

Parent Partnership
Town Hall
St Ives Road
Maidenhead
SL6 1RF
Tel: 01628 683182



Email: parent.partnership@rbwm.gov.uk

I THINK MY CHILD HAS SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) - WHAT CAN I DO?

Information Sheet 2

1. How much do you know already?

You clearly have concerns about your child's progress but:

- have you spoken to your son or daughter's school or early education provider (nursery, playgroup etc) about your concerns?
- do you know how the school works with children who may have SEN?
- do you know if your son or daughter is on the Code of Practice¹ stages and if so which one?
- does your son or daughter have an individual education plan (IEP)²?

2. Who should you speak to in school?

The first person to speak to is probably your child's class teacher or form tutor (or the pre-school group leader). You might want to do this at a parent consultation session or make a separate appointment to see them.

If you want to, you could ask for the meeting in writing setting out what it is you want to discuss, for example:

Dear Mrs Smith

I would like to arrange to see you in school next week to talk about James' progress. I do not feel that James is reading as well as his sister did at the same age and would be grateful for an opportunity to discuss this with you.

I can be available during the morning/after school/at lunchtime etc... and can be contacted on ...

Yours sincerely

After you have spoken to the class teacher they may involve another teacher in the school known as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO³ for short). The SENCo has responsibility for what happens on a day to day basis in the school for pupils with SEN. The SENCo also provides professional advice to other teachers in the school to help all pupils to make progress.

1. See Information sheet on The Code of Practice
2. See Information Sheet on IEPs
3. See Information Sheet on the role of the SENCO

The Headteacher and the school governors also have responsibilities in law in relation to children with SEN.

The pupils school record⁴ should be updated regularly to record information about SEN and the action that is being taken.

3. How are children's needs identified and assessed and what action does the school take?

A new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice¹ was published by the Government and came into effect on 1 January 2002.

The Code of Practice gives guidance on the main forms of additional or different action that should be taken to meet the needs of pupils. It says that for most pupils extra help will be provided in the classroom, managed by the class or subject teacher – this could be by working with the rest of the class, in small groups or on an individual basis with a teacher or teaching assistant. Different actions may need to be taken for pupils at School Action, School Action Plus or those with Statements of SEN⁵, see below.

Section 317(a) of the Education Act 1996 requires schools to inform parents when they make special educational provision for their child because they have identified him or her as having SEN

School Action: The class teacher will involve the SENCo. In consultation with you, the SENCo and the class teacher will draw up an individual education plan for the pupil. This plan, known as an IEP is an action plan and sets out.

- the child's difficulties
- short term targets for them to achieve
- details of who will work with the child and what materials might be
 - needed
- when the IEP will be reviewed

You may be given some tasks to do at home with your son or daughter as part of the IEP.

School Action Plus: Is felt to be appropriate if, despite having received additional support and an individualised programme at **School Action**, the pupil is still not making significant progress it may be decided to involve outside professionals. These professionals may advise the school on how to work with the child, they may provide additional specialist assessment or they may work directly with the child. They will help to set new targets for the pupil's IEP.

*The resources needed to provide for support for a pupil at **School Action** or **School Action Plus** are contained within schools' budgets⁶.*

4. Parents have a right to see their child's school record

5. See Information sheet on Statements

6. See Information sheet on How mainstream schools are funded

There is no minimum or maximum amount of time that a child is expected to spend at **School Action** or **School Action Plus**. However the pupil's progress should be reviewed regularly and targets revised to reflect progress. The pupil's school record should be kept up to date.

After some time at **School Action Plus** it may be felt that the Local Education Authority (LEA) should carry out a statutory (legal) assessment of the pupil's SEN. Any such decision should be made in consultation with you. It is at this stage that the LEA will become involved for the first time. Only a very small number of pupils (perhaps about 2% of the total school-aged population) will have needs which are so complex that a Statement of SEN is required.

The LEA will consider whether that pupil meets its criteria for assessment. They will make this decision on the basis of evidence gathered from the school and others. The school should be able to provide written evidence or information about the action it has taken, IEPs, National Curriculum levels and attainment information, any educational or other assessments. The pupil's health, the view of the parent and the child, the involvement of other professionals and any involvement by Social Services or the Education Welfare Service will also be reported. If the pupil does meet the criteria an assessment will be carried out. If the LEA feels there is not enough evidence or that the child's needs are not severe or complex enough to meet the criteria, the assessment will be refused and you will be advised of your right of appeal⁷.

If the assessment shows that it is necessary, the LEA will issue a Statement of SEN and make sure that the help needed by the pupil is put in place. The LEA will provide additional money to the pupil's school so that they can provide the support. The LEA will monitor the pupil's progress once a year through an annual review⁸ of the Statement which you will be invited to attend.

4 What can I do if I think my child needs a statutory assessment?

You have the right in law (Education Act 1996) to ask the LEA to assess your child's SEN, whatever stage on the Code of Practice they happen to be on. It is advisable to discuss this with your son or daughter's school first, as they will be asked by the LEA to provide evidence of the action they have already taken to help your child. Once the LEA has received your request, it has 6 weeks to decide whether or not your son or daughter's needs are severe or complex enough to need a statutory assessment. If they agree then the assessment will go ahead; if they disagree, they will write to you and the school explaining why.

Your request to the LEA should be made in writing to the SEN Manager:

Rhidian Jones, SEN Manager
Town Hall
St Ives Road
Maidenhead
Berkshire
SL6 1RF

An example of the type of letter you could write is given on the next page:

(Your Address and telephone number)
(Date)

Dear Mr Jones

Re: *(Child's name, date of birth and school/early education setting)*
I am writing to ask you to assess the educational needs of my son/daughter under the terms of the Education Act 1996.

I make this request under Section 329 of the Act because (here give details of your reasons for making the request for assessment).

I understand that you will gather information about (your child's name) special educational needs and that a panel will decide whether or not those needs meet The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's criteria for statutory assessment.

Yours sincerely

Additional information

www.parentcentre.gov.uk at home page click on publications

Resources for parents by parents

'Help your children to learn' series of booklets published by Department for Education and Skills (DfES)