

Moving on to a new school or college

**For children and young people with
Special Educational Needs**

Together Trust SENDIAS Service

Moving on to a new school or college – for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The process of choosing a school or college for a child or young person with SEN differs depending on whether the child or young person has an EHC plan or not.

If your child has an EHCP the information below will help guide you through what you need to know.

Please contact the SENDIASS service if you would like support and advice about this.

We provide **free, confidential** and **impartial** support to parents and carers of children and young people aged between 0 and 25 who have or may have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Contact us on –

Telephone: 0161 240 6168 Email: stockportsendiass@togethertrust.org.uk

Website: <https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/SENDIASS>

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TTStockportSENDIASS>

Useful organisations:

IPSEA <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>

Special Needs Jungle <https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/>

SOS SEN <https://www.sossen.org.uk/>

Relevant legislation:

Children & Families Act 2014 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/part/3/enacted>

SEND Code of Practice 2015

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

SEND Regulations 2015

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/pdfs/uksi_20141530_en.pdf

Moving on to a new phase of education

Apart from when an EHC plan is first issued, the move between phases of education is the most common time that parents, carers or young people have to think about what school or college should be named in the EHC plan.

There should always be an annual review of the EHC plan before a transfer to a new phase of education.

For further information about what the law says should happen please visit the IPSEA webpage about choosing a school or college if your child has an EHCP

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/choosing-a-schoolcollege-with-an-ehc-plan>

What is a new phase of education?

Very often this process is called a “phase transfer”

- (a) early years education to school;
- (b) infant school to junior school;
- (c) primary school to middle school;
- (d) primary school to secondary school;
- (e) middle school to secondary school; or
- (f) secondary school to a post-16 institution.

What happens to the EHC Plan?

The EHC plan must be reviewed and amended before—

- (a) **31 March** if the transfer is from secondary school to a post-16 institution
- (b) **15 February** in any other case, or
- (c) If a young person is moving from one post-16 institution to another post-16 institution at any other time, **at least five months before that transfer takes place**

Choosing a new school

We have included some tips below that parents have said they have found useful when looking at potential schools.

Before your visit:

Tip #1: Plan ahead

Thinking about what secondary school you want to send your child in Year 5 or prior to this can help you prepare your child for the transition.

For a complete list of all types of schools in Stockport and links to their websites please look at the Stockport Local Offer

<https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/site.page?id=8WldK6yPM3o>



[Early Years and Childcare](#)



[Mainstream Schools](#)



[Resourced Provision](#)



[Special Schools](#)



[Independent Specialist School](#)



[Post-16 Education & Training Providers](#)

Tip #2: Do your research

Research the schools you might want to send your child to. You can have access to resources that will help you assess whether the school meets the needs of your child such as:

- The school's prospectus
- Special Educational Needs information report
- A copy of the Ofsted report
- A copy of the school's policies and procedures on SEN and bullying

(Most of these can be accessed on the individual school's website)

It may also be useful to join a few Facebook groups and ask other parents their opinions on certain schools. If you choose to do this, it is important to keep an open mind as everyone's experience will be different. Some Facebook groups you may find useful are: Stockport SEND Families, PACTStockport, Stockport Council SEND and Stockport Autism Team.

Tip #3: Planning your Visit

Planning your visit might help know what to expect and who you will be talking to. Plan how are getting to the school (Is the school easy to get to?). Contact the school to find out about the visiting process as every school is different.

During your visit:

Tip #4: Make notes

While you're there make physical or mental notes such as, do the staff and pupils look happy? Is the school accessible? Was it hard to get to the school? What does the school do to support children with SEN? How are the teachers communicating? Do any other children in the school have the same needs as your child?

Tip #5: Don't be afraid to ask questions (there is a list of questions, in this document below which you may find helpful)

Keep an open mind when visiting the schools and make sure to ask any questions you think might be crucial in your decision on whether you would be sending your child there. See how the teachers or pupils respond to your questions.

After your visit:

Tip #6: Review

Once you have visited all the secondary schools you have chosen, you now need to decide which school would be best for your child. Consider which school provided the best support and environment for your child's needs.

Tip #7: Contact

After you've visited all the schools you might realise that you have forgotten to ask a question that might be crucial in deciding what school is best for your child. Contact the school office and ask your query.

Tip #8: Second visit

After you have decided what school, you want your child to attend or at least narrowed it down you might want to attend for a second visit. This could help you make a final decision. During this second visit you might want to take your child to get their view.

List of potential questions to ask the School/SENCO:

Some of these questions may be relevant for your child and some not. There may be more you want to add but these may be helpful to think about:

- What specific support could you offer a young person with ***your child's SEN***?
- Is the school accessible/adapted for children with ***your child's SEN***?
- What interventions and strategies do you use? (TEACCH, PECs, social stories, symbols, timelines etc.) Can you show me some examples of these? Are all staff competent in these approaches?
- What training has your staff received to meet ***your child's SEN***? Is it possible for staff to receive training in ***your child's SEN***?
- Are staff trained to administer emergency medication?
- Are your staff competent in managing Epilepsy? For instance, administering emergency medication and monitoring seizure activity?
- Are your staff trained to administer other medications? Can your staff administer ***your child's specific medication/s***?
- Are the staff gastrostomy/tracheotomy trained?
- Are staff moving and handling trained to perform personal care? Do school have the required equipment to perform this and meet ***your child's needs***? e.g. Hoist and Plinth
- Will the members of staff be able to assist ***your child*** with eating?
- Can your school accommodate special diets and dietary requirements?
- Are the staff trained to manage Type 1 Diabetes? Can this be arranged?
- Does the school have any assistive technology which would be beneficial to ***your child and their needs***?
- How big will the class groups be?
- What will the staff ratio be in the classroom?
- What changes could you make to the classroom if the environment is too loud/busy for ***your child***?
- What is the staff ratio in unstructured time e.g., lunchtime?
- Is there an opportunity to have time out of the classroom? Is there a designated space for this?
- Is there an opportunity for ***young person*** to work in a room on their own if they are not coping in the classroom?
- How would you support someone with challenging behaviour e.g., levels of support, behaviour management programmes, staff ratio?
- Are there any types of challenging behaviour that you feel you would be unable to accommodate?

- What types of therapy would be available for ***your child***? Speech and Language Therapy/Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy/ Hydrotherapy etc.
- Do you provide Speech and language therapy, if so, how is it accessed and how much do they provide to the school?
- Do you provide Occupational Therapy, if so, are they trained in sensory integration?
- Do you go out into the community? What type of activities/places do you access in the community?
- Do you have adapted vehicles and passenger assistance?
- What is the staff ratio out in the community?
- What courses do you have available for young people with learning difficulties/disabilities?
- Is there any flexibility in the curriculum?
- How many days a week is your provision?
- Is there additional provision outside core hours or holidays etc?

Comparing Schools:

The table below has been created to help parents consider which schools are better able to meet their child's needs. To use the table effectively you may have to contact the schools you are considering and ask them some questions about their resources; we have provided a list of potential questions above. Using the table below, list your child's needs. Listing your child's needs from most predominant to least predominant may be useful in helping you decide which school meets your child's needs the best. In the School 1 or School 2 box insert the schools you are considering. If you are comparing more than 2 schools, please insert extra columns. Go through each of your child's need and click the tick box based on whether the school meets your child's needs or not. A tick suggests the school does meet the needs; leaving the box empty or adding a cross suggests the school doesn't. Once the table is complete count the number of ticks you have for each school and write it in the Total box beneath. The greater the number, the more needs can be met at the school. It is important to note that if you write the needs in order of priority one school may meet more needs than the other but won't mean the most important needs are met.

An example table is shown below:

List of Needs to be Met at School	School 1	School 2
1.	x	✓
2.	x	✓
3.	✓	x
4.	✓	✓
5.	✓	x
6.	✓	x
TOTAL Yes:	4	3

Naming a school in an EHCP:

When you have a preference for a particular school or college you can use the table above to evidence your reasons and decision. This may help if you need to have discussion with the Local Authority when they come to name a school in your child's EHCP.

Parents or young people have a legal right to request that a particular school or college is named in an education, health and care ("EHC") plan (or to express a preference for an independent school, college or other institution).

It is not uncommon for LAs to ask parents to complete a 'general preference form' so their preference(s) can be considered. However, these forms apply to children and young people without EHC plans through separate legislation. Therefore, parents who have children with EHC plans are not required to complete general preference forms. It is not lawful for LAs to impose this requirement on these parents or young people but there might be a risk in not following this process; if the LA refuses to name your choice of school, it may name a school that you would be particularly unhappy with. It is important to remember, however, that even if you do list several preferences the LA can **only** refuse to name your first preference if one of the legal reasons for refusal applies.

The only reason the local authority can refuse the request is if:

- The setting is unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs ("SEN") of the child or young person; or
- The attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for others; or
- The attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

This is set out in section 39(4) CAFA 2014. The LA has to prove that at least one of these conditions applies in order to dislodge the parent or young person's preference.

For further information please look at the IPSEA website

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/choosing-a-schoolcollege-with-an-ehc-plan>

What happens after I make a request?

An LA, before naming a school, must consult:

(a) the governing body, proprietor or principal of any school or other institution the authority is considering having named in the plan, and

(b) if that school or other institution is maintained by another LA, that LA.

(Section 39(6) CAFA 2014.)

The LA should give them 15 days to respond. If it fails to respond, the LA does not have to wait to make a decision about naming a school/college. The LA still needs to stick to the statutory deadlines for issuing a final plan. The LA should issue the draft EHC plan (or amendment notice) well before the deadline to make sure it can comply with its consultation duties.

The final decision rests with the LA where the child or young person lives. Even if the school or college, and/or the LA where the school or college is located (if different), objects, the home LA can still choose to name the school or college in the plan.

What happens once a school or college is named in an EHC plan?

If one of the type of nurseries, schools or colleges listed in section 38(3) CAFA 2014 is named in section I of an EHC plan then they must admit the child or young person (section 43 CAFA 2014).

If an independent school is named in section I, then the LA must pay any fees payable in respect of education or training provided for the child or young person at that school, institution or place in accordance with the EHC plan (section 63 CAFA 2014).

The LA could simply name a type of school or college (rather than a particular school/college). This is lawful, but it means that there is no school/college with the duty to admit the child or young person.

If you receive an EHC plan which does not specify a particular school/college, then you can appeal to the SEND Tribunal and seek to have a particular school/college named in the EHC plan.

If you disagree with the school or setting named in the EHC plan

Parents and young people have the right to request that a particular school, college or other setting is named in an EHC plan. If the LA does not agree to the parent or young person's request and names a different setting, this can also be appealed to the SEND Tribunal.

We would always suggest you discuss this with the LA as soon as possible to try and resolve any disagreement. You can also request a Disagreement Resolution meeting too. If you are not able to reach agreement about the name of the school in an EHCP you will have the right to appeal to the SEND Tribunal. For more information please have a look at the IPSEA website and also the SEND Tribunal website <https://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-special-educational-needs-and-disability>

Please contact SENDIASS for support