



Montessori
SCHOOL OF CAYMAN

ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT NEEDS POLICY

(ALSN Policy)

Approved and adopted: July 19, 2024

Reviewed: November 2024

Reviewed and updated: July 2026

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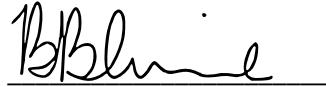
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Reviewed and updated: July 2026 — this revision refreshes the policy’s language and formatting for clarity and consistency, and updates the named Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). The substantive standards, legal references, and procedures are otherwise unchanged.

This policy has been developed and implemented in consultation with the Department of Education Services (DES), Montessori School of Cayman, the Head of School and leadership team, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), and the school staff. This policy is required as set out in the Ministry of Education’s Code of Practice: Identification, Assessment and Provision for Additional Learning Support Needs in Education (2021).

SIGNATURES

Head of School / Director



Mrs. Briana Bergstrom Currie

Director of Teaching, Learning & Operations



Ms. Aristeia Underwood

This policy and all outlined requirements must be in adherence with the Cayman Islands’ Data Protection Act (2017). As the “data controller,” Montessori School of Cayman shall be compliant with the eight data protection principles set out in Schedule 1 of the Act.

Table of Contents

1. Aims
 2. Legislation and Guidance
 3. Definitions
 4. Roles and Responsibilities
 5. Identification and Assessment
 6. The Three Phases of Action
 7. Arrangements for ALSN/SEND
 8. Complaints Procedure
- Appendix A — Additional Learning Support Needs (ALSN) Register
- Appendix B — Learning Support Plan (LSP)

For the purposes of this Policy, the term “school” includes both early childhood and primary education, and the term “student” includes all children enrolled and attending, including early childhood children.

1. Aims

Vision

Montessori School of Cayman is committed to identifying, assessing, and providing for all additional learning support needs, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We firmly believe that all students with additional learning support needs (ALSN), including SEND, are entitled to an education that enables them to:

- achieve the best possible outcomes
- make a successful transition through each stage of their lives
- become confident individuals living fulfilling lives.

Objectives of the ALSN Policy

The specific objectives of Montessori School of Cayman's ALSN Policy, aligned with the Cayman Islands' Code of Practice for Additional Learning Support Needs in Education (the 'Code of Practice'), are as follows:

- to identify all children with additional learning support needs, including SEND, and to ensure that their needs are met
- to ensure that all children with additional learning support needs, including SEND, have access to a balanced curriculum and are included in the activities of Montessori School of Cayman
- to ensure that all children with additional learning support needs, including SEND, make the best possible progress, as defined by the Office of Education Standards (OES) criteria
- to ensure that parents/guardians are informed of their child's individual needs and the provision offered, and that there is effective communication between parents/guardians and Montessori School of Cayman
- to ensure that children are supported in expressing their views and are fully involved in decisions which affect their education, to the fullest extent possible
- to promote effective partnerships.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is aligned to the Code of Practice issued by the Cayman Islands' Ministry of Education, as required by the Education Act, 2016 (2024 Revision), Section 33(1), which became operative in August 2021. The Code of Practice contains excerpts from both primary legislation and regulations pertaining to SEND.

In accordance with the Code of Practice, the following legislation, agreements, policy, and guidance were also considered:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child — Persons with Disabilities, 2007
- Children Act (2012 Revision)
- Cayman Islands' Disabilities Policy, 2014–2033
- Education Act, 2016
- Education Regulations, 2017
- Disabilities (Solomon Webster) Act, 2016
- Successful Schools & Achieving Students 2, Office of Education Standards (OES), October 2020
- Strategy for Additional Learning Support Needs in Education, 2023 (in draft).

3. Definitions

Within the Cayman Islands, the Code of Practice applies to all children with additional learning support needs, including SEND. Children's additional learning support needs, including SEND, fall within the following four broad areas of need and support:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional, and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs.

The term "additional learning support needs" is an umbrella term that describes the continuum of needs that require additional learning support, including those of children with exceptional and substantial needs associated with SEND categorisation.

A child is understood to have additional learning support needs if they require support that is additional to or different from the educational provision generally made for children of the same age in schools and early childhood care and education centres. A child can have additional learning support needs without the need for formal assessment procedures that could lead to special educational needs and/or disability categorisation and the requirement for a statement of eligibility. A child who has special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) will, by definition, have 'additional learning support needs' (ALSN).

As per the Education Act, 2016:

Special Educational Needs — in relation to a student (a child), means that, by reason of characteristics of body or mind personal to the student, the student's educational needs cannot be satisfied otherwise than by making exceptional provision in relation to the student; and, for the purposes of this definition:

- provision is exceptional in relation to a student (a child) if it is substantially different from that which is made for the education of the generality of persons of equivalent age and description; and
- students (children) for whom English is an additional language, or who are gifted or talented, are not to be treated as having special educational needs.*

**Children with English as an additional language or who are gifted or talented may have additional learning support needs.*

If a child is determined to have special educational needs and/or disabilities, they must be set out by the responsible authority in a statement of eligibility specifying those needs and the provision to be made in relation to them.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Introduction

Provision for children at Montessori School of Cayman who have additional learning support needs, including SEND, is a responsibility shared by the entire school community. The Head of School and leadership team, teachers, the SENCO/Designated Lead (DL), the School-Based Support Team (SBST), and all other staff members have important roles and responsibilities. Montessori School of Cayman is committed to delivering services as outlined in each child's Learning Support Plan (LSP) and, where applicable, the statement of eligibility, through "reasonable accommodation." During inspections by the Office of Education Standards, Montessori School of Cayman will be assessed for compliance with the Code of Practice.

Crucially, Montessori School of Cayman ensures that the child and their parents/guardians are at the centre of all decision-making processes, planning, and provisions.

School Responsibilities

In providing for additional learning support needs, including SEND, at Montessori School of Cayman, the following responsibilities should be considered:

- The school leader, with oversight and support from the leadership team, determines the school's policies and procedures, establishes appropriate staffing and resourcing arrangements, and maintains overall responsibility for the school's work.
- The school leader is responsible for the day-to-day management of all the school's work, including its additional learning support needs procedures and provision, and works closely with the SENCO/DL.
- The SENCO/DL, working closely with and supporting teachers and staff, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school's Additional Learning Support Needs Policy and for coordinating additional learning support needs, including SEND provision.
- The School-Based Support Team (SBST) is the main decision-making body for children who have additional learning support needs, including SEND.
- Teaching staff should be involved in the development of the school's Additional Learning Support Needs Policy, and all staff should be familiar with the procedures pertaining to additional learning support needs.
- Class or subject teachers are primarily responsible and accountable for the learning, progress, and development of the children in their class, including where children access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.
- Roles and responsibilities should be clearly outlined in the school's Additional Learning Support Needs Policy.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) / Designated Lead (DL)

At Montessori School of Cayman, the role of the SENCO/DL must be undertaken by an experienced, qualified teacher who demonstrates strong pedagogical insight and has a depth of knowledge and qualifications in the area of additional learning support needs, including SEND.

In all schools, the SENCO/DL is responsible for:

- the day-to-day operation of the school's policy for additional learning support needs, including SEND
- responding to requests for support and advice from other teachers and support staff
- ensuring the identification of additional learning support needs through standardised measures, including screening and assessment tools
- coordinating provision, ensuring appropriate liaison with the various teachers/subject teachers who teach children with additional learning support needs, including SEND
- maintaining a register with records of all children with additional learning support needs, including SEND
- coordinating provision with the School-Based Support Team and Multi-Disciplinary Teams as appropriate
- maintaining close liaison with the parents/guardians of children with additional learning support needs, including SEND
- identifying, brokering, and providing in-service training requirements for the staff, and contributing as appropriate to their training needs
- collaborating and supporting transitions of children with additional learning support needs, including SEND, entering from the Early Intervention Programme and other early childhood care and education centres, and subsequent transitions through all educational stages, including Key Stages
- ensuring that parents/guardians are closely involved throughout, and that their insights inform any action taken by the school

- liaising with external agencies as required.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are primarily responsible and accountable for the learning, progress, and development of all children in their class, including those who access support from assistant teachers, specialist staff, or external providers.

High-quality, classroom-based teaching, differentiated for individual children as necessary and appropriate, is the first step in responding to children who have additional learning support needs, including SEND. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good-quality classroom teaching.

Additionally, class/subject teachers are responsible for ensuring that Learning Support Plans (LSPs) are implemented with the support of the SENCO/DL and all other identified staff, including external providers, as appropriate and agreed.

The School-Based Support Team (SBST)

Montessori School of Cayman will maintain a School-Based Support Team (SBST) as required by the Code of Practice. The SBST is the decision-making body in relation to the identification, assessment, and provision for children with additional learning support needs, including SEND.

The composition of the SBST at Montessori School of Cayman is as follows:

- the Head of School — Briana Bergstrom Currie
- the Director of Teaching, Learning and Operations – Aristeia Underwood
- the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) — Allegra Jansen van Vuuren
- Programme Leads — Blessa Valdez (Casa), Emily Benson (Toddler Garden) and Anna-Katharina Farah (Toddler Sun).
- support service providers (Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Music Therapists, Counsellors, etc.). These school-based specialists, where applicable, provide assessments, information, and support pertaining to specific areas of concern.

Although not part of the SBST, parents'/guardians' perspectives and insights are integral to supporting the roles and responsibilities of the SBST. Parents/guardians should be fully informed with regard to all decisions and changes to levels of support, and provide consent as necessary.

Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT)

At times, additional external support from other professionals may be required to ensure that the needs of children with SEND are met. These professionals may provide additional support to the SBST and, together with the SBST, should be considered a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). This team will consist of professionals who are not directly school-based, including but not limited to:

- medical doctors
- clinical psychologists
- clinical psychiatrists
- private clinicians and therapists
- social workers
- other external professionals and providers.

Parents'/guardians' involvement, perspectives, and insights are integral to supporting the roles and responsibilities of the MDT. Parents/guardians should be fully informed regarding all decisions and changes to levels of support, be involved as required, and provide consent as necessary.

Parents/Guardians

Partnerships with parents/guardians are crucial in promoting a culture of cooperation between parents, Montessori School of Cayman, and other stakeholders. All professionals at our school actively seek to work with parents/guardians in a meaningful way and value the contributions they make. We believe that the work of professionals can be much more effective when parents/guardians are involved, and account is taken of their wishes, feelings, and perspectives on their child's development. This is especially true when a child has additional learning support needs, including SEND.

At Montessori School of Cayman, all parents/guardians of children with additional learning support needs, including SEND, will be treated as partners in the process to best identify and meet the children's needs. To ensure effective communication with parents/guardians, our staff and other involved professionals will:

- acknowledge and draw on parents'/guardians' knowledge and expertise in relation to their child
- focus on the child's strengths as well as areas of additional learning support needs, including SEND
- be aware of the parents'/guardians' feelings and the challenges they may be experiencing
- ensure that parents/guardians understand procedures for seeking information and advice, are aware of how to access support, and are given any documents to be discussed in advance of meetings
- respect the validity of differing perspectives and seek constructive ways of reconciling different viewpoints
- respect the differing needs that parents/guardians themselves may have, such as disability or communication barriers, poor school experiences, or cultural differences
- recognise the need for flexibility in the timing and structure of meetings.

At Montessori School of Cayman, we believe that parents/guardians should be fully involved in the responses to and support for their child, understand the purpose of any interventions, and be fully informed at all times. We encourage parents/guardians to:

- communicate regularly with the school and alert them to any concerns they might have about their child's learning or provision
- share information
- attend meetings as required
- fulfil their obligations to ensure that their child receives full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any additional learning support needs, including SEND.

Involving the Child

The Code of Practice highlights the importance of children in schools participating in all decisions about their education. This aligns with Articles 12 & 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), which state that children who are capable of forming views have a right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion (in a medium of their choice), and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. The views of the child should be given due weight according to the age, maturity, and capability of the child. The signing and ratification of the UNCROC by the United Kingdom signals that the Cayman Islands are bound by a broad set of values regarding children, particularly in expressing their views, having a say in all matters which affect them, presenting their insights, and being supported to do so in the most meaningful and appropriate manner.

At Montessori School of Cayman, the child will, where possible and according to age, maturity, and capability, participate in all decision-making processes. This includes setting learning targets, contributing to Learning Support Plans (LSPs), discussions about choices, contributing to the assessment of their needs, and outlined review and transition processes. We believe children are more likely to respond positively to intervention and support programmes if they understand the rationale for them and are given some personal responsibility for their own progress. Such positive involvement can also enhance self-image and confidence. In particular, the school will consider how best to:

- involve the child in decision-making processes which affect their own assessment, provision, and progress
- determine the child's level of participation, taking into account approaches to assessment and intervention that are suitable for their age, ability, past experiences, and prior learning
- record the child's views in identifying their difficulties, setting goals, and agreeing on a strategy for developing, monitoring, and reviewing progress
- involve the child in formulating, implementing, and reviewing their own LSP.

5. Identification and Assessment

It is crucial that children with additional learning support needs, including SEND, are identified early. The sooner action is taken, the more responsive the child is likely to be. To aid in early identification, teachers and the SENCO at Montessori School of Cayman will collaborate with partnering agencies, using indicators such as observations, formative and summative assessments, and information obtained from parents/guardians. Formal assessment procedures as set out in the Code of Practice will be strictly adhered to.

6. The Three Phases of Action

The Code of Practice recognises a continuum of additional learning support needs, including SEND, and outlines a three-phase framework for action. Responsibility for children within Action Phase 1: Teacher Action and Action Phase 2: School Action lies at the school level. This is followed by a period of Formal Assessment, which provides an opportunity to fully understand the needs of the student and for consideration of SEND categorisation and a statement of eligibility at Action Phase 3: School Action Plus. The table below summarises the three phases of action.

Phase	Responsibility / Focus / Activities
Action Phase 1: Teacher Action	Responsibility: Teachers Focus: Identification and initial response Activities: Observations, classroom interventions, and parental engagement
Action Phase 2: School Action	Responsibility: School (Teachers, SENCO, and SBST) Focus: Enhanced support and intervention Activities: School-based assessments, development of Learning Support Plans (LSPs), and involvement of specialised staff
Action Phase 3: School Action Plus	Responsibility: School (SENCO, SBST) and External Agencies Focus: Formal assessment and SEND categorisation Activities: Comprehensive evaluations, collaboration with external professionals, and preparation of a statement of eligibility

By following this structured approach, Montessori School of Cayman ensures a thorough and systematic process for identifying and supporting children with additional learning support needs, including SEND.

Statement of Eligibility

Children at Action Phase 3: School Action Plus who have been formally assessed and identified with SEND are required by law to have their needs, and the provision to be made in relation to them, set out by Montessori School of Cayman's responsible authority in a statement of eligibility, as outlined in the Code of Practice.

Annual Review

All children with a statement of eligibility at Action Phase 3: School Action Plus are required to have an Annual Review in line with the Ministry of Education's policy and strategy. Montessori School of Cayman is committed to the processes, expectations, and responsibilities relating to the three phases of action outlined in the Code of Practice, and to all legal requirements set out in both the Education Act, 2016 and the Education Regulations, 2017.

Learning Support Plan (LSP)

All students with ALSN, including SEND, require a Learning Support Plan (LSP) across all three phases of action. An LSP should be 'SMARTER':

Specific: clearly define what the child should be working towards.

Measurable: ensure it is clear when the target has been achieved.

Achievable: set goals that are attainable for the individual student.

Relevant: align targets with the student's needs and circumstances.

Time-bound: set deadlines for target achievement and review at least termly.

Evaluated: review and revise targets if they are not effective.

Reviewed: formally reassess and share progress with the co-production team, celebrating successes.

An LSP is a working document, reviewed at least termly through meetings between the teacher/SENCO and the parents/guardians. It helps the student make steady and significant progress through additional support, ensuring that the LSP continues to address and meet the child's needs. Parental/guardian input is essential, as is the student's own perspective, if they are able to convey their thoughts on progress and the LSP's effectiveness. The teacher/SENCO will discuss and update targets as necessary.

See Appendix B for an example of Montessori School of Cayman's Learning Support Plan (LSP).

7. Arrangements for ALSN/SEND

Curriculum Access

Montessori School of Cayman ensures that all students have support and full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Specific actions include:

- access to Literacy, Numeracy, and ICT support
- implementation of specific programmes for additional support

- differentiation in teaching methods
- development and use of LSPs in relation to the curriculum
- provision of appropriate resources.

Ensuring Effective Inclusion

At Montessori School of Cayman, all students, whether they have ALSN or not, are included in the full life of the school. We actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation, ensuring that children are included positively and proactively. Inclusion involves fostering a sense of community, belonging, and meaningful participation.

We aim to achieve inclusion through:

- an inclusive ethos
- a broad and balanced curriculum for all children
- early identification systems for barriers to learning and participation
- high expectations and suitable targets for all children.

Links

Montessori School of Cayman will develop partnerships and inclusive links with other schools and centres of excellence, which will benefit both staff and children. This includes:

- continuity and progression of curriculum provision
- opportunities for professional development
- sharing resources and expertise
- joint initiatives.

Training

All staff at Montessori School of Cayman will have ongoing access to a range of training opportunities. The school utilises external agencies and providers for training on various ALSN/SEND topics. These training opportunities are part of our training programme and are also available through the Ministry of Education and Department of Education Services. Staff may attend specific training days and courses leading to specialist qualifications to improve outcomes for students with ALSN/SEND. Information and expertise are shared within the school through staff meetings and other collaborative discussions.

8. Complaints Procedure

If parents/guardians have complaints regarding any aspect of the identification, assessment, or provision of ALSN/SEND, they should direct their complaints to the school leader and/or the responsible authority (Governing Body). Montessori School of Cayman adheres to its own complaints policy, which is available upon request.

Additionally, complaints can be made to the Chief Officer or the Chief Officer's designate, in accordance with the Ministry of Education's policy and guidelines.

Appendix A — Additional Learning Support Needs (ALSN) Register

Montessori School of Cayman ALSN Register:

[illegible]

Appendix B — Learning Support Plan (LSP)

Montessori School of Cayman's Learning Support Plan template, completed for each student with ALSN/SEND:

Students should have a Learning Support Plan (LSP) completed using the template below, reviewed at least termly.

Student Name:		DOB:		Classroom:	
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Things I Find Difficult	What I am Working Towards	How Will You Know I Can Do It?	Who and What Will Help Me? (Teachers/Parents)	Review (Date: Dec / April / June)
				☐ Practice ☐ Working ☐ Masters Comments:
				☐ Practice ☐ Working ☐ Masters Comments:
				☐ Practice ☐ Working ☐ Masters Comments:
				☐ Practice ☐ Working ☐ Masters Comments:

Short Term Goals: -
Long Term Goals: -

Parents Role	Teacher's Role	SENCO Role

Parent:	Signature: _____ Date: _____
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Teacher:	Signature: _____	Date: _____
SENCO:	Signature: _____	Date: _____
Head of School:	Signature: _____	Date: _____

Worked example: how to complete a goal on the LSP.

Goal

Explanation

The goal means that:

In Practice, This Looks Like

Why It's Important

- Learn to follow through and finish what she/he starts.
- Build attention, task endurance, and self-regulation.
- Prepare for group learning, where children often need to do activities they may not choose themselves.
- Gain confidence in completing challenging or less preferred tasks independently.