

SEN SUPPORT IN SCHOOL

This fact sheet has been written by parent carers for parent carers.



Children make progress at different rates and have different ways in which they learn best. Many children will get some extra help at school, perhaps with reading or handwriting, without being described as having special educational needs (SEN). But if your child needs extra help at school that is on top of, or different from, the usual range of strategies that a teacher would use, they will get something called SEN Support. This used to be called School Action/Action Plus.

What is SEN Support?

SEN support is help given to children and young people that is additional to (or different from) the support generally given to other children of the same age, to help with their special educational needs. These needs could be around speech, language and communication, including autistic spectrum conditions. They could be due to learning difficulties across all their learning or specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Social, emotional and mental health difficulties can lead to special educational needs. Some children need SEN support to access education because of physical disabilities or sensory needs such as a visual or hearing impairment.

For some children this support at school will follow on from extra help they had at their early years setting. For others it will start at school because their need for SEN support has become clear as they get older or the expectations of them change. School must use their best endeavours to make sure all their pupils with SEN get the support they need.

How do you get SEN Support?

Schools must tell you if they have decided your child has special educational needs and you should be involved in their support plans and processes all along, as should your child, especially as they get older. If you are worried that your child is not learning or progressing in school, you should speak to their class teacher. You could also speak to the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO).

What kind of SEN Support is available?

SEN Support might take many forms, including a special programme of work, particular equipment, time with a teaching assistant/learning support assistant on their own or in a group, or advice and extra help from specialist teachers, educational psychologists or therapists. Most children on SEN Support in mainstream schools are supported from the resources that the school already has; some will get just a bit of help and some will get lots, up to £6,000 worth in some cases.

How does SEN Support work?

How much help and the type of help your child is given will be based on their individual needs, and decided through a process called **Assess, Plan, Do, Review**.

- **Assess:** This starts by looking at (assessing/analysing) your child's needs and what might help.
- **Plan:** A plan is made about what help to give, when and what outcomes it should bring. The plan could include some of the examples of support we mentioned earlier.
- **Do:** This means putting into practice the help and support that is in the plan.
- **Review:** A review of how things are working. Are the outcomes being achieved?





SEN SUPPORT IN SCHOOL

The review will inform and lead on to the next plan and the cycle continues as long as your child needs the extra support. You should have three face-to-face meetings with the school during the academic year to review how things are going and what progress is being made.

If your child does not make the expected progress with the help and support they have planned, things should intensify, perhaps bringing in an expert or planning different support.

What if SEN Support isn't working?

If your child has been on SEN Support for a while, but they are still not making progress at school, you can discuss this at one of your three face-to-face meetings during the year. If it looks like your child will need help above and beyond what the school can provide from its own resources, he or she may need an **Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan**. Only a small minority of children move onto this higher level of special educational support. See our separate fact sheet on *EHC Plans*.

Ask About

- **Reaching Families** – provides training, information & other fact sheets related to this topic. See especially our companion fact sheet on *EHC Plans* and our workshops on *Making Sense of SEN Support at School* and *Making Sense of EHC Needs Assessment and Plans*. We also offer benefits advice, peer support, a Facebook group & handbook (see below) for parent carers of children & young people with SEND in West Sussex. See: www.reachingfamilies.org.uk.
- **SEN Information Report and SEN Policy** – every school should publish an information report on their website that details the SEN provision the school can offer and their commitment to including children with SEND. Visit the school's website or the West Sussex Local Offer.
- **West Sussex SEND Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) Service** – contact them for independent advice and support. They also have Young People Advisers, who can support young people up to the age of 25 to help them to think through their options. Go to: <https://westsussexsendias.org>, call: **0330 222 8555**, or email: send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk (parent carers) or: cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk (children and young people).

Further information and useful links

- ***Making Sense of it All: From Birth to Adulthood*** – Reaching Families' handbook for parent carers of children and young people with SEND in West Sussex. This provides essential information on money matters, including claiming DLA and PIP, as well as social care, health, leisure, travel, education and employment. Go to: www.reachingfamilies.org.uk/guides.html.
- **Independent Parental Special Education Advice (IPSEA)** – for information and advice about SEND law, EHC Plans & tribunals as well as template letters & a helpline see: www.ipsea.org.uk.
- **SEND Code of Practice** – Government guidance on the legal duties of education providers in relation to SEND provision for children and young people aged 0 to 25. See: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25.
- **SOS SEN** – information and advice about SEND law. Runs workshops and events and a telephone helpline for parents. Go to <https://sossen.org.uk> or call: **0208 538 3731**.
- **Special Needs Jungle** - parent-centred information, resources and opinions about SEN, disability, children's health and SEN politics. Visit: www.specialneedsjungle.com.
- **West Sussex Local Offer** – go to: <https://westsussex.local-offer.org> for local services, support and details of Short Breaks providers for children & young people aged 0 - 25 years with SEND.

