

Parent

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Handbook



SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES

ALTRINCHAM C.E. AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The term 'special educational needs' (SEN) has a legal definition, referring to children who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn or access education than most children of the same age.

Many children will have SEN of some kind at some time during their education. Help will usually be provided in their ordinary, mainstream early education setting or school, sometimes with the help of outside specialists.

If your child has special educational needs, they may need extra help in a range of areas, for example:

- schoolwork
- reading, writing, number work or understanding information
- expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying
- making friends or relating to adults
- behaving properly in school
- organising themselves
- some kind of sensory or physical needs which may affect them in school

Your child's progress at school

Children make progress at different rates and have different ways in which they learn best. When planning lessons based around the National Curriculum, your child's teacher will take account of this by looking carefully at how they organise their lessons, classroom, books and materials.

The teacher will then choose suitable ways to help your child learn from a range of activities (often described as 'differentiating the curriculum').

If your child is making slower progress or having particular difficulties in one area, they may be given extra help or different lessons to help them succeed.

Just because your child is making slower progress than you expected or the teachers are providing different support, help or activities in class, this doesn't necessarily mean that your child has SEN.

Special Educational Needs

There are a number of basic principles that all those involved in your child's education will consider. When talking to your child's teachers, there are some basic points to bear in mind:

- if your child has SEN their needs should be met and they should receive a broad, well-balanced and relevant education
- your views should always be taken into account and the wishes of your child should be listened to

- your child's needs will usually be met in a mainstream school, sometimes with the help of outside specialists
- you should be consulted on all the decisions that affect your child
- you have a vital role to play in your child's education

If your child has SEN, there are also a number of organisations that will be of help.

Parent Partnership Services

All local authorities (LAs) have a duty to provide information, advice and support to parents of children with SEN. This should be provided by dedicated staff working separately from the LA's SEN team so you are assured that the advice and information is impartial, and that the people you are receiving it from are not involved in the SEN decision making process. Some parent partnership services are based in the voluntary sector but most remain within the LA. Most services also offer access to Independent Parental Supporters (IPs) who are volunteers trained to provide individual support to parents.

Assessments

If your child still does not seem to be making progress under the School Action or School Action Plus, or needs a lot of extra help, the local authority may decide to carry out a more detailed assessment of your child's needs, based on specialist advice. Very few children need an assessment.

The assessment finds out exactly what your child's needs are, and what special help they need. It is only necessary if your child's school or educational setting cannot provide all the help they need.

You can ask for an assessment for your child and so can your child's school. If the school wants to ask the local authority to carry out an assessment, they should always talk to you first. If you would like to approach the local authority, it's best to talk to your child's teacher or SEN coordinator (SENCO) first.

The school SENCO is Mrs. Horner.

The Assessment Process

The local authority will look at requests and tell you (normally within six weeks) whether they will carry out an assessment. They also explain the assessment process.

If the assessment goes ahead, the local authority asks people to give their views on your child. They ask for advice from:

- you
- your child's school
- an educational psychologist
- a doctor
- social services (who will only give advice if they know your child)
- anyone else who the local authority thinks it should get advice from to get a clear picture of your child's needs

You can attend any interview, medical or other test during the assessment. You know your child best so your views are important. What your child thinks also plays a big part in the assessment.

You are free to suggest any other groups you know whose views may be helpful. The local authority should take them into account as part of the assessment. You may want to think about asking:

- your local parent partnership service
- voluntary organisations working with children
- other parent support groups

After the assessment

Once SEN officers have completed their assessment, they decide whether to write down all the information they have collected in a statement of SEN. Your local authority usually tells you if it is going to write a statement within 12 weeks of beginning the assessment.

If the local authority decides not to write a statement, it will explain the reasons, and tell you how it thinks your child's needs should be met in school or in other ways.

If the local authority decides not to assess

If the local authority decides not to assess your child, it must write and tell you and the school its reasons. If you or your child's school still feel that more needs to be done, talk to the head teacher or SENCO. The local authority could think about other ways of helping your child, including getting in some outside help.

The local authority should tell you about local arrangements for sorting out any disagreement informally and how long it should take. You also have a right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal, an independent organisation. It is important that you begin any appeal to the Tribunal within the time limit as the Tribunal is likely to refuse to hear your appeal if you are late.

What if your child is Early Years?

These needs should be met by using Early Years Action and the Early Years Action Plus.

S.E.N. Teaching

S.E.N. pupils are accommodated in the normal classroom environment. There is no specially designated room or area available to them. Small group teaching has to take place in the classroom environment, staffroom, library if this is available.

There is disabled access throughout the school with a disabled toilet located in the entrance hall. A shower facility is located in the nursery.

S.E.N. pupils are integrated into the normal classroom provision.

The governors will ensure that a teacher is responsible for Special Needs provision in the school (S.E.N.C.O.). The provision for special needs is coordinated by the S.E.N.C.O. and the headteacher. The help and support of the school's support officer is occasionally used.

The levels of school SEN support are provided by specialist SEN staff.

The school offers SEN pupils with the following **Wave Intervention Programmes**:

- **Wave 1** - differentiated / personalized class teaching.
- **Wave 2 - School Action**. An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is in place. (objectives shared and agreed with the pupil and parents/ guardians).
Resources include small group work, Jolly Phonics, Oxford Reading Tree, Fuzz Buzz Reading Programme.
- **Wave 3 – School Action Plus**. One to one intervention (IEP) in place. Normal practice is Wave 2 pupils with identified further needs at Wave 3. Resources include Fischer Family Trust Programmes.

Further help

A Department for Education booklet explaining Special Educational Needs for parents and carers can be downloaded free from the [Teachernet](#) website.

The [Department for Education](#) publishes a Code of Practice giving guidance to schools and education authorities on how they should help children with Special Educational Needs.

