



Choosing a school for a child with Special Educational Needs/ Disabilities

Summary

This factsheet is designed to give you information on things to think about before choosing a school for a child with Special Educational Needs/ Disability (SEND). This information should be read alongside your Local Authority's admissions guidance.

[Herefordshire - Admissions Guidance](#)
[Worcestershire – Admissions Guidance](#)

Visiting a school is important, as it helps you to get a feel for the school, ask any questions you might have and make an informed decision. You may wish to visit several schools before making your decision.

You can often attend open day events, or you can arrange a visit directly with the school. Visiting a school during the normal school day can be helpful as you are able to see what your child will experience. You can also arrange a second visit to a school, if you feel you need it, to help you make up your mind.

Before you visit a school

To find schools, early years settings and post 16 providers in your area, check your Local Authority's website:

[Herefordshire – Find a School](#)
[Worcestershire - Find a School](#)

You can search for specialist provision in your area or further afield on these websites:

[Special Needs UK](#)
[Special Needs Guide](#)
[Special Needs Guide- Special Needs schools in the West Midlands](#)

You can find a list of independent specialist provision on the GOV.UK website.

[Independent special schools and post 16 institutions-GOV.UK](#)

You can search for independent provision on these websites:

[Schoolsearch](#)
[The Independent Schools Directory](#)



Every school must publish a SEN Information Report, detailing its approach to teaching children and young people with SEN. You should be able to find this on the school's website. It is a good idea to read this report along with other school policies before you visit.

Before you visit a school, think about what you would like to know beforehand, and consider questions to ask. The questions below may give you a starting point. It might be helpful to take a notepad and pen so that you can write down the answers to all of your questions.

You may want to ask to meet with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) to find out more about the support your child could receive.

General questions

- What will the school day look like for your child?
- Is the teaching flexible enough for your child to take part in as much of the curriculum as possible?
- Do any of the staff have specialist training linked to your child's needs?
- Are there any other children in the school with similar Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND) to those of your child? If so, has their placement been successful?
- How many students attend the school and how many classes are in each year group?
- What is the average number of students per class?
- Are all areas of the school accessible to your child? Are any adaptations required (wheelchair access, ramps, wide doors etc)?
- How will staff be informed about your child's needs?
- How will school ensure that your child's views and wishes on how best to support them are heard?
- Will your child be supported by the same people? What happens if your child's teacher or teaching assistant is absent?
- If your child needs help with things like collecting lunch at lunchtime or changing for PE, how will the school provide this help?
- Do the classes change for every lesson? If so, does your child need help getting from one to another? What can the school offer if they do?
- Does your child require any therapy e.g., physiotherapy? If so, how would this be managed?
- Does your child require medical support? If so, how would this be managed?
- What support or activities are available during break times and lunch times?
- How does the school support students to make friends?
- What are the homework expectations?
- What about pastoral care? Who can your child talk to if they have a problem?
- What are the access arrangements for exams?
- Do parents/carers have open access to school staff, or do you need to make appointments?



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- How will school communicate with you?
 - What extra-curricular activities are offered and what support is put in place for students to access them?
 - How will your child travel to and from school?
 - Ask for a copy of the school prospectus to see the school policies such as SEND, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour & Discipline, Uniform, Homework etc.

If your child is moving to the new school

- How does the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) of the new school liaise with the SENCo of your child's current school?
- Will the new school continue to build on the current Individual Educational Plan/targets?
- If your child currently has Teaching Assistant (TA) support, how will the new school ensure that TA support is in place when your child starts the new school?
- How will the move to the new school be planned? Is there a Transition Plan in place? (This could include visits to the school, meetings with members of staff that will be working with your child, meetings with the SENCo, a photo book to help your child become familiar with the new environment, a map and timetable, a buddy programme etc.)
- Will your child be invited to visit the school before they start?

After the visit

- Were you made to feel welcome? Were you shown through the whole school?
- Were all your questions answered?
- Do you think your child will be happy there? Do the staff and pupils seem happy?
- Is there sufficient access for your child to all buildings/classrooms?
- Look around any other schools that you are interested in and compare your findings.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan

If your child has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) any setting transitions will be managed by your Local Authority's SEND Team.

When you have visited all the schools that you have selected, discuss your preferences with your Casework Officer. It is important that you check with your Casework Officer if transport is likely to be a problem because access to school transport can be very limited and you may not be eligible for Local Authority (LA) assistance.

If your child has an EHCP and is going through a phase transfer, you do not have to apply through the normal admissions route. School placement should be addressed at your child's EHCP transition review which should be completed by March in the year of transition.



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Worcestershire**

However, local guidance within Herefordshire and Worcestershire is that you can apply through the admissions process if you choose, in order that your school preference is known to both the Admissions and SEN teams simultaneously. You may discuss this with your SEND caseworker if you have any difficulties.

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