



Visiting a new school.

A guide for parents and carers of children with SEND

When looking for a new school for your child, visiting a number of schools may help you make an informed decision. We have noted a few questions that may be useful to ask when you are visiting schools.

Before you visit a school

Go on the school's website and read online information very carefully, especially the SEN information report.

Carefully think about and write down any additional questions or points that are particularly important for your child.

Think about how easy the journey from your house to the school is.

Ask if you will be able to meet the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and staff who would be involved with your child? If it is not possible to meet in person, you may wish to request a phonecall or virtual meeting.

Attend open days and also contact the school directly to arrange a visit during normal school hours.

Visit several schools so that you can compare what is on offer.

You may want to visit the school with a friend, relative or professional who knows your child well.

If you are unable to visit in person, due to health risks, ask if there are virtual tours available. There may be videos of the school grounds and environment on the school website.

Name of School	
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First Impressions of the school	
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Does the school feel welcoming?	
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Are you given the chance to speak to pupils about their experience?	
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Is it easy to get around? Could my child access all areas?	
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Are you given clear accessible information?	
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General questions	
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How would you get to know my child prior to starting?	
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Do you provide visual aids to support my child's transition to the new school Eg: visual timetable, pictures of staff, visual map, etc...	
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How many children will be in my child's class?	
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What time does the school day start and finish? What is the structure of the school day?	
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How often will my child's class change / move around	
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Adapting the learning & supporting the child at School	
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What support / supervision is available at break & lunch times?	
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Does the school have a "Buddy" system?	
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How many members of staff would be in my child's class?	
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How does the school assess and monitor progress?	
How often are written reports sent home?	
How is work adapted to support individual needs?	
How often would my child's progress be reviewed? (Assess, Plan, Do & Review) Who will be involved in this? How will I be involved?	
Does the school have experience of supporting children with similar needs?	
How does the school arrange extra support for pupils who need it?	
Is extra support provided in the classroom, individually or in small groups?	
What is the school system for sharing key information about my child's needs with other staff?	
Resources available to the SEN Dept: Is there a quiet room / space for children with SEN to access? Is a member of SEN available for my child at all times? Who is this? Do the SEN staff have any specialist areas of expertise?	
What groups are available for children with SEN (Eg – Social skills group / Lego club)	
Will the school develop a one page profile with my child outlining their strengths, interests and needs?	

<p>How does the school promote children's social and emotional well-being as well as their academic progress?</p>	
<p>How does the school ensure ALL pupils have the opportunity to take part in all areas of the curriculum?</p>	
<p>How do the school plan activities to include all pupils? Eg: school trips off site.</p>	
<p>ADDITIONAL NOTES / QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO YOUR CHILDS NEEDS...</p>	
<p><i>Eg: Does the school use visual supports to make learning activities and the structure of the school day more predictable for children with autism? Or ..How will the school prepare my child for transition to another activity, class or to their next school?</i></p>	

Questions specific to Secondary schools	
Is there a home work club? How many students attend? How is this staffed? What are the reasonable adjustments to ensure my child can access this?	
How does the school provide its time table? Eg – Online or paper copy. Can my child have their own copy?	
Does the school offer alternatives to GCSE's? If so what are these?	
Can the school provide support in exams (access arrangements)? What can be provided?	
Does the school have links to local colleges and careers advice services? What additional support is available for my child with SEN transitioning at Post 16?	

School Policies	(You can gather policies from the school website prior to your visit)
Does the School have a SEN Policy? When was it last updated?	
What is the school policy on bullying?	
How does the school support challenging behaviour?	
What is the school policy on giving medication?	
What is the school policy on pastoral care?	

What is the school policy on equal opportunities / inclusion?	

Working with school	
What are the arrangements for contact between home and school?	
Who can I contact if I want to let you know what's working really well / not so well in meeting my child's needs?	
What other services / professionals come into the school?	
What can I do to help further your understanding of my child's needs?	

CHILD / YOUNG PERSON'S VIEWS

What did you think of the school?	
What did you like most about the school?	
Is there anything you didn't like?	
Is there anything you are worried about?	
Is there anything else you want to know more about?	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION / COMMENTS	

You can use the checklist here to gain a view on how well a school might be able to meet the needs of your child.

You may not have the chance to ask all the questions listed but you can look through this guide for ideas and choose the questions that are most important for your child.

If you need further advice and information around issues relating to special educational needs and disabilities for parents, carers, children and young people aged 0-25, please contact Bexley IASS.

HOW CAN BEXLEY IASS HELP YOU?

We offer a range of support and advice for parents and carers who have children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) including:

- Advice about SEN support in schools
- Information and advice about education, health and care plans (EHCP)
- Support with transition between stages of education
- Help you prepare for meetings
- Help and support with exclusions
- Support and advice about transport
- Provide advice about education law relating to special educational needs and disabilities
- Help with appeals to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

CONTACT US

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