

Special Educational Needs Support in School



A Guide for Parents & Carers

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The Children & Families Act 2014 came into force on 1 September 2014. This details some changes concerning the arrangements for supporting special educational needs (SEN) in schools. The new law includes new statutory guidance in the form of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years. Each school must also publish, on its own web site, a SEN Information Report to describe the SEN provision that is made within the school.

How can school help my child?

Each child is an individual and may require help to support their individual needs. All schools provide planning, teaching and assessment which takes into account the wide range of abilities and interests of their children. Most children will benefit from these different approaches and will make progress, whilst other children may need more specific support.

The SEND Code of Practice says:

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' (6.2)

What if my child needs more support?

If you or the school are concerned that your child is not making progress it is possible that they may have special educational needs. If so, your child may need support which is additional to, or different from, that given to other children in their class. All schools receive funding to provide such support and they should follow the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice to identify what support is required to help children achieve the outcomes or learning objectives that have been set for them.

What is this support called?

From 1 September 2014, the terms **School Action and School Action Plus** were replaced by the single term **School SEN Support**. This means that a child will be receiving additional or different support in school to meet his/her needs. Schools have a duty to tell parents if their child needs SEN Support and they must involve you and your child as fully as possible in any decisions.

In Devon the SEN Support your child will receive is identified through the new **Devon Assessment Framework (DAF)** process. This is a single assessment and planning framework to support children and young people with additional needs. Following such an assessment, your child's needs, agreed outcomes and support can be set out in a non-statutory **My Plan** or (for children with the most complex needs) a statutory **Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)**.

What can my child expect from SEN support?

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice says that 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). This should happen through ongoing **assessing, planning, doing** and **reviewing** to provide your child with effective strategies and support to help them progress and this cycle is known as the *graduated approach*.

The Code of Practice identifies four broad areas of need:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs

One or more of these may be relevant to your child's needs and the plan that is put in place to support them.

What is a My Plan?

In Devon there are My Plans - non-statutory plans that still include education, health and care needs and support. They are for children who would not meet the threshold for statutory EHC assessment but who still require a plan of support. In Devon My Plans will be drawn up on the DAF 2a paperwork by a professional involved with your child.

How can the SENCo help?

Mainstream schools (unless they are 16-19 academies) must have a member of staff who is the **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)** and this person must be a qualified teacher.

The SENCo will work with you and your child's class teacher to:

- help to decide if your child has SEN
- help to assess your child's strengths and areas of need
- arrange for other relevant professionals to assess your child's needs
- coordinate and plan SEN support for your child
- make sure that records are kept of your child's progress
- make sure that the appropriate school staff talk to you and other professionals working with your child
- advise and support other members of staff in the school about SEN
- write the My Plan (*see opposite*)
- request statutory assessment if your child has complex needs that meet the threshold for a statutory Education, Health & Care Plan

What is an EHCP?

An EHCP is an Education, Health and Care Plan – a single support plan that incorporates all three of these areas. From September 2014, EHCPs started to replace Statements of SEN for those children with the most complex needs and this is being done in a phased way until 2018. In addition, any new requests for statutory assessment will be actioned under a new legal framework. In Devon an EHCP is drawn up on the DAF2b paperwork by the SEN 0-25 Team at the Local Authority and it is the Local Authority that has responsibility for the provision within the plan.

What is an outcome?

The new legislation and Devon's own assessment framework are focussed on achieving the best **outcomes** for children with additional needs. An outcome is the benefit or difference that it is hoped will be achieved through the support that is put in place for your child.

In order to identify an outcome it can be helpful to ask questions such as:

- What do we want the child/young person to be able to do?
- What do we hope they can achieve?
- What difference will it make?

Small steps will need to be identified to help your child to achieve their outcomes and these steps or targets should be SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

How can my child and I be involved?

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice stresses the importance of taking into account the views of parents, children and young people. You should have the opportunity to participate at all stages of the SEND journey, including developing and reviewing any plans.

Your participation could take many forms – such as attending and being involved at meetings, completing paperwork, preparing written views etc. You will be able to access support to do this, if you would like to.

In Devon, you can contact services such as Devon Information Advice & Support (DIAS) for support or find out about advocacy opportunities for you or your young person.

There are also some ‘tools’ that you can use to help you set out your or your child’s views in advance of planning meetings or to support your contribution to a statutory assessment. These include documents called All About My Child, All About Me and Listen to Me & My Family. You do not have to use these – you might choose to write a letter or a report instead, for example. Our leaflets ‘Participating in assessments and reviews’ and ‘Your child or young person has a view too’, will help you to learn more about how you can all be involved.

How can I find out more?

Under the new legislation, Local Authorities have to publish information about what can be expected regarding support for children and young people with SEND.

This information is called the Local Offer and in Devon it is available at www.devon.gov.uk/send. You can also find out more in the school’s SEN information report.

How can Devon Information Advice & Support help?

We can support parents and carers as they guide their children along this new special educational needs and disability journey. We can support you to:

- learn more about SEN support in school
- understand the process and paperwork
- express your views
- discuss the impact on your child
- prepare for meetings
- make contact with other groups and services and understand their roles
- ...and much more!



Contact Devon Information Advice & Support on **01392 383080** or email **devonias@devon.gov.uk**

We have further leaflets and information online at:
www.devonias.org.uk

You can also find us on Facebook

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