



A Guide to SEN Support in Mainstream school settings

This information is about the support that mainstream schools must and should provide for children with special educational needs (“**SEN**”).

What is SEN support?

Every child with special educational needs should have special educational needs support, also known as **SEN support**. This means help that is additional to or different from the support generally given to most of the other children of the same age. The purpose of SEN support is to help children and young people achieve the **outcomes** or learning objectives set for them by the school in conjunction with parents and pupils themselves.

Every school must publish an **SEN information report** about the SEN provision the school makes. You can find this on the school’s website. You can also ask your child’s teacher or the school’s Special Educational Needs Coordinator for information on the SEN provision made by the school.

The **Local Offer** published by Bexley Local Authority also sets out what support it expects early years settings, schools and colleges to make for all children and young people with SEN or disabilities.

SEN support can take many forms, including:

- a special learning programme for your child
- extra help from a teacher or a learning support assistant
- making or changing materials and equipment
- working with your child in a small group
- observing your child in class or at break and keeping records
- helping your child to take part in the class activities
- making sure your child has understood things by encouraging them to ask questions and to try something they find difficult
- helping other children work with your child, or play with them at break time
- supporting your child with physical or personal care, such as eating, getting around school safely, toileting or dressing.

- advice and/or extra help from specialists such as specialist teachers, educational psychologists, and therapists. When schools want to call in specialists, they should discuss and agree this with parents.

The legal requirements are set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#) (the 'Regulations'), and there is also statutory guidance for Local Authorities, schools and colleges in the [SEN and Disability Code of Practice](#) (the 'Code').

Duty to provide SEN support	Code of Practice
<p>All children and young people are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress so that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieve their best • become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and • make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training 	Para 6.1

Who decides what SEN support my child has?

Progress	Code of Practice
<p>Class and subject teachers, supported by the senior leadership team, should make regular assessments of progress for all pupils. These should seek to identify pupils making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.</p>	Para 6.17

Following assessments, the school should then decide if your child needs SEN support. The school should talk to you and your child about this. If a young person is 16 or older the school should involve them directly.

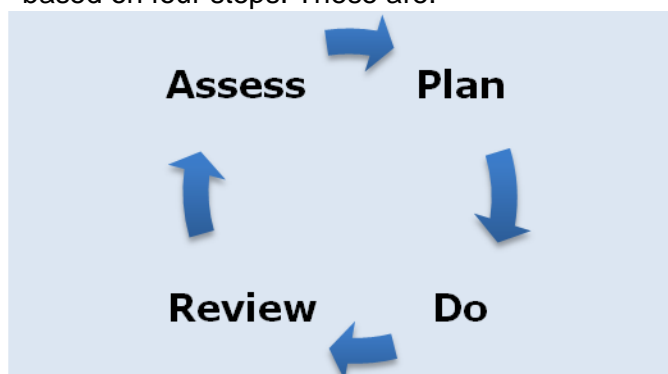
Sometimes you may be the first to be aware that your child has some special educational needs. If you think your child may need SEN support, you should talk to your child's teacher or to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

If you are not happy about the support your child has you can ask to talk to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator or headteacher. You can also find out more by looking at www.bexleyiass.co.uk

Listening to parents or carers, children and young people	Code of Practice
<p>Parents know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.</p>	Para 6.2

A graduated approach

When your child is identified as having SEN, the school should use a graduated approach based on four steps. These are:



SEN support	Code of Practice
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.	Para 6.44

Assess

Teaching staff should work with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator to assess your child's needs, so that they give the right support. They should involve you in this and, where possible, seek your child's views.

SEN support	Code of Practice
Schools should take seriously any concerns raised by a parent.	Para 6.45

Sometimes schools will seek advice from a specialist teacher or a health professional. They should talk to you about this first.

Plan

If the school decides that your child needs SEN support it **must** tell you. The school should agree with you the outcomes that will be set, what help will be provided and a date for progress to be reviewed.

Do

Your child's class or subject teacher is usually responsible for the work that is done with your child, and should work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved. The school should tell you who is responsible for the support your child receives.

SEN support	Code of Practice
All those who work with your child should be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required	Para 6.49

Review

The school should review your child’s progress, and the difference that the help your child has been given has made, on the date agreed in the plan. You and your child should be involved in the review and in planning the next step.

If your child has not responded to the help they were given, the review should decide what can be done next. This may include more or different help.

Sometimes it helps to involve other professionals to investigate the difficulties or to plan the next steps.

You and the school can look at the **Bexley Local Offer** to see what support should be available that could help achieve your child’s outcomes.

Sometimes the next step may be to ask the local authority for an **EHC needs assessment**. If the school decides to do this they must tell you. If you think it is needed you can ask for it yourself.

Review of SEN Support	Code of Practice
Schools should meet with parents at least three times a year.	Para 6.65

Where does funding for SEN come from?

All mainstream schools receive money for special educational needs support and resources. Schools can decide how to spend this money. This is called “delegated” funding because it is given (delegated) to schools by local authorities or the **Education Funding Agency** from money they receive from central government.

The SEN part of the school’s income is sometimes called the “notional” SEN budget because it is not based on the school’s actual numbers of pupils with special needs, but on a formula.

Funding for SEN provision is from three sources (“elements”):

Element 1

Schools get money for each pupil, based on actual pupil numbers. This is called the **Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)** and it is part of schools’ delegated funding. Some of this

money is for general SEN provision. This might, for example, include the cost of providing the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and some other resources.

Each local authority sets the AWPU for their schools, and the Education Funding Agency sets the AWPU for academies and free schools. The AWPU differs according to whether the school is primary or secondary etc.

Element 2

Element 2 funding is SEN-specific and is to provide **SEN support** for children who need it. This is support that is *additional to* or *different from* the support that most other children get. SEN support is for children who used to have help through **School Action** and **School Action Plus**.

The local authority provides this funding for schools it is responsible for using a formula that determines the amount of money the school gets. The formula gives more money to schools that in the past had more children on free school meals and more children who were not doing as well as others in English and Maths. The **Education Funding Agency** provides this funding for academies and free schools. Element 2 funding is also part of schools' delegated budget.

Government guidance says schools should provide up to the first £6,000 (on top of the AWPU) of additional or different support for those children who need it, including those with an **Education, Health and Care plan**. This does not mean that the school will spend £6,000 on every child with SEN. Sometimes schools use funds to help groups of children. Some children will need less help – and some children may need more.

You can ask your school how it uses its SEN budget to support your child and whether it has enough to make all the provision they need. The local authority also publishes a **Local Offer** that explains what type of resources this money might be spent on.

Element 3

Where a school has children needing very expensive provision which might absorb a lot of the SEN support funding, the school can request additional funding. The local authority is responsible for managing Element 3 funding (sometimes called the 'high needs block'), which can be used to make specific provision for an individual child or a group of children, if the school or academy can show it is necessary.

You can find details of how this funding is allocated in the **Local Offer**.

These funding arrangements do not override the local authority's duty to your child to ensure they receive any necessary provision that the school itself cannot make. The law says that the local authority must find out via an **EHC needs assessment** whether an EHC plan is needed when a child or young person may have SEN that may need the local authority to secure provision. So if your school is unable to make all the provision your child needs, you have the right to ask for an EHC needs assessment.

What is SEN funding for?

Schools should use some of their budget to buy resources and make provision for children who need additional help. This can take many forms. For example, children with SEN might need:

- changes to the curriculum
- special equipment or teaching materials
- the use of additional information technology
- small group work
- support in the classroom
- a base to work in or have quiet time

SEN support	Code of Practice
Schools use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people’s SEN	Para 6.2

Who manages the school’s SEN resources?

School governors are responsible for the school’s policy on SEN. The headteacher and the SENCO ensure that the policy is put into practice.

The SENCO organises support for individual children, but every teacher is responsible making sure that your child’s special educational needs are met in the classroom. The **SEN Information Report** on the school’s website tells you more about the arrangements for SEN support and how to contact the SENCO.

Funding	Code of Practice
It is for schools, as part of their normal budget planning, to determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with SEN. The SENCO, headteacher and governing body or proprietor should establish a clear picture of the resources that are available to the school. They should consider their strategic approach to meeting SEN in the context of the total resources available, including any resources targeted at particular groups, such as the pupil premium.	Para 6.97

How can I find out what support and resources my child is getting?

The first step is to talk with your child’s teacher or the SENCO. This may be at a parents’ evening, a support plan meeting or a review. You can ask for a written copy of any support plan in place for your child.

Duty on schools to make SEN provision	Code of Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people’s SEN • ensure that children and young people with SEN engage in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have SEN • designate a teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating SEN provision – the SEN co-ordinator, or SENCO. • inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child • publish an SEN information report and their arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps being taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to enable access to the school for disabled children and their accessibility plan showing how they plan to improve access progressively over time 	<p>Para 6.2</p>

Where can I get further information, advice or support?

Look for the SEN Information Report on the school website

Read Chapter 6 of the Code of Practice

Speak to your child’s teacher or the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

The **Bexley Local Offer** www.bexleylocaloffer.uk is the place to find out about services available locally and the arrangements that schools and others are expected to make for children and young people with SEN.

Bexley IASS can also give you:

- more information about SEN support
- advice about what to do if you are not happy with the support your school is providing
- information about other organisations, support groups and information services that could help
- information and advice about your rights to request an **EHC needs assessment** if your child might need more than the school can provide.