

## Information for parents

### The special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms - England

**contact a family**  
for families with disabled children



## Extra support in mainstream school – SEN support

From 1 September 2014 there will be changes to the way children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are supported.

**Most children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or a disability will attend mainstream schools.**

Guidance to schools on their legal duties is contained in section 6 of the new *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*.

The Code says that 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.*

(SEND Code of Practice section 6.2)

In mainstream schools, a single category called **SEN support** will replace School Action and School Action Plus from 1 September 2014.

Schools must identify pupils who have SEN and need extra help through **SEN support**. They should record this in the school records. They must tell you if they are making special educational provision for your child.

Schools must have a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) who is responsible for arranging and coordinating extra help for pupils with special educational needs. The SENCO works with class and subject teachers to plan and deliver support.

The SEND Code of Practice says that schools should use a four-part cycle (Assess, Plan, Do and Review) to support your child with special educational needs (SEN). This means that the SENCO and teaching staff should identify the extra support your child needs in order to make

progress, put this support in place, and regularly check how well it is working, so that they can change the amount or kind of support if they need to.

The school can ask specialist support services, such as educational psychology or speech and language therapy, to provide further advice and support if necessary.

*Schools should involve specialists if your child continues to make little progress or work at substantially lower levels than expected.*

(SEND Code of Practice, sections 6.72 and 6.73)

The school should draw up a plan, involving you and your child, focusing on the outcomes your child needs and wants to achieve and detailing how the school will support them to achieve these.

Schools should record details of the actions they are taking under **SEN support**. It is up to schools to decide how to keep their records but they should be able to provide clear and accessible information to you about your child's support and progress.

School should meet with you at least three times a year to review how your child is progressing. This should be in addition to scheduled parents' evening meetings. The school must provide a report at least once a year on your child's progress.

## Need advice?

Call our freephone helpline

**0808 808 3555**

**helpline@cafamily.org.uk**

**Open Monday to Friday, 9.30am–5pm**



If your child isn't making the expected progress, you or the school can ask for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment. See our factsheet on *Education, Health and Care needs assessments*.

## Has the definition of SEN changed?

The definition of special educational needs (SEN) remains the same as it was under the 'old' law, and now includes young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who are still in education or training.

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

(Children and Families Act 2014 section 20.1)

## Will my child get less support than before?

Your child should not get any less support under the new system unless their needs have changed.

## How will I know what help or support my child's school can provide?

From 1 September 2014, each school will be required to provide a SEN Information Report (SEND Code Of Practice section 6.79). This must include:

- The kind of SEN the school provides for.
- Policies for identifying children and young people with SEN and assessing their needs, including the name

and contact details for the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

- Arrangements for consulting parents of children with SEN and involving them in their child's education.
- Arrangements for assessing and reviewing children's progress towards outcomes.
- Arrangements for children and young people moving between phases of education and in preparing for adulthood.
- Approach to teaching, the expertise and training of school staff and how specialist expertise will be available.
- Support for improving emotional and social development, including listening to the views of children with SEN and measures to prevent bullying.
- How children with SEN are supported to access activities in the school that are available to pupils without SEN.
- How the school involves health, social care and local authorities to provide support for families.
- Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with SEN.

Many pupils with SEN will also be disabled. Under the Equality Act 2010 schools must have an inclusion policy and accessibility plan setting out how they support disabled pupils to be included in all the activities of the school.

**No child or young person should be left without support because the system is changing. Your child should not get any less support if their needs have not changed.**

Find out how you can get involved in the changes in your area by joining your local parent carer forum. Contact the National Network of Parent Carer Forums:

**[www.nnpfc.org.uk](http://www.nnpfc.org.uk) 020 7608 8708 [info@nnpfc.org.uk](mailto:info@nnpfc.org.uk)**  
**[www.facebook.com/NNPCF](https://www.facebook.com/NNPCF) [www.twitter.com/NNPCF](https://www.twitter.com/NNPCF)**

**Got a question about the changes?  
 Call the Contact a Family freephone  
 helpline: 0808 808 3555  
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[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)**

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 Registered Office: 209-211 City Road, London, EC1V 1JN  
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