



Information Advice and Support

What are Special Educational Needs?

This leaflet explains what Special Educational
Needs are, and what support is available at school



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What are Special Educational Needs?

The legal definition of special educational needs can be found in Section 312 of the Education Act 1996. It states that:

Children have Special Educational Needs if they have a *learning difficulty* which calls for *special educational provision* to be made for them.

To be able to decide whether this applies to an individual child it is important to consider the definitions of both a *learning difficulty* and *special educational provision*.

**A child has a learning difficulty if he/she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
or
the child has a disability that prevents that him/her from using the educational facilities that are provided for children of the same age in the local area**

The Education Act 1996 also states that it is important not to assume that children have a learning difficulty solely because their home language is different from the language that they are taught in.

For children over two, special education provision is any provision that is *additional to or different from* what is provided for children of the same age in the local area.

For children under two, special educational provision is any educational provision that is made for them.

What can I do to help my child?

Parents should try to keep in regular contact with the school. You should ask the SENCO/Class Teacher if there is anything that you don't understand. Parents and school working together as partners helps children with special educational needs to fulfil their potential.

Parents should try to attend IEP/Pupil Passport Reviews and Parents' Evenings wherever possible. This will give you the opportunity to discuss the progress that your child is making or any concerns that you may have. You will also be able to discuss how best to support your child at home, including working on their IEP/Pupil Passport targets or homework.

Parents have a duty by law to ensure that their child attends school. If there are issues in school you should speak to your child's Class Teacher/Head of Year as soon as possible to try to resolve the situation.

Useful Websites

Download a copy of the SEN Code of Practice January 2015:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

Information from the government on SEN:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/sen>

or

<https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs>

What is a LSA?

LSA stands for Learning Support Assistant. LSAs can also be known as Teaching Assistants (TAs) or Classroom Assistants.

An LSA provides to teachers and pupils in the classroom. They may work with children on a 1-to-1 basis or in small groups. Their duties may include

- Helping children in improving literacy and numeracy skills
- Checking that children understand tasks and helping when they find something difficult
- Delivering therapy programmes
- Giving general support to complete classroom work
- Work on targets set in a child's IEP/Pupil Passport
- Preparing learning materials and equipment
- Helping children with physical difficulties such as mobility, toileting and getting dressed
- Completing assessments under the direction of the teacher

Will the LSA work with my child on a 1-to-1 basis all of the time?

An LSA may work with a child on a 1-to-1 basis for some of the day but they may also support children of similar ability in small groups. Very few children will need constant 1-to-1 support.

There can be disadvantages to a child getting constant 1-to-1 support. Children may become isolated from their peers or may begin to feel 'different'. They may also become too-dependant on having someone there to help.

What types of difficulties does the term SEN include?

The SEN Code of Practice 2015 (6.28), groups Special Education Needs into four main areas of need. These are:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Sensory and/or Physical Needs

A child or young person may have needs in more than one of these areas.

Communication and Interaction includes any difficulty which a child or a young person has in communicating and interacting with others. This may include speech and language delays or disorders, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, hearing impairment and autistic spectrum disorders.

Cognition and Learning includes children or a young person who has difficulties in learning and understanding. This may include moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, physical and sensory difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health includes becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour, hyperactivity, lack of concentration, immature social skills and emotional difficulties.

Sensory and/or Physical Needs difficulties includes hearing and visual impairments (both permanent and temporary), a multi-sensory impairment or physical difficulties.

What should I do if I think my child has Special Educational Needs?

Every school has a teacher who is responsible for co-ordinating the help that children with Special Educational Needs receive. This teacher is called the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator).

If you feel that your child has Special Educational Needs, you should make an appointment to see your child's class/form teacher along with the SENCO. It is helpful to make a list of your concerns before you go to the meeting so that you all of the points that you want to discuss are covered. Ask the teachers if they have noticed any issues with your child's learning at school.

What help is available at school for my child?

When a child has been identified as having Special Educational Needs, they will be placed on the Special Educational Needs register. This is a list of the children within the school that have Special Educational Needs and helps to ensure that they receive the help in school that that require. A teacher from school, usually the SENCO, will discuss this with you before placing your child on the SEN register.

Every school receives funding to support children with Special Educational Needs. The help that children with Special Educational Needs receive depends on the level of their needs. This approach is known as the 'graduated response' to Special Educational Needs. The first stage of the graduated response is called 'SEN Support'.

What support is provided through SEN Support ?

Children or young people placed at the SEN Support stage will receive help from the teacher or learning support assistant/teaching assistant. This help will be **additional to** or **different from** what is provided for the rest of the children. This will be recorded in an IEP/Pupil Passport - see *Page 4* - for more information on IEPs/Pupil Passports.

What if my child still doesn't make adequate progress?

If a child has been receiving help and support through SEN Support but still isn't making adequate progress, the next stage of the Special Educational Needs arrangements is an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. The SENCO will usually talk to you at your child's IEP/Pupil Passport Review before this.

What is an IEP or a Pupil Passport?

An IEP (Individual Education Plan) or a Pupil Passport, is a document that records the help that children with Special Educational Needs receive in school. It will contain targets for the child to work towards. These targets should be SMART - **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime bound.

The IEP/Pupil Passport will also contain the strategies that the school will use to help the child meet his/her targets, as well as success criteria and a review date.

School should discuss your child's IEP/Pupil Passport with you, ask you to sign it and then give you a copy to keep at home.

How often should an IEP/Pupil Passport be reviewed?

An IEP/Pupil Passport should be reviewed at least twice a year, although some schools review IEPs more frequently than this.

At least one IEP/Pupil Passport Review should coincide with Parents' Evening, although you can ask for a more private meeting if you'd prefer. School should always seek parents' views when reviewing a child's IEP/Pupil Passport.