Appendix Three - Merton Early Years Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) Pathway for Providers

The purpose of the Merton Early Years Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) is to support early education and childcare providers to address the needs of individual children with SEN. In Merton, it is available for all children aged 2, 3 years - 4 years - old who are not in a school Reception class, who are receiving funded early education, who have lower level or emerging Special Educational Needs (SEN) and meet the SENIF criteria.

Children with more complex needs and those in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are not eligible to access this fund.

The funding is available at two levels (see Appendix 1 for further details):

- 1b / Medium Tier - £2.50 per hour
- 1c / High Tier - £7.76 per hour

Eligibility

- Children aged 2 to 5 years (excluding 4 and 5-year-olds who are in Reception classes) AND
- In receipt of funded early education AND
- Meet the criteria for SENIF funding

To note: a provider does not have to access SEN Inclusion Support through an Early Years Advisor in order to apply for SENIF funding.

How do I apply?

Providers are required to complete an application which includes mandatory fields that indicate the evidence of SENIF criteria and level of support that the child requires.

It is strongly recommended that advice and support is sought prior to the completion of the application form by new settings, those with a new SENCo or those applying for SENIF funding for the first time.

All applications and supplementary evidence must be sent by email to providers@merton.gov.uk

We strongly advise you request an encrypted Proofpoint email to enable secure transfer of sensitive information. You can request a secure email by emailing providers@merton.gov.uk before you submit the application.
Any request submitted in hard copy (on paper) will be not be processed and will be securely destroyed.

**Decision-making**

All applications will be screened before being sent to the SENIF Panel for review. Any application that is not fully completed with the mandatory fields or is missing information will be returned to the provider. The SENIF Panel convenes every two weeks and your application will be sent into the first available Panel. There are two outcomes from the Panel:

*Application is unsuccessful*

If an application form does not have sufficient evidence to make an assessment e.g. SENIF criteria, evidence of current assessment, the planned use of the funding, and any other supporting documentation from other professionals involved, the application form will be returned to the provider with feedback on the reasons and suggested next steps.

*Application is successful*

You will be informed of the funding decision. The decision will be communicated to you via the email address on the application form. A copy of the outcome of the Panel will also be sent to the parents/carers (if an email address for them is provided)

**Terms and Conditions of the SENIF**

- 1b/Medium Tier – funding is paid for a maximum of two funding periods, at which point you will need to reapply
- 1c/High Tier – funding is paid for a maximum of three funding periods, at which point you will need to reapply
- A child undergoing ECHP assessment – funding is issued until the assessment is completed. Funding starts from the date of the SENDIS panel.
- If a child changes setting there must be a suitable transition and a new application for SENIF must be submitted by the new setting. SENIF **cannot** be transferred from one setting to another.

The SENIF is reviewed every year to inform the following financial Year’s SENIF processes and the total value of the fund. Where SENIF funding is agreed for a timescale that cuts across two financial years, there may be changes to the funding released for funding periods falling in the new financial year.

All children who are in receipt of SENIF funding will be subject to a child-led Audit 6 to 8 weeks after funding is provided. This is to ensure that the funding is being used in accordance with the purpose set out in the application and that the child’s outcomes are being met and progress is being made. For further information on the content of the audit, please refer to the document Annual Reviews and Audits for Early Years Providers Delivering Funded Early Education.

**Funding**

SENIF funding will be issued in line with the timetable published in the Merton Funded Early Education Guidance (section 9 table 1.1)
Funding will start for successful applications from the date that the application was submitted and in line with the terms and conditions above.

Applications that arrive after the final submission dates for a funding period will be processed through the SENIF panel but funding will not commence until the start of the next funding period (see section 9 table 1.1 of the Merton Funded Early Education Guidance)

For example, if an application arrives on 10 December 2017, funding will commence from 1 January 2018.

Claiming the Funding:

- Private, Voluntary, Independent and Academy providers:
  - To claim the funding, please follow the guidance in Section 9.3 of the Funded Early Education Guidance.

- Maintained Schools:
  - Ensure you have submitted the child’s UPN as part of the application to allow attachment of the funding to your Early Education Funding Claim.

Moving between funding levels

- The movement of a child from 1b/medium level funding to 1c/high level funding must first be agreed by the SENIF Panel via the application process. Once agreed, the funding will automatically be upgraded from the date of submission of the application.

- If a child is receiving 1b/medium level funding and an agreement to assess them for an EHCP is made by the SENDIS Panel, the funding will be automatically upgraded to 1c/high level funding effective from the decision date for 20 calendar weeks or the effective date of the finalised EHCP, whichever is sooner.
### Appendix 1 – SENIF Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Level</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Threshold and criteria</th>
<th>Evidence to be provided</th>
<th>Possible uses for the funding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1b/Medium Level</td>
<td>Available for both universal and extended entitlement for an initial period of a maximum of 2 funding periods. 2017-18: £2.50 2018-19: TBC</td>
<td>Child/ren identified with additional needs:  - At least 1 age band below in the three prime areas (at least three ‘jumps’ delayed), AND;  - Requires targeted SEN support with an SEN Support Plan in place, AND;  - Identified needs in at least one of the SEND Code of Practice areas:  - Cognition and Learning.  - Communication and Interaction  - Social Emotional Needs and Mental Health  - Physical</td>
<td>To make a decision to go to SENIF Panel  - Parental consent and views, AND;  - Evidence of Assess, Plan, Do, Review (SEN Support) and;  - The Early Years Foundation Stage individual child tracking showing how the criteria is met, AND;  - Professional evidence/evidence of advice sought from a minimum of 1 specialist, AND;  - An assessment evidencing the communication checklist if the child’s prime need is Communication and Interaction.</td>
<td>Social interaction or Language Groups delivered in small groups (4 to 6 children maximum) Integral use of visual timetables incorporating objects of reference, photos, symbols, use of picture exchange systems etc depending on child’s needs and used consistently by all staff. Differentiation of activities and resources to support specific targets included in SEN Support Plan or recommended by another professional Short direct teaching sessions clearly planned for the individual child Regular supervision and individualised and consistent behaviour management with behaviour plan for children with challenging behaviour Risk assessments for children with risky behaviours and enhanced staffing support for short periods of the day Care Plans for children who require specific care outlined by a medical professional, delivered by staff with training Reasonable adjustment to the environment or resources Specialist or additional equipment to support children with physical disabilities. Changes to staff deployment to enable small group work or individualised support for specific and planned activities Support at circle time to maintain listening and attention Specific environmental adaptations for sensory needs Additional supervision when accessing particular equipment or resources, to ensure health and safety of all children and adults Support to manage basic hygiene, feeding and personal needs above and beyond what would normally be expected for a child given their age (note: nappy changing should be an integral part of caring for children under 4 in the EYFS)</td>
</tr>
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| 1c/High level | Available for both universal and extended entitlement for an initial period of a maximum of 3 funding periods. 2017-18: £7.76 2018-19: TBC | Child with complex and significant needs:  
- 2 year olds: at least 12 months below expected levels which impact on the 3 prime areas of the EYFS. (3 jumps)  
- 3 year olds: at least 18 months below expected levels which impact on up to 3 prime areas of the EYFS. (4-5 jumps)  
- 4 year olds: at least 24 months below expected and impact on up to 3 prime areas of the EYFS. (6 jumps).  
- SEN Decision Making Panel has agreed to undertake an EHCP assessment. (max funding is 20 calendar weeks or the effective date of a finalised EHCP, whichever is sooner. Identified needs in at least two of the SEND Code of Practice areas:  
  - Cognition and Learning  
  - Communication and Interaction  
  - Social Emotional Needs and Mental Health  
  - Physical | To make a decision to go to funding panel  
- Parental consent and views, AND;  
- Evidence of Assess, Plan, Do, Review (SEN Support)* AND  
- The Early Years Foundation Stage individual child tracking showing how the criteria is met, AND;  
- Professional evidence/evidence of advice sought from a minimum of 2 specialist, AND;  
- An assessment evidencing the communication checklist if the child’s prime need is Communication and Interaction. OR  
- Part B (no appendices needed) if the SEN Panel has agreed to undertake an EHCP assessment  
  - Supporting documentation from Early Help/CASA/Single Assessment  
  - All supporting documentation from health, social care, inclusion or SEND Specialist Services  
  - Health Care Plan or other relevant plans  
  - Child-centred risk assessment  
  *unless the child is transferring from Portage – where the Portage final report can be attached instead of SEN Support evidence | For the higher level of funding, many of the strategies and interventions identified above (1b/medium level) will be in place. In addition you will need to consider:  
Additional support for the child by increasing staffing ratios for intensive support and interventions to meet the targets set for the child (not 1:1)  
Intensive support/teaching for the child, taking place on an individualised basis and based on recommendations being made by a number of professionals involved with the child  
Intensive support for the child to meet Personal, Social and Emotional development (e.g. highly challenging behaviour, social interaction, self-esteem and positive relationships.)  
Intensive support to manage basic hygiene and personal needs for children with complex special needs and care needs, with training undertaken or overseen by a community nurse  
Significant attention being paid to the provision and maintenance of a range of personal equipment and manual handling and hoist training for staff where applicable.  
Positive Physical Intervention training where appropriate  
All staff being fully aware of the child's issues to ensure consistent and highly efficient application of strategies across both planned activities, routines and everyday play |