



Information Advice and Support

Which School?

This leaflet explains about schools and your rights.



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Deciding which school you would prefer for your child is one of the biggest decisions you will have to make. Often it is a question you have in mind a long time before your child starts school. These notes may help you.

Thinking about schools

The law says that children with Special Educational Needs should be educated in mainstream schools wherever possible - this is now a legal right for parents/carers.

It is important to keep an open mind and consider several possibilities. There may not be an 'ideal' - there are advantages and disadvantages to most arrangements. For example, one school may have smaller classes but may not organise the teaching in the way that would suit your child.

Your Rights

Like all parents/carers, you have the right to inform the Local Authority (LA) which school you would like your child to attend. You need to decide what your preference is, but do talk to people who know you and your child before you make your mind up.

In many cases, your child will be able to go to the school you nominate. In a few cases, your child could be turned down.

If you express a preference for the mainstream school serving your child's permanent home address, the LA guarantees a place will be available there for your child.

If you express a preference for any other school, individual consideration will be given to your preference.

If your child has a Draft Education, Health and Care Plan

You will be asked to say which school you would like your child to attend. The LA will agree to this so long as:

- It is suitable for your child's needs.
- Your child's attendance would not disrupt other children's education at the school.
- It is efficient use of resources for the LA.

(Your child could still be turned down for some of the reasons already mentioned).

There is also a 'catchment' area for special schools. If you chose a school in that area, your child will be provided with transport if needed. If you live outside that area, your child may be offered a place if there are spaces, but transport may not be provided.



The LA has a leaflet for parents/carers that gives details of its transport arrangements.

Types of Schools

This depends on your child's needs, but in most cases it will be a mainstream school in your area. Your child will be with their friends and peers from your local community.

These are the possible options:

- Mainstream school with support from the arrangements made for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- Mainstream schools with extra help or provision for example:
 - i. An extra member of staff (a Learning Support Assistant) who may be there for part of the time.
 - ii. A specialised teacher who visits the school.
 - iii. Special equipment.
 - iv. An additional unit.
- Special school - where the children in the school will have Special Educational Needs.

Academies

Academies are publicly funded independent local schools that provide free education.

Academies don't have to follow the national curriculum and can set their own term times. They still have to follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as other state schools.

Academies get money direct from the government, not the local council. They're run by an academy trust which employs the staff. Some academies have sponsors such as businesses, universities, other schools, faith groups or voluntary groups. Sponsors are responsible for improving the performance of their schools.