



SEND Support in Mainstream Schools

RANi Need to Know Guides | SEND support Advisory sheet 1

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A Guide for Parents, Carers and Professionals

What is SEND?

SEND stands for **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**. A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that means they need **special educational provision** that is different from, or additional to, what is normally available in mainstream schools.

SEND may affect a child's:

- Communication and interaction
 - Cognition and learning
 - Social, emotional and mental health
 - Sensory and/or physical development
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Who Must Provide SEND Support?

All mainstream early years settings, schools and colleges must follow the **SEND Code of Practice (2015)**. They are legally required to:

- Identify children with SEND
- Put appropriate support in place
- Involve parents and the child or young person in decisions
- Keep records and review progress regularly

This is part of their duty under the **Children and Families Act 2014** and the **Equality Act 2010**.

What is SEN Support?

“SEN Support” is the term for the help given in school **before an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** is considered. It involves:

- Identifying a child’s needs
- Putting support in place
- Reviewing how well it’s working
- Adjusting as needed

Schools must use a cycle called “**Assess, Plan, Do, Review.**”

The Graduated Approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review):

1. **Assess** – The school assesses the child’s needs using observations, assessments, and feedback.

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2. **Plan** – A support plan is created with clear outcomes and agreed support strategies.
 3. **Do** – The agreed support is put in place by teachers or other staff.
 4. **Review** – Progress is monitored and reviewed regularly with parents and the child.
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Who is Responsible for SEN Support?

- The **class teacher** is responsible for your child's progress and support every day.
 - The **SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)** oversees the support plan, ensures staff are trained, and arranges specialist advice where needed.
 - The **Headteacher** ensures the school meets its duties under the law.
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What Kind of Support Can Be Given?

Support should be tailored to the child's individual needs and could include:

In the Classroom:

- Differentiated teaching
- Extra time or support during tasks
- Visual aids, writing frames or chunked instructions
- Access to a laptop or technology

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Additional Support:

- Small group or one-to-one interventions
- Social skills groups or speech and language programmes
- Emotional wellbeing support or counselling
- Support from a teaching assistant (TA)

Whole School Support:

- Training for teachers on conditions such as autism, ADHD or dyslexia
 - A positive behaviour support policy
 - Access to quiet spaces or sensory areas
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What is a SEN Support Plan?

A **SEN Support Plan** or **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** should:

- Describe the child's strengths and needs
- Set clear short-term goals
- Explain what support will be given
- Say who is responsible and how progress will be tracked

You should be involved in creating and reviewing this plan.

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Working with Parents and Carers

Schools must:

- Listen to your concerns
- Involve you in planning and reviewing support
- Share progress and next steps

You should be given regular updates and invited to meetings, usually once per term.

Can Other Professionals Be Involved?

Yes. If needed, the SENCO may seek advice from:

- Educational Psychologists
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Specialist teachers (e.g. for hearing or vision impairment)

Your permission is usually needed for referrals, and you should be involved in discussions.

When is an EHCP Needed?

If a child:

- Has **significant or complex needs**

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- Is **not making progress** despite SEN Support
- Needs **more help than the school can provide from its own budget**

Then a request can be made for an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment**. If successful, this can lead to an **EHC Plan**, which provides legally binding support.

What Are My Rights as a Parent?

You have the right to:

- Be informed if your child is being given SEN Support
- Be involved in all decisions about your child's education
- Access information, advice, and support from **SENDIASS**
- Ask for an **EHC needs assessment**
- Appeal if you are unhappy with decisions

Schools must also make **reasonable adjustments** under the Equality Act 2010 if your child is disabled.

SEN Support: What Should Schools Record?

Schools should keep a clear record of:

- Your child's needs
- Support given
- Outcomes set

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- Progress made

This record should be shared with you at least three times a year, as part of the review process.

What If Support Isn't Working?

If you feel the support isn't enough:

- Speak to the class teacher and SENCO
 - Ask for a review of the SEN Support Plan
 - Request involvement of external professionals
 - Ask the local authority to carry out an **EHC needs assessment**
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Key Terms

Term	Meaning
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

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Graduated Approach

Four-step process: Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Reasonable Adjustments

Changes schools must make for disabled children

Summary: What to Expect

What School Must Do	Your Role
Identify and assess SEND	Share concerns and evidence
Provide tailored support	Be involved in support plans
Review progress regularly	Attend meetings and reviews
Involve specialists if needed	Give consent and attend appointments
Refer for EHCP if needed	Request EHC assessment if appropriate

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Support and Resources

You can get further support from:

- **RANi** – Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **Local Offer** - Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **SENDIASS** – Local impartial information and advice service for parents and young people www.iasmanchester.org
- **IPSEA** – Independent Provider of Special Education Advice: www.ipsea.org.uk
- **Contact** – A national charity supporting families with disabled children: www.contact.org.uk

If you'd like help preparing your request or understanding your appeal options, RANi can provide guidance and templates.

Remember:

Always keep a copy of all correspondence you send, along with proof of postage or delivery. If you send documents by post, we recommend using a **signed-for** service. If sending by email, request a **read receipt** if possible.

Get in Touch

If you need more information or have a question, we're here to help.

Email us: info@rani.org.uk

Please include:

- Your name
- Your child's name
- Your child's date of birth
- Your query

Or, if you prefer, you can fill out our online **contact form** and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

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