



WIASS

Wolverhampton Information,
Advice and Support Service

“For special educational needs and disability”

Impartial information, advice and support on matters relating to a child or young person's special educational needs or disability from birth to 25 years.

SEN Support

A graduated approach to support children and young people in education



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Families at the heart of the system

Children and young people (and their parents or carers) should be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve.

All schools and early years / post 16 settings have a legal duty to identify the special educational needs (SEN) of pupils and students. This means:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure that a child or young person with SEN gets the support they need
- Inform parents and carers when they are making special educational provision
- Ensure children and young people with SEN engage in activities alongside peers who do not have SEN

This leaflet is designed to inform you (parents, carers and young people) how schools, settings and other services support children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability and how you will be involved.

What does SEN mean?

The term **Special Educational Needs** is described in law in the Children and Families Act 2014 as:

1 A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

2 A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- (b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

3 A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if the points above are likely to apply when they start school.

4 A child or young person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been spoken at home.

Areas of Special Educational Needs

The Department for Education has identified four broad areas which cover a range of needs. Children and young people may have SEN that are defined by more than one of these areas:



Communication and Interaction

Some children and young people may have speech, language and communication difficulties which make it difficult for them to make sense of language or to understand how to communicate effectively and appropriately with others. They may:

- have difficulty with producing or responding to expressive or receptive language
- have difficulty uttering speech sounds or have a speech delay
- have difficulty processing and identifying speech sounds and complex language
- have difficulty with understanding age-related social conventions of interaction, such as turn-taking during conversations or appropriate level of physical contact during play

Children and young people with an Autistic Spectrum Condition are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction.

Cognition and Learning

Some children and young people may learn at a slower pace than others their age. They may:

- have difficulty in understanding parts of the curriculum
- have difficulties with organisation and memory skills
- have a specific difficulty affecting one particular part of their learning such as in reading, writing or numeracy

The term 'learning difficulties' covers a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) where there may be associated difficulties with mobility and communication and profound and multiple difficulties (PMLD), where there may also be a physical disability or sensory impairment. Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) may affect one or more aspects of learning. Dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia come under this term.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which present themselves in many ways and may be a barrier to learning. They may:

- have difficulty in managing their relationships with other people
- be withdrawn
- behave in ways that may hinder their learning or that have an impact on their health and wellbeing
- have difficulty in accessing the school site or learning environment

This broad area includes attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attachment disorder. It also includes behaviours that may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, self-harming and eating disorders.



Sensory and/ or Physical

Children and young people may have a physical disability that means they must have additional on-going support and equipment to access all opportunities available to their peers. The impact may be hidden, mild or profound. They may have:

- hearing impairment (HI) - a diagnosed hearing loss which can range from mild to profound
- visual impairment (VI) – a diagnosed visual impairment or condition that can vary from mild to significant
- feeding difficulties or delayed independence skills
- physical disability (PD) – a diagnosed physical disability, which can be short-term or permanent
- sensory processing difficulty which affects how the brain processes sensory information. e.g. poor posture, uncoordinated movements, overly sensitive or under responsive to touch, movement, sights or sounds

What does disability mean?

Many children and young people who have SEN may also have a disability. A disability is described in law (Equality Act 2010) as:

'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term (a year or more) and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

This includes, for example, sensory impairments such as those that affect sight and hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy. Many disabilities are hidden.

Schools and settings are also required to anticipate the likely needs of future disabled learners and take steps that are reasonable to meet those needs.

Many children and young people with a medical condition and/or special educational needs will be protected by the legislation that defines disability under the Equality Act 2010. This means that they have a right not to be discriminated against. Schools and other education providers have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to their policies and their premises and to provide auxiliary aids and services to avoid children and young people with disabilities being placed at a disadvantage. It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably because of a reason connected to their disability. This applies to all aspects of school, nursery or college life, including extra-curricular activities and trips.

A failure to make a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act amounts to unlawful discrimination and can be challenged in a court or tribunal.



Support for pupils with medical conditions

There is a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. In doing so they should ensure that children can access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other child.

The aim is to ensure that all children with medical conditions, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

Further details can be found on our website, **wolvesiass.org**.
<https://wolvesiass.org/support-for-medical-conditions.html>



Support in schools and settings

The **SEND Code of Practice** provides statutory guidance for organisations (this includes schools and settings) working with and supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. It covers the 0-25 age range.

All schools and settings should have a clear approach to identifying and responding to special educational needs. For schools and nursery schools, this should be published in their SEN Policy and SEN Information Report.

All schools and settings will carefully monitor the progress of all children and young people in all four areas of need.

The SEND Code of Practice says:

This information gathering should include an early discussion with pupil and their parents. These early discussions with parents should be structured in a way that they develop a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty, the parents' concerns, the agreed outcomes sought for the child and the next steps. (6.39)

A Graduated Approach to supporting Special Educational Needs

Everyone learns in different ways and at different rates. Many children and young people may need extra help at some time during their education. In most cases, schools and settings should help them overcome any difficulties by providing work that is suitable for their level of ability and ordinarily available to all children and young people within the setting. This is known as the Universal Offer

The **Universal Offer** may include:

- Reasonable adjustments - these may include scheduled rest breaks, leaving class early to avoid busy areas, alternative lunch space, alternative arrangements for start or end of day
- Auxiliary Aids - these may include coloured overlays, enlarged print, reader pens
- Specialist equipment or furniture
- Visual timetables and/or use of symbols
- Support to develop peer relationships and participate in group activities
- Structured lunch time activities to support social skills
- Reward systems
- Repetition and reinforcement of skills including worked examples and modelling
- Time given for processing
- Consistent use of terms
- Home/school communication book

However, some children and young people may have additional needs which requires special educational provision. This means something that is 'additional to' and 'different from' that which is generally available from the universal offer to pupils of the same age. These children and young people may be identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and requiring SEN support.

The **SEND Code of Practice** says:

Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place (6.44)

SEN support includes **targeted support** and may involve **specialist services**. Interventions should be based on 'least intrusive, most effective' approach. SEN support should be delivered by staff with sufficient skills and knowledge.

Targeted support is school/setting based support which may include:

- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
- Circle of Friends social intervention
- Precision Teaching to support learning
- Comic Strip Conversations and/or Social Stories to explain situations an individual may find difficult
- Sensory diet/ sensory snacks to support sensory regulation
- Cool Kids/Cool Characters to support fine and gross motor development
- School counsellor or mentor

When additional interventions may be required the school/setting should engage **specialist services** to consider what additional support might be needed to ensure they are doing everything they can to meet the child or young person's special educational needs. **Specialist services** that may be involved include:

- Wolverhampton Outreach Service
- Educational Psychology
- Specialist Teacher Service
- Sensory Inclusion Service
- Inclusion Team
- Speech and Language Therapy

- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- Strengthening Families Service
- Disabled Children and Young People's team (DCYPT)

Further information on the Graduated Approach can be found on **Wolverhampton's Local Offer**



Early Help Assessment

At any stage whether universal support or targeted, an Early Help Assessment could be considered by school or setting to help them better understand your family's needs. It is a holistic assessment which is completed with your consent to identify strengths, needs and to gain targeted support from multi-agency Early Help services which may include one or more of the specialist services.

Early Help is a way of getting extra support when you and your family need it, and as soon as difficulties start. It's for children and young people of any age. Help can come from all kinds of services and organisations who work together to support your family. You might be using some of these services already, but the assessment will make sure they are providing the right support for you and your family's needs.

You can still receive SEN support without an Early Help Assessment.

SEN Funding

All mainstream schools, academies, academy sixth forms, sixth form colleges, further education colleges and 16-19 academies are provided with resources to support those with additional needs, including children and young people with SEN and disabilities.

Schools have an amount identified within their overall budget called the notional SEN budget which is determined by a local funding formula. Colleges and sixth forms have similar allocation based on a national funding formula. All mainstream schools and colleges are expected to provide appropriate, high quality SEN support using all available resources from their SEN budget. They must provide evidence of the amount of funding and resources used to support a child or young person to the Local Authority when making a request for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

Steps to following the Graduated Approach

Step 1

A school, parent carer identifies the child or young person may have additional needs. Both the school and parents should discuss any worries and concerns. This can happen at any time during the school year.

Step 2

To help identify a child's additional needs, schools must use a Graduated Approach. During this process, schools must involve parents and the child/young person in the stages, which are access, plan, do and review. This is called **SEN support**.

Step 3

School might be able to provide adequate **targeted** intervention for the child to make progress in each area of need identified. **Support may continue this way until interventions are no longer required.**

Step 4

If the child or young person does not make adequate progress further guidance can be sought from **specialist services** such as an Educational Psychologist, Specialist Teacher, Wolverhampton Outreach Service or Speech and Language Therapist.

Step 5

SEN review meetings should be held at least every term or more frequently if required for family, school and other professionals to review the SEN support plan and agree next steps. Further strategies and support could be implemented and evidenced.

Step 6

If the school cannot provide adequate intervention for sustained progress everyone should agree that an Education, Health and Care needs assessment should be the next step. The school will gather evidence and outcomes of the support that has been implemented along with information and reports from professionals.

Step 7

The school submits a request for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment to Wolverhampton SEND team – known as SENSTART. Parents, carers and young people can also submit a request for an assessment.

See our **EHCP Booklet on our website**

<https://wolvesiass.org/factsheets-and-booklets.html>





Assess

Teaching staff will look at individual development and progress. As part of any assessment your views should be taken into account. In some cases, outside professionals may already be involved and should help to inform any assessments and planned support. The SENCo may wish to contact services not already involved and should seek your agreement to do so. You must be told if SEN support is needed.

Plan

The plan of support will be agreed with you, detailing interventions and support to be put in place. The school/setting should agree with you the desired outcomes, what help will be provided and a date for it to be reviewed. SEN support should be delivered by staff with sufficient skills and knowledge.

The plan should consider what approaches and strategies can be used at home (or elsewhere) to enhance SEN support. The plan should be in writing, shared with you and appropriate staff to ensure everyone is aware of individual needs, the support required and agreed strategies or approaches.

Do

The teacher/tutor/early years practitioner is responsible for implementing SEN support on a daily basis, even if this means working away from the main class or group. There is also a requirement to work closely with teaching assistants or specialist staff involved to link the interventions and plan of support to classroom teaching. The SENCo can provide further support to staff.

*The **SEND Code of Practice** says:*

Young people should be supported to participate in discussions about their aspirations, their needs, and the support that they think will help them best. Support should be aimed at promoting student independence and enabling the young person to make good progress towards employment and/or higher education, independent living, good health and participating in the community. (7.13)



Review

The school/setting should review the plan regularly with you in line with the agreed date. The review should evaluate the effectiveness of the support, the quality and impact on progress towards meeting the identified outcomes. Teachers, with the SENCo, should consult you for your views before deciding on any changes to the support plan and next steps. Reviews should take place at least three times a year or more frequently if required.

Schools and settings should record all details of SEN support. Whatever format is used, clear and accessible information should be provided.

Wolverhampton Local Authority has issued guidance for schools and settings on the additional support it expects them to provide for children and young people. *This can be found on Wolverhampton's Local Offer .*

The role of the SENCo

Schools and early years settings must have a SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator) who is responsible for arranging and co-ordinating extra help for pupils with SEN. The SENCo works with the class and subject teachers to plan and deliver support. The SENCo must be a qualified teacher working at the school. The SENCo has an important role to play with the head teacher and governing body to develop the SEN policy and has day to day responsibility for the co-ordination of SEN provision. The SENCo provides professional guidance to colleagues and other professionals and works closely with staff, parents and carers and other services. The SENCo ensures children and young people are at the centre of the SEN support process.

There is a named person in colleges with oversight of SEN to ensure support and provision is in place.

Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements may allow children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access support during tests, assessments and examinations. This support may include a reader, scribe or papers, questions in appropriate formats, extra time or supervised rest breaks.

Transitions

SEN support should include careful planning with future settings to ensure a smooth transfer. It should also include planning and preparation for any transition between education phases, year or class groups as well as transitions around the school/setting site.

Emotionally Based School Non- Attendance (EBSNA)

This is a broad umbrella term used to describe children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

Wolverhampton's EBSNA Pathway guidance for schools and settings should be used as part of a holistic, inclusive, graduated and person-centred approach to support. This support should help achieve long term meaningful outcomes, rather than a sole focus on improving attendance at school and should follow the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle of support.

You can find out more about **Exam Access Arrangements, Transitions and Emotionally Based School Non Attendance** in the Factsheets & Booklets on our website, **wolvesiass.org**.

<https://wolvesiass.org/factsheets-and-booklets.html>

Advice and support

Sharing views and concerns

The **SEND Code of Practice** says:

Decisions about provision for children and young people with SEN or disabilities should be made jointly by providers, parents, and children and young people themselves, taking a person-centred approach, with the views of children, young people and parents taken into account when those decisions are made. (11.1)

If you have any concerns or are unsure about the help available or support provided you can request a meeting with the school or setting.

The class teacher or form tutor may be your first point of contact. You can also ask to speak with the SENCo or person responsible for coordinating SEN support.

The **SEND Code of Practice** says:

Schools should take seriously any concerns raised by a parent. (6.45)

Our preparing for a meeting factsheet provides tips to help you prepare and examples of questions you may want to ask.

See our Factsheets & Booklets on our website,

<https://wolvesiass.org/factsheets-and-booklets.html>





Based on your circumstances WIASS can offer individual support which may include:

- Support at and preparing for meetings
- Help to understand and complete paperwork
- Help to express your views and participate in discussions and decision making
- Liaising with other services and organisations
- Looking at positive outcomes

When things are not working well

WIASS aims to support parents, carers and young people to resolve disagreements in relation to special educational needs and/or disability and help you move forward. We can support you to be actively involved in any discussions and decisions and help you to express your views.

Complaints about schools and settings

Complaints about schools should usually be to the school itself. This applies both to maintained schools, academies and independent schools. You must issue a formal complaint following the school's complaints procedure.

There is guidance on how to complain about SEN support on the Department for Education's website, www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/sen-complaints

Complaints about post 16 providers

This includes post 16 colleges, sixth form colleges and independent training providers. You must issue a formal complaint to your provider following their complaints procedure, including any appeals processes if necessary.

If you have fully exhausted the provider's complaints procedure, have evidence of this and remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency>





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*IASS would like to thank parents, carers and Voice4Parents
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