

Bury Council and Bee Inclusive's SEND Social Opportunities Draft Criteria.

Background:

Why is the council providing free social opportunity placements to primary and secondary-aged pupils with SEND?

We recognise the feedback from our families, who have described the difficulties their children can face when accessing mainstream activities for their children during the holidays.

These difficulties include barriers such as:

- Venues being too busy. This is particularly difficult for our autistic children, who struggle in noisy or busy environments and need space and quiet to feel able to join in. Some children will need reduced activity capacity and adaptations such as reduced music volume or the ability to wear ear defenders without fear of judgement.
- Sensory overwhelm. Again this is particularly difficult within the autistic community, as many children have sensory processing differences, which means that environments need to be adapted for them to be able to be included, such as lower lighting or access to sensory spaces or provision.
- Some children need access to adequate toilet facilities, including a rise-and-fall change bed, shower, rise-and-fall sink and hoisting. These facilities are usually called a Changing Place/Space.
- Some children with SEND struggle to establish relationships and build friendships. And some children, especially those attending mainstream schools, may not have met children they feel are similar to themselves. Children tell us how important it is to have a safe space to 'be themselves' and make authentic friendships with children who are relatable to them. We want children to have the opportunity to make a relative peer group for themselves.
- Some children need specialist equipment and adaptations, such as hoisting, to move into and out of their wheelchairs to join activities. Some children may require additional or adapted equipment or activity types to be included.
- Many of our families have two or more children with SEND. We recognise the difficulties this may bring to some families when juggling different children's needs when attending activities. We recognise the importance of ensuring activities are as accessible to these families as possible to encourage them to attend and to reduce isolation.
- Some families are single-parent families. We recognise the additional capacity that having a child with SEND often brings to single-parent families, especially those who have two or more children with SEND.

Eligibility:

1. The child must have SEND (a Special Educational Need or a Disability).

And...

2. Must be Primary or Secondary age. Primary age means the child must be eligible for a reception placement or a primary placement at a primary school setting.

The child must be in their placement currently or, if homeschooled, would meet the same criteria.

If your child is an Early Years child and has yet to start their September placement in a reception/primary school setting, your child is not eligible. However, your child may qualify for our Early Years SEND activities. Please see the separate booking form.

If your child has finished their secondary school placement this year (end of year 11) and has broken up for the summer, they are still eligible for a placement.

And...

3. The child must be accompanied by a responsible adult parent/carer at all times.

And...

4. Children must live in Bury and must pay their council tax to Bury Council.

And...

4. You must be in receipt of proof of the child's SEND. You must provide proof of the child's SEND if requested by Bee Inclusive or Bury Council.

And...

4. The child's SEND must prevent or restrict them from accessing mainstream activities. You may be asked to provide proof from a named professional by Bee Inclusive or Bury Council.

Age Group	Eligibility	Additional Information
Early Years: 0-2	Not eligible	N/A
Early Years: 3-4 years	Eligible for our Early Years Social Opportunities . Please fill in the specific Early Years form. This is separate from the primary/secondary form.	If your child is an Early Years child and has yet to start their September placement in a reception/primary school setting, your child is not eligible for the primary/secondary offer, but may be eligible for our separate Early Years offer.
Reception: 4-5 years	Eligible for our primary/secondary social opportunities.	The child must be in their placement currently or, if homeschooled, would meet the same criteria.
Primary: 5-11 years	Eligible for our primary/secondary social opportunities.	N/A
Secondary: 11-16 years	Eligible for our primary/secondary social opportunities.	If your child has finished their secondary school placement this year (end of year 11) and has broken up for the summer, they are still eligible for a placement.
School leavers: 16 years +	Not eligible	N/A

What do we mean by ‘the child’s SEND must prevent or restrict them from accessing mainstream activities’?

Below are some examples of family situations that would meet our criteria:

Family 1: Daniel is autistic. Daniel is unable to attend a soft play centre during the holidays. The noise is too overwhelming. Daniel feels embarrassed to wear his ear defenders as this has previously drawn unwanted attention from other children. Daniel struggles with busy places. Daniel doesn’t like other children to brush past him. These issues could result in Daniel having an Autistic meltdown/shutdown. Daniel, however, may be able to attend the play centre if there were 50% fewer children, the music was turned off, and he felt comfortable wearing his ear defenders.

Family 2: Amira is a wheelchair user. She is diagnosed with a profound and multiple learning disability and has complex health and care needs. Amira loves animals. However, the farm does not have a changing place toilet facility. Therefore, if Amira needs the toilet when visiting the farm, her parents would have to change her on the floor or cut the farm visit short and take her back home. Amira, however, may be able to enjoy a visit to see the animals if the session was brought into a community centre with a changing place toileting facility.

Family 3. Jake, Chloe and Jenson are siblings. They all have SEND. Jake has complex medical needs and has full-time 1-1 care given by his mother. Chloe has autism. And Jenson has some undiagnosed differences but can usually manage at mainstream summer activities, such as the local play centre. In this example, we would be looking to use our discretion. Although Jenson can manage his needs and access mainstream activities, we would look at the whole family and the needs of the parents, who would likely find difficulty in juggling all their children’s different care needs at a mainstream activity. Therefore, using our discretion, we would likely grant all three siblings a placement.

If the child’s needs are not clearly described, we will use our discretion to assess if a child’s SEND prevents or restricts them from accessing mainstream activities. We need to ensure that the families most in need are prioritised fairly.

Who isn’t eligible?

Our SEND Social Opportunities offer is for children whose SEND must prevent or restrict them from accessing mainstream activities.

Not all children with disabilities will be eligible for Bury’s specially adapted placements.

Examples of this may include (but are not restricted to) conditions such as a standalone diagnosis of Diabetes or an allergy.

The following are examples of children who are NOT eligible:

Family 4: Muhammad has Diabetes. He is in receipt of DLA. Muhammad can attend mainstream activities. Muhammad joins his local football team on a Saturday. In the school holidays, Muhammad likes to go to 'family swim' at the local swimming baths. Muhammad doesn't need any adjustments to be made so that he can join in. He attends lots of sessions that are available for any child in Bury. Therefore Muhammad doesn't need an additional specially adapted placement.

Family 5: Isobel has severe allergies to some types of food. Isobel is in receipt of DLA. Isobel loves regularly attending the cinema, parties with her friends and her local forest school. Isobel's allergies do not restrict her from being able to access mainstream activities, nor does she need any reasonable adjustments when attending the activities. Therefore Isobel does not need to attend a specially adapted placement.

Summary:

Placements will be allocated as fairly as possible.

We do reserve the right to use our judgement and allocate placements by need.

The SEND Social Opportunities are a new provision. Following on from families experiences, the council will consult with families to shape any provision going forward.

Therefore this policy is an agreed draft policy.