage experienced by a child with a disability;
- The practicalities of making and maintaining any adjustments, e.g. structural and operational changes;
- The effect of the disability on the individual child;
- Health and safety requirements and how these apply in each location for the clubs, and to the age-range of children in each club;
- The need to comply with the requirements of external bodies such as Ofsted and Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS);
- The interests of other children in the clubs currently, and in the future.

What we need to assess, and how we carry out the assessments

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

So that we can make a fair and balanced assessment it is paramount for The Oaks to know as much as possible about a child's suspected or diagnosed needs and the way(s) in which these needs affect their ability to do participate in club activities. We will therefore take the following steps in order to carry out an assessment:

1. The Clubs Manager will meet with the parent/carer to discuss your child's needs;
2. We will ask you to see (copies if appropriate) all reports that have been prepared and/or provided by health/medical/education professionals. These include but are not limited to the child's statement of SEN or an education, health and care (EHC) plan, either of which set out the extent of support required.
3. Where there are also medical needs, we will ask for the child's personal health care plan provided by a GP, or other medical professional;
4. We will liaise with the school and any professional agencies, the local authority and any other persons involved in supporting your child so that we understand the support provided and on what terms.
5. Carry out a full risk assessment as well as a financial assessment to determine whether or not, and in light of all the information we have, we can make the adjustments required. This will include an assessment of the duration of support due to the age-specific ranges, physical settings and staffing ratios across the clubs.

The complete assessment will be presented for review and discussion by the Director Group. The possible outcomes are:

1. That any adjustments The Oaks needs to make are reasonable and can be implemented with reasonable cost(s) and with minimal disruption to clubs, staff and children in our care. We will review this arrangement with you at least annually or more frequently as the needs of the child or the situation in our clubs changes.

2. As 1 above and also additional staff, specialist materials or equipment are required. In this case we will agree with you how this is to be funded, managed and maintained (we may request for example a contribution, or that you replace items after an agreed time, or, if we can, we will support any funding applications you may make to local authority or other bodies).
3. In order to make reasonable adjustments we will need to implement an ongoing funding arrangement for initial and on-going costs. The local authority or other sources may provide this funding upon application. If we can, we will support your application for funds and your child will be able to attend club when adjustments are confirmed by us and we are ready to welcome and care for your child.
4. The Oaks does not believe that it can make any adjustments, which are reasonable, because of the implications for the other children in our care, the physical requirements, the club environment and the additional training and support required from staff. This means that we will not be able to accept the child into the club(s).

Our decision will be communicated in writing and you will have the opportunity to discuss this decision with the Director Group.

Version History

Date:	Version:	Summary of Changes Made
02 Nov 2020	1.0	Issued
21 May 2021	1.1	Updates made to reflect the change of office management roles – from General Manager to a Clubs Manager and Office Manager

See Related Policies:

Administering Medicine

Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work (for staff)

Registration Pack