

Navigating Education with SEND

**Everything Parent Carers Need to
Know About Education Support**



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Throughout this guide you will find QR codes, to use them:

1. Open your phone's camera app.
2. Point the camera at the QR code.
3. Wait for a notification or icon to appear.
4. Tap the notification or icon to open the link or app.



Welcome

Welcome to your School & Education Guide

If you're reading this, the chances are you're trying to make sense of a system that can sometimes feel overwhelming.

Maybe your child has just started school.

Maybe school has raised concerns.

Perhaps you've heard words like SENDCo, EHCP or Graduated Approach for the first time, and you're wondering what they actually mean.

Or maybe you've been navigating the education system for years and simply need a place to find reliable information without searching through endless websites.

Whatever has brought you here, we're really glad you found us. At Choice, we know that no two children are the same. We also know that no two families experience the education system in quite the same way. That's why we've created this guide—to help you understand your options, your child's rights, and the support available every step of the way.

Our aim isn't to replace practitioner advice or tell you what decisions to make. Instead, we want to give you clear, easy-to-understand information so you can feel more confident asking questions, making informed choices and working in partnership with your child's school.

Above all, remember this:

You know your child better than anyone else.

Your voice matters.

Team Choice



Your Child has a Right to Education

Every child has a right to education under Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the Human Rights Act.

This fundamental principle is promoted in both national and international law, recognising that education is not a privilege, but a basic human right.

Inclusive education aims to provide all children with the opportunity to learn and develop to their full potential within mainstream settings wherever possible, with reasonable adjustments and support tailored to their individual requirements.

This ensures that children with disabilities or additional needs are not excluded or marginalised, but rather empowered to participate fully in society, creating their own independence, self-esteem, and future prospects.



Picking a School for Your Child

Picking a school for a child is difficult enough, but once you add additional needs, varying pieces of equipment, and therapies into the mix, it can be even harder to figure out where to start.

So where can you start and what is available?

A child with additional needs can attend a mainstream school, a specialist school, or a mainstream school with extra support. The best option depends on your child's needs and circumstances.

Mainstream school

- Most children with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities attend a mainstream school
- Children in mainstream schools learn the national curriculum
- Some mainstream schools have special units for specific needs, such as autism or learning difficulties

Mainstream school with extra support

- Also known as "enhanced provision", this option may be for children who need a lot of help

Specialist school

- Specialist schools are designed to support pupils with additional needs
- They may have smaller classes, specially trained teachers, and a higher staff/pupil ratio
- Some specialist schools may take pupils with a particular diagnosis, such as autism
- Parents can request a specialist school or provision, but the Local Authority decides whether to name it within an EHCP.



Other options

- Homeschooling may be an option
- Independent schools, are schools that are not funded by the government. There is also no legal duty for the local authority to consult with an independent school that is not section 41 (*section 41 – independent schools which have been approved by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Children and Families Act (CFA) 2014*) registered with the DFE.
- Academies and free schools can also be named in an EHCP.

What is a maintained and non-maintained special school?

A maintained special school is funded and controlled by the local education authority (LA) and follows the national curriculum, while a non-maintained special school is a charitable foundation or "not-for-profit" school, approved by the Secretary of State, that is not controlled by the local authority.

How to find a school

- Ask your local authority for a list of special schools in your area
- Check your Local Offer for information on education, health, and social care services
- Visit schools to see if they suit your child
- Talk to other parents of children with additional needs
- Get advice from your local Information, Advice and Support (IAS) Service

To get a place at a specialist school funded by your local authority, all of the following must apply:

- your child has an EHCP
- your local authority agrees that the specialist school can provide the support in the plan
- the school agrees that they can meet the needs of your child
- your local authority agrees to fund the place
- In some rare cases, a child might get a place at a specialist school after their needs assessment has started, but before their plan has been finalised. This is called an 'assessment placement'.



Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes that organisations and people providing services must make if someone's physical or mental disability puts them at a disadvantage compared with others who aren't disabled.

It means schools have a legal obligation under the Equality Act to support pupils who are disabled with reasonable adjustments, making sure they can benefit from what the school offers in the same way as a pupil who isn't disabled.

A school must not discriminate against a disabled pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability. For example, preventing a disabled pupil on crutches from going out at break time because it would take too long to get out and back would be considered discriminatory.

Schools should think about how all aspects of the school day could be adjusted to meet the needs of the disabled child, including attendance and behaviour, so that everyone is set high expectations and feels they belong in the school community.

For example; A reasonable adjustment at school for a child could be providing a quiet space for a student with sensory sensitivities to take breaks, or offering extended time for assignments or tests to accommodate a child with a learning difference.

Children do not need an EHCP to receive reasonable adjustments. Schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010 regardless of whether a child has an EHCP.

You can learn more about reasonable adjustments here:



Graduated Approach

The Graduated Approach refers to the system of SEN support within mainstream settings. It is the system schools use to assess the needs of children and young people and then provide the appropriate support. The system should follow four stages, often referred to as a 'cycle': Assess, Plan, Do, Review. The Graduated Response sits within SEND Code of Practice Chapter 6.

Assess:

This involves gathering information about a child's needs, strengths, and challenges through various methods like observations, discussions with the child and family, and formal assessments.

Plan:

Based on the assessment, a plan is developed outlining specific interventions, support strategies, and expected outcomes, with the involvement of the child, family, and relevant practitioners.

Do:

The planned interventions are put into practice, providing the child with the necessary support.

Review:

Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions and make adjustments as needed, ensuring the child's needs are being met and progress is being made.

You can learn more about the graduated approach here:



A support plan is a document that outlines the special education needs and services a student needs to succeed in school and or higher education. Schools usually create a SEND Support Plan (sometimes called an Individual Learning Plan, One Page Profile or Provision Map).

What does a support plan include?

- Goals: Short-term targets and timeframes for the child to achieve
- Support strategies: Additional support the child needs, such as accommodations or services
- Learning difficulties: The nature of the child's learning or developmental difficulties
- Assessment information: Information about the child's likes, dislikes, and worries
- Who will help: Who will provide the support and services

Who creates a support plan?

- A team that typically includes:
 - Parents or caregivers
 - Teachers
 - Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo)
 - Other relevant practitioners

Who might be eligible for a support plan?

All children on the SEND register should have a support plan.

What is the difference between a EHCP & a Support plan?

An Support Plan, is a plan created by a school for a child with additional needs, while an Educational, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) is a legally binding document that outlines a child's special educational needs.





Support Plan

- Created by the school
- Not legally binding
- Focuses on a child's educational needs within a specific school
- Includes objectives, targets, and strategies
- May include assessment information, likes, dislikes, and worries
- May include details of any additional support needed

EHCP

- Legally binding document
- The Local Authority is legally obligated to implement the EHCP in the named provision
- Outlines a child's special educational needs in detail
- Can stay in place until a young person reaches the age of 25
- The main idea is to help children achieve their full potential

Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs)

You might need an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) if your child has significant and long-term special educational needs or disabilities that cannot be well supported by the standard provision available at their school or educational setting, meaning they require additional support beyond what is typically offered to most children with special needs; this could include specific educational, health, and social care provisions outlined in the plan to help them reach their full potential. An EHCP is based on needs, not diagnosis.

To learn more on EHCPs,
check here:



To learn more on Support
Plans, check here:



It covers:

- your child's needs
- the benefit or difference the support should make to your child (outcomes)
- the support that your local authority must provide (provision)

This could be because your child needs support with:

- reading, writing and numbers
- talking and listening
- social skills and emotions
- physical skills

Special educational provision:

- 'educates or trains' your child and is additional to or different from the educational offer to others of the same age

For example:

- speech and language therapy
- physiotherapy
- occupational therapy
- cognitive behavioural therapy
- support from a trained emotional learning support assistant to do group play
- a laptop with voice control software and training
- An EHCP is based on needs, not diagnosis.

Requesting an EHC assessment

You can ask your local authority to carry out an assessment if you think your child needs an EHC plan. You can also request an assessment for your child. A young person can request an assessment themselves if they're aged 16 to 25.

The EHCP Assessment & Plan Timeline

From request to final plan - key timescales

When you (or the school with your agreement) ask the local authority for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment, they must follow the timescales set out in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015).

These are the maximum timescales the local authority must meet.

STEP 1

Request for an EHC needs assessment

You, your child's school or a health or social care practitioner can request an EHC needs assessment from the local authority.

Week
0

What the local authority must do

- Acknowledge your request within 2 weeks.

STEP 2

Decision to assess

The local authority decides whether your child's needs may require an EHC plan.

By
Week
6

What the local authority must do

- Decide within 6 weeks whether to carry out an EHC needs assessment.
- If they decide not to assess, they must let you know why and tell you about your right to appeal.

STEP 3

Information gathering

If the decision is to assess, the local authority gathers information from you, school, health and social care.

Weeks
6-16

What the local authority must do

- Gather the information they need.
- You, school, health and social care must provide their reports by week 16.

STEP 4

Draft EHC plan

The local authority writes a draft plan based on the information gathered.

By
Week
16

What the local authority must do

- Send you a copy of the draft plan.
- You must be given at least 15 calendar days to comment.



Remember

These are maximum timescales. Many assessments are completed sooner, but the local authority must meet these deadlines.

STEP 5

Your comments on the draft

You have the right to read the draft plan and make changes or add your comments.

Weeks
16-17

What the local authority must do

- Consider your comments and any changes you suggest.

STEP 6

Final EHC plan

The local authority finalises the plan.

By
Week
20

What the local authority must do

- Issue the final EHC plan by week 20
- (at the latest).
- Send a copy to you, your child's school, and any health or social care services named in the plan.

STEP 7

Implementation

The plan is put into action - provision must be arranged as soon as possible.

After
Week
20

What happens next

- The local authority must ensure the provision in the plan is delivered.
- The plan will be reviewed at least annually.

Key points to remember



- The total statutory timescale from the decision to assess to the final plan is 20 weeks.
- If the local authority misses a deadline, ask for an explanation in writing.
- Keep a record of all dates and communication.
- If you disagree with any decision, you have the right to appeal.

EHC Process - Timescales Summary

Week 0

Request made

By Week 2

Acknowledgement of request

By Week 6

Decision whether to assess

Weeks 6-16

Information gathering

By Week 16

Draft plan sent to you

Weeks 16-17

Your comments (15 days minimum)

By Week 20

Final plan issued

Where can I find more information?

See Chapter 9 of the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2015) for full details of the EH assessment process and your rights.

Disagreeing with a decision

You can challenge your local authority about:

- their decision to not carry out an assessment
- their decision to not create an EHC plan
- the special educational support in the EHC plan
- the school named in the EHC plan

If a local authority refuses to issue an EHC plan (Education, Health and Care Plan), you can usually access mediation as a next step, this involves contacting a mediation service to discuss your concerns with the local authority in an attempt to reach an agreement. You do not have to mediate.

You can choose mediation or request the certificate immediately. You will need a mediation certificate to proceed with an appeal if mediation is not successful.

To appeal a **Section B (needs)** of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, you must first attend mediation, then complete the SEND35 appeal form, and submit it to the SEND Tribunal within the required timeframe, providing evidence and reasons for your appeal.

To appeal a **Section F (provision)** of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, you must first attend mediation, and if that fails, you can appeal to the SEND Tribunal using the SEND35 form, providing reasons and supporting evidence for your disagreement with the Local Authority's decision.

To appeal a **Section I (placement)** of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, you don't need to consider mediation, but you still have the right to mediate if you wish, and you must submit your appeal to the SEND Tribunal within two months of the date on the Local Authority's decision letter

IPSEA advice line
0800 018 4016



SEND Tribunal

The SEND Tribunal is an independent court that settles disagreements between families and Local Authorities about Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessments and EHCPs. It looks at the evidence from both sides and decides whether the Local Authority has made the correct decision. The Tribunal is independent, free to use, and designed to ensure children and young people receive the support they are entitled to under the law.

Think of it like this:

School → Local Authority → Mediation (where required) → SEND Tribunal

The Tribunal is completely independent of your local authority and the Department for Education. Its job is to decide whether the Local Authority has followed the law and whether the evidence supports the child's needs.

What can you appeal?

- The SEND Tribunal can hear appeals about:
- Refusal to carry out an EHC needs assessment.
- Refusal to issue an EHCP after an assessment.
- The description of your child's needs (Section B).
- The educational provision your child should receive (Section F).
- The school or educational placement named in the EHCP (Section I).
- A decision to cease (end) an EHCP.



What happens at the Tribunal?

Many parents imagine a courtroom like they see on television—but it isn't like that.

Usually:

- The hearing takes place in a meeting room.
- A panel (normally a judge and one or two specialist members) listens to both sides.
- Parents explain why they disagree.
- The Local Authority explains its decision.
- Evidence such as school reports, educational psychologist reports, therapy reports and medical evidence is considered.
- The panel asks questions to better understand your child's needs.

The atmosphere is intended to be respectful and focused on the evidence.

Do I need a solicitor?

No.

Many parent carers represent themselves successfully.

Some choose support from:

- an advocate,
- a SEND adviser,
- charities such as IPSEA or SOS!SEN,
- or a solicitor or barrister for more complex cases.

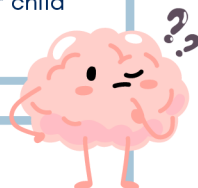
How long does it take?

Most appeals take around 4-6 months from lodging the appeal to the hearing, although timescales can vary depending on the issue and the Tribunal's workload.



What happens next if you receive an EHCP for your child?

After receiving an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for your child, the plan will be implemented and reviewed annually. The plan is a legal document that outlines the support and provision your child is entitled to.



What is a EHCP Review?

An Education, Health and Care (EHC) review is a formal meeting that takes place at least once a year to assess a child's progress and update their EHC plan. The review is a legal requirement that must be carried out by the local authority. The review can be attended by the pupil, parent carers, education setting, practitioners involved in the individual's care, and the local authority. The Local Authority must decide whether to

- maintain
- amend
- cease

the EHCP following review.

Making changes to your EHCP

In some situations, you can ask the school (or placement) and local authority for an early annual review. This can help you get significant changes to your child's plan without waiting for the next annual review. A significant change might be getting another diagnosis.



Asking for an Informal Review

You can ask your child's school for an informal review at any time. You do not have to wait until the annual review to talk about:

- how the school is carrying out the EHC plan
- any concerns about your child's progress

Depending on the school, the SENCo may set up reviews each term to check your child's progress.



Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

If the local authority (LA) agrees it would be inappropriate for any required special educational provision to be delivered in a school, it can agree to arrange for it to be delivered somewhere else, for example at home.

The LA must arrange and pay for that provision.

EOTAS is different to elective home education. With an EOTAS package the LA is responsible for arranging and paying for the provision.

However, to access the EOTAS option, your child must have an EHCP.

If **you choose** to home educate your child, the LA is not responsible for meeting any of the costs or providing any support.

Elective Home Education

If you would like, you could choose to home educate your child. This is sometimes called 'home schooling', but is more accurately known as 'elective home education' or 'EHE'.

If this is what is right for you and your child then this can be a positive step.

The Department for Education's "All you need to know about home-schooling and elective home education" summarises key information you should be aware of if you are thinking about home schooling. Which you can find here:



Elective home educating children or young people with EHC plans

The LA **should not stop** an EHC plan because the child or young person is being home educated. The LA must also still review the plan annually to assure itself that the provision set out in it continues to be appropriate and that the child's special educational needs (SEN) continue to be met (paragraph 10.32 of the Code). The LA must use the same legal process to review the EHC plan, even if the child or young person is being home educated. Parents should think carefully before deregistering from school if the issue is unmet SEND needs.

If you wish to home educate your child you do not need school's permission, but should write to:

- the school and explain that they intend to educate their child at home, and the LA and ask it to amend Section I of the EHC plan by removing the name of the school. Parents of children at special schools will also need to ask the LA to agree to their name being taken off from the school roll if the LA arranged for them to go there.
- If your child's current educational placement is not working and you do not want to home educate them, it may be better to change the EHC plan to set out different special educational provision and/or name a different school/placement rather than attempting to take on home education without support.

For more information on EHE with an EHCP plan, please follow this QR:



School Attendance, Medical Needs & EBSA

Every child has the right to an education, but they also have the right to the support they need to access it.

For many children with SEND, attending school isn't simply about choosing whether to go. Physical health, mental health, anxiety, sensory differences, unmet needs and inaccessible environments can all become significant barriers to attendance.

The Department for Education's attendance guidance expects schools and local authorities to take a support-first approach, working alongside families to understand and remove those barriers before considering legal action.

Medical Needs

Children who are too unwell to attend school should not be expected to attend.

Medical needs can include:

- Physical illnesses
- Long-term health conditions
- Hospital treatment
- Recovery after surgery
- Mental health conditions
- Anxiety where supported by medical evidence

Schools should work with families, health practitioners and other services to identify how the child's education can continue safely.

Depending on the child's needs, support may include:

- Flexible start or finish times
- A phased return
- Adjustments to the school day
- Learning at home for a temporary period
- Alternative provision where appropriate



Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

EBSA is when a child experiences significant emotional distress or anxiety that affects their ability to attend school.

It is not the same as truancy or simply refusing to go to school.

Children experiencing EBSA are often desperate to attend but feel overwhelmed by barriers such as:

- Anxiety
- Sensory overload
- Bullying
- Unmet SEND needs
- Social pressures
- Fear of failure
- Exhaustion and burnout
- Changes in routine

The earlier support is provided, the better the long-term outcomes are likely to be. Schools should work with families to understand the reasons behind the attendance difficulties and agree a support plan.

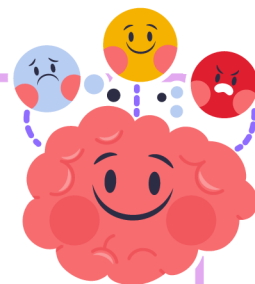
Possible support may include:

- ✓ Meet and greet by a trusted adult
- ✓ Safe spaces during the day
- ✓ Sensory adjustments
- ✓ Flexible transitions
- ✓ Adapted timetables
- ✓ Reduced demands where appropriate
- ✓ Mental health support
- ✓ Regular review meetings

Reduced or Part-Time Timetables

A reduced timetable should only ever be used:

- In the child's best interests
- As part of a planned support package
- For the shortest possible time
- With clear review dates



Choice Tip ♥

Attendance is important—but understanding why a child is struggling is even more important.

When schools, families and practitioners work together to remove barriers rather than simply focusing on attendance figures, children are much more likely to feel safe, included and able to learn.

It should never become a long-term solution or be used because a school cannot meet a child's needs.

Parents should be involved in agreeing:

- Why it is needed
- What support will be provided
- When it will be reviewed
- The plan for returning to full-time education where appropriate

Attendance Expectations

Schools are expected to promote good attendance for every child. However, attendance should never be viewed in isolation.

The Department for Education expects schools to:

- Understand the reasons for absence
- Identify barriers early
- Work with parent carers
- Make reasonable adjustments where needed
- Consider SEND and disabilities
- Work with health practitioners and the Local Authority where appropriate

Children with SEND may need different support to help them access education successfully.

If your child is struggling to attend

Speak to your child's:

- ✓ Class Teacher
- ✓ SENDCo
- ✓ Attendance Lead

Ask for a meeting to discuss:

- What barriers are affecting attendance?
- Have reasonable adjustments been considered?
- Is your child receiving SEN Support?
- Is an EHC Needs Assessment required?
- Would an early Annual Review help if your child has an EHCP?
- Should other practitioners become involved?



Bullying, SEND & Your Child's Rights

Every child deserves to feel safe, included and respected at school.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are significantly more likely to experience bullying than their peers. Bullying can have a serious impact on a child's education, confidence, mental health and wellbeing.

Schools have a legal duty to prevent bullying, respond appropriately when it happens and create an environment where every child feels safe.

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that is:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated over time (although a single serious incident should always be investigated)
- Intended to upset, intimidate or harm another person

Bullying can take many forms, including:

 Name calling or insults

 Social exclusion or being left out

 Online or social media bullying

 Physical bullying

 Threats or intimidation

 Bullying because of a disability, additional need, race, religion or other protected characteristic



Children with SEND

Children with SEND can sometimes find it harder to recognise bullying, report concerns or explain what has happened.

Some children may think bullying is "normal" or may struggle to communicate how they feel.

Schools should take this into account when investigating concerns.

Your child's rights

Every child has the right to:

- ✓ Feel safe at school
- ✓ Learn without fear
- ✓ Be treated with dignity and respect
- ✓ Have bullying taken seriously
- ✓ Receive support if bullying affects their wellbeing

If your child is disabled under the Equality Act 2010, bullying related to their disability may also amount to disability discrimination or harassment.

What should schools do?

Schools should:

- ✓ Investigate concerns promptly
- ✓ Listen to both the child and parent carers
- ✓ Record incidents
- ✓ Put appropriate support in place
- ✓ Take action to prevent bullying from continuing
- ✓ Monitor whether interventions are working
- ✓ Review any support plans or reasonable adjustments if needed

If bullying is linked to a child's SEND, schools should also consider whether additional support or reasonable adjustments are needed.

Reasonable adjustments

Sometimes bullying happens because a child's needs are not being understood. Schools should consider adjustments such as:

- Safe spaces during breaks
- Adult support during unstructured times
- Alternative lunch arrangements
- Social skills support where appropriate
- Peer awareness and inclusion activities
- Flexible movement around school
- Staff awareness of your child's needs

Every child is different, so adjustments should be tailored to the individual.



What can parent carers do?

If your child tells you they are being bullied:

- ✓ Stay calm and listen.
- ✓ Keep a written record of incidents, including dates, times and witnesses where possible.
- ✓ Report concerns to the class teacher or form tutor.
- ✓ Ask what actions the school will take.
- ✓ Request a meeting with the SENDCo if bullying is linked to your child's additional needs.
- ✓ Follow the school's complaints procedure if concerns are not resolved.

When should concerns be escalated?

You may wish to escalate concerns if:

- Bullying continues despite being reported.
- Your child no longer feels safe in school.
- Your child's attendance begins to suffer.
- Their mental health is deteriorating.
- The school is not investigating concerns appropriately.
- Bullying relates to your child's disability and reasonable adjustments have not been considered.

Did you know?

Schools must have an Anti-Bullying Policy and a Behaviour Policy, and should make both available to parents, usually via their website.

If bullying is affecting your child's education, SEND support should be reviewed to ensure the right provision is in place.

Schools have legal duties under:

- Education Act 2002 – Schools must safeguard and promote pupils' welfare.
- Equality Act 2010 – Disabled pupils must not experience discrimination or harassment because of their disability.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – All schools must have safeguarding procedures for responding to bullying, including online bullying.
- DfE Guidance: Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Schools should have clear procedures for preventing, recording and responding to bullying.
- Children and Families Act 2014 – Schools should make appropriate provision for children with SEND and work with families to remove barriers to learning.

Who does what?

Understanding the people supporting your child at school

Teacher

Your child's day-to-day teacher.

The class teacher is responsible for ensuring your child receives a high-quality education and making reasonable adjustments in the classroom.

They will:

- Deliver your child's learning.
- Differentiate work to meet your child's needs.
- Monitor progress.
- Raise concerns if they feel additional support is needed.
- Work with the SENDCo to put support in place.
- Meet with you to discuss your child's progress.

Go to your teacher when...

- You have concerns about day-to-day learning.
- Homework is becoming difficult.
- Your child is struggling in lessons.
- You want to discuss classroom strategies.



Headteacher

Responsible for the whole school.

The Headteacher ensures the school meets its legal duties, including supporting pupils with SEND.

They will:

- Lead the school.
- Ensure SEND legislation is followed.
- Allocate staffing and resources.
- Deal with complaints.
- Make decisions about school policies.

Go to your Headteacher when...

- You have been unable to resolve concerns with the teacher or SENDCo.
- You wish to make a formal complaint.
- There are concerns about the SEND provision.



SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator)

The school's SEND specialist.

The SENDCo coordinates support for children with SEND and works alongside teachers to ensure appropriate provision is in place.

They will:

- Coordinate SEND support.
- Complete or oversee SEND paperwork.
- Arrange assessments where appropriate.
- Liaise with outside practitioners.
- Help implement EHCPs.
- Monitor interventions.
- Support staff with strategies.
- Attend Annual Reviews.

They do not

- Diagnose conditions.
- Decide whether your child gets an EHCP.
- Allocate Local Authority funding.

Go to your SENDCo when...

- Your child needs more support.
- You want to discuss SEND Support.
- You think an EHCP assessment may be needed.
- You have questions about Annual Reviews.



Governors

The school's accountability team.

Governors oversee how the school is run. They don't manage day-to-day teaching but ensure the school is fulfilling its legal responsibilities.

They will:

- Monitor school performance.
- Ensure SEND policies are followed.
- Hold the Headteacher accountable.
- Review complaints where appropriate.

They do not

- Decide individual EHCPs.
- Manage classroom support.
- Override Local Authority decisions.

Go to the Governors when...

- You have exhausted the school's complaints procedure.



Local Authority (LA)

Responsible for EHCPs and specialist provision.

The Local Authority has legal duties under the Children and Families Act 2014.

They will:

- Decide whether to assess for an EHCP.
- Carry out EHC needs assessments.
- Issue EHCPs.
- Name schools in EHCPs.
- Arrange and fund the provision within an EHCP.
- Review EHCPs every year.
- Arrange specialist school placements where appropriate.

They do not

- Manage your child's day-to-day education.
- Tell teachers how to teach.

Go to the Local Authority when...

- Requesting an EHC needs assessment.
- Discussing an EHCP.
- Requesting changes to an EHCP.
- Discussing specialist placements.

SEND Tribunal

An independent court.

The SEND Tribunal is completely separate from your Local Authority. It settles disagreements about SEND law.

They will:

- Hear appeals about EHCP decisions.
- Consider evidence from both sides.
- Decide whether the Local Authority has followed the law.
- Order changes to an EHCP if appropriate.

Go to the SEND Tribunal when...

- You disagree with a Local Authority decision about an EHCP or assessment and have completed (or obtained exemption from) the required mediation process.



School & SEND Glossary

Common words and acronyms explained

Term	What it means
Annual Review	A yearly meeting to review an EHCP and decide whether it still meets your child's needs.
APDR (Assess, Plan, Do, Review)	The four-stage cycle schools use to identify, support and review children with SEND. Also called the Graduated Approach.
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Supports children and young people with emotional or mental health needs.
EHC Needs Assessment	A legal assessment carried out by the Local Authority to decide whether a child needs an EHCP.
EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)	EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)
Educational Psychologist (EP)	A specialist who assesses how a child learns and makes recommendations to support them.
Graduated Approach	The process schools follow to provide and review SEND support before considering an EHCP.
HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant)	A teaching assistant with additional responsibilities and training who supports learning in school.
IAS Service	Information, Advice and Support Service. Offers free, impartial SEND advice to families.
Local Authority (LA)	The council responsible for EHC assessments, EHCPs and specialist school placements.
Occupational Therapist (OT)	A practitioner who helps children develop everyday skills such as handwriting, dressing, eating and sensory regulation.

Term	What it means
One Page Profile	A simple document describing what people like and admire about a child, what is important to them and how best to support them. Some schools use this instead of a Support Plan.
Provision	The support, equipment, therapies or teaching your child receives to help meet their needs.
Reasonable Adjustments	Changes schools must make under the Equality Act 2010 so disabled pupils are not placed at a disadvantage.
SALT (Speech and Language Therapy)	Support for children with speech, language and communication needs.
SEN (Special Educational Needs)	When a child needs extra educational support to help them learn.
SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)	An umbrella term covering children and young people with additional educational needs and/or disabilities.
SENDCo	The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator. The member of staff responsible for coordinating SEND support within school.
SEND Tribunal	An independent court that hears appeals about EHC assessments and EHCP decisions.
Support Plan	A school document (sometimes called an Individual Learning Plan, Pupil Passport or One Page Profile) explaining the support a child receives at SEN Support level.



Top Tip

Don't worry if you don't understand every acronym straight away. Schools and practitioners often use shortened terms without explaining them. It's always okay to ask, "Could you explain what that means?" There are no silly questions when it comes to understanding your child's support.



School Myths & Truths

There is a lot of misinformation or incorrect information when it comes to discussing EHCPs.

We thought that taking this space to clear them up would help a lot of individuals.
Please check our socials for more!

Myth	Fact
You must prove your child has needs to be assessed	An assessment should be considered if A the child has or may have special educational needs and B if they may need a special education provision
Schools need funding before they can help.	Schools should provide SEN Support using their existing resources while seeking additional funding where appropriate.
A child has a diagnosis, so they need an EHC plan	An EHC plan is not dependent on diagnosis. Children with a range of diagnosis can have their needs met through SEN support
EHC needs assessments are funded by schools.	They're funded by the Local Authority, so no cost to the school at all.
Your child must have a diagnosis to get a EHCP	There is no need for a diagnosis, just evidence that your child is in need of extra support or on a pathway to diagnosis.
A child cannot get any support without an EHC Plan	All schools have a notional budget of £6000 to help support all children in the school with SEN needs, they can also apply for more funding to help.



Useful Organisations

- IPSEA
- SOS!SEN
- Contact
- Council for Disabled Children
- Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA)
- SENDIAS
- DfE Attendance Guidance
- Government SEND Code of Practice



Your Child, Your Choice

Because one size doesn't fit all

Find our
website here:

