



Information Advice and Support Kent

A service for special educational needs and disabilities
helping you to make informed choices

Contact: Helpline 03000 41 3000
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Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support in Mainstream Schools

Children learn in different ways and progress at different rates. Many children need some kind of extra help during their time in education.

All schools aim to support these children through a 'graduated approach', which takes into account their individual learning needs.

The Government has produced guidelines to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), which early years settings and schools should follow. These are set out in the SEND Code of Practice.

This information is about the support that mainstream schools should provide for children with SEN.

The [**SEND Code of Practice**](#)** says:

All children and young people are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress so that they:

- ***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*** (6.1)

The duty is on schools to make SEN provision.

The SEND Code of Practice** says all schools must:

- *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* (6.2)

What is SEN support?

Every child or young person with special educational needs should have **SEN support**. This means help that is additional to or different from the support generally given to other children or young people of the same age.

The purpose of SEN support is to help children or young people achieve the **outcomes** or learning objectives set for them by the school. Schools should involve parents in this process.

If your child is on **School Action** or **School Action Plus** they should transfer to a single category of SEN support.

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 **SEND Local Offer*** published by **Kent County Council (KCC)** 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.

Who decides what SEN support my child has?

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

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. (6.17)

The school should 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 have questions about the support your child is receiving you can ask to talk to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator or head teacher.

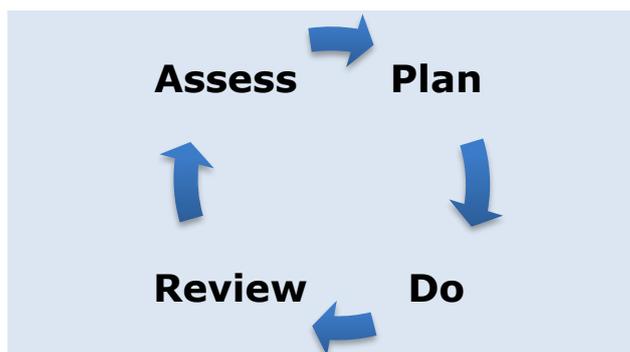
If you feel your questions have not been answered, you could write a letter to the class teacher or Special Educational Needs Coordinator to formalise your concern (for an example letter see page 5).

A graduated approach

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)*

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



Assess

Teaching staff should work with the SENCo 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.

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

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

Plan

If the school decides that your child needs SEN support it **must** tell you. The school should talk with you about the outcomes that will be set, what help will be provided and agree 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.

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. (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.

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

Schools should meet with parents at least three times a year. (6.65)

Sometimes it helps to involve other professionals in further assessment or to support planning the next steps. If your child has not made reasonable progress it will be important to discuss with the school what should happen next.

Schools in the Kent County Council districts access further support through a Local Inclusion Forum Team (**LIFT**) to seek advice and discuss whether referrals to services such as specialist teaching or educational psychology could be beneficial. You may like to speak to the school's Special Needs Coordinator about this.

You and the school can also look at the **KCC SEND Local Offer*** to see what support is available that could help achieve your child's outcomes.

Where can I get more Information, Advice or Support

You can find out more about SEN Support by:

- looking at the SEN Report on the school website
- talking to your child's teacher or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator
- looking at the **KCC SEND Local Offer***
- reading Chapter 6 of the **SEND Code of Practice****

You can also ring our **Helpline** on **03000 41 3000** for:

- information about SEN support, including information about SEN funding
- 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**.

***KCC SEND Local Offer** link: www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/assessments-and-statements-of-special-educational-needs

**** SEND Code of Practice** link: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/342440/SEND_Code_of_Practice_approved_by_Parliament_29.07.14.pdf

Example letter, when writing to the school. Feel free to personalise it as you feel appropriate.

Dear...

I am concerned that my son/daughter is having difficulty at school with their learning; I think they might need extra help.

I would like to talk to someone about my child and what the school could do to help.

The concerns I would like to tell you about are...

(The following questions may be useful to consider when writing your letter)

- What in particular is concerning you?*
- When did you first notice this?*
- What difficulties is your child having?*
- Are they getting worse?*
- Does anyone in the family have similar difficulties?*
- What has helped in the past?*
- Is your child making adequate progress at school?*

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

(Remember to keep a copy for your own records)

On request, this information can be provided in alternative formats.

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