A Guide for Parents and Carers

Supporting your child at school

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) should get the extra help they need to learn and make progress in their learning alongside other children of the same age.

Norfolk County Council's Local First Inclusion programme, developed with schools, aims to ensure children with additional needs, including those with higher or more complex needs, can be well supported at their local mainstream school. The programme has increased support, expertise and funding to schools to help them meet a diverse range of needs.

Attending school in the local community alongside friends and siblings, if possible, gives children the best chance to flourish and lead successful, independent lives.

SEN Support Plans

Most children with SEND can be supported with a SEN Support Plan. No formal medical diagnosis is needed for this, and no formal assessments are required.

SEN Support Plans are put together by school Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Co-ordinators (SENDCos) and class teachers in agreement with parents and carers. Schools should involve you in what will be included in your child's SEN Support Plan.

A SEN Support Plan is made based on the needs your child is presenting. It identifies your child's needs and then contains information about what the school will do to meet them.

The extra help which can be put in place through a SEN Support Plan is varied. It can include a range of approaches such as: adapted teaching materials in the classroom; sensory tools or aids like ear defenders; and small group learning. These are just a few examples. There is no one-size fits all. The support is tailored to meet the specific needs of your child.

The Provision Expected at SEN Support (PEaSS) guide

You can read more about different kinds of support in Norfolk's Provision Expected at SEN Support guide. This guide sets out how to identify needs and contains information about the different approaches class teachers and schools can consider using. Find it at www.norfolk.gov.uk/peass

Funding for schools to provide SEN Support

Schools have access to a wide range of services, including top up funding, that help them to provide support for children with higher SEND needs.

The graduated approach

Once a SEN Support Plan has been agreed with you, it should be written down, you should receive a copy, and it should be put into place at school. It should be reviewed with you at least once a term and adapted, with your input, as your child's needs change.

This graduated approach is known as assess, plan, do, review. Your child's needs are assessed, then a plan is made to show how those needs will be met, the plan is put in place, and then a review is held to see whether it's worked and what, if any, changes are needed. Then, if it's needed, the cycle starts again.

Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs)

Where teachers in a mainstream school feel a child has higher needs that cannot be met in the classroom, they can consider referring them for an SRB place. SRBs are specialist provisions with their own teaching staff based within a mainstream school.

No formal medical assessment or diagnosis is needed for an SRB place. The number of placements available has doubled over the last five years and is still growing.

Some schools have an SRB on site but in some cases your child would need to travel to the nearest one. If the school feel your child would meet the criteria for an SRB, they will talk to you about this. If the county council agrees to the place, they will provide transport if it's needed.

Depending on the type of needs your child has, they may stay on roll at their current school and attend the SRB on certain days, or they might attend the SRB full time.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Only children with higher or complex needs require an EHCP. They are for children and young people whose needs cannot be met with SEN Support. They typically identify and set out the additional support to meet education, health and social needs.

An EHCP is a legal document which requires a statutory annual review and a number of professional reports to specify what a child needs to achieve the best possible outcomes. Children and young people require an EHCP in order to apply for a place at a special school.

Further help

In the first instance you should work with your school to agree suitable support for your child. If you have further queries or concerns or you feel your child needs more support or is struggling:

- Contact the Norfolk SEND and Inclusion Support Line on 0333 313 7165. It's open Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) from 9am to 5pm. The friendly and knowledgeable advisers can help you if you feel your child needs an EHCP, if they are at risk of school exclusion, and if they are struggling in their mainstream school.

- Contact Norfolk SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) for free, confidential and impartial support and advice about education for children with SEND. This includes free bookable 40-minute consultations on their telephone helpline. Find out more, including how to book a telephone appointment, at **www.norfolksendiass.org.uk**

- Find further information about SEN Support Plans, SRBs and EHCPs in the education and learning section at www.norfolk.gov.uk/send

- The Just One Norfolk website has a range of useful information about supporting children's emotional and health needs at school in its Additional Needs and Disability section. Find this at www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk