

Section 4

Special Educational Needs

Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a term used when a child needs specialist support at school to help them with their educational learning.

This may be due to:

- A learning disability
- An emotional, behavioural, sensory or physical disability
- Difficulty with communication or speech and language

Some children may have more complex needs. This may mean that they need to go to a school that offers specialist provision or resources to better meet their needs.

The Council has a number of services to help support parents and children with special educational needs. We are committed to meeting the needs of all children, wherever possible, within mainstream schools or in special schools or resourced provision.

Places in schools within other Councils will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

This section explains the admissions process for children who have special educational needs including some frequently asked questions.



What help is available if my child has special needs?

Most children with special educational needs go to mainstream schools within their local community. Schools have resources to help support the learning needs of most children.

The Council also provides services to parents and schools such as:

- The Special Educational Needs Support Services (SENS)
- Service for Social Communication and Interaction (SSCI)
- Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
- Educational Welfare Service (EWS)
- Parent Partnership Service (PPS)

Some children with more complex needs may have a 'Statement of Special Educational Needs'. This is a formal document about the educational needs of your child. This is put together with yourself, your child and other professionals who may be involved with your child.

Do all children with special educational needs have a statement?

No. The majority of children do not need a statement.

Some children may already have a statement before they start school.

If your child does not have a statement you apply in the same way as for all other children. You need to fill the application form in and send it back. Make sure you tick the box to tell us your child has a special educational need.

How do I apply if my child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs?

If your child has a statement, the Council's Special Needs Team will discuss the most appropriate schools with you. They can advise you whether the school you have chosen is suitable for your child's needs.

You can choose a mainstream school. The school you choose must be able to support your child's learning needs.

The Council has to name the school you ask for unless:

- The school cannot meet your child's needs
- Your child's attendance will affect the education of other children
- There are no places available

Like everyone else you still need to fill in and return an application form. Your application will be sent on to the special educational needs Assessment and Review Team. You can do this online or in paper format.

If the school you wish to choose is a Voluntary Aided, Foundation School or Academy, the School Governing Body (not the Council) decides who gets places. These schools have their own agreed admissions criteria. See Section 8 for a summary of these. Contact the school to find out more.

Within Wakefield there is a wide range of schools that can offer specialist support. You can find the details of these in Appendix 2.

What if my child needs to attend a special school?

Some children are unable to be supported in mainstream schools. They will need to go to a special school or resourced provision. Here children will have specialist teaching staff and resources to help them with their education. Special resourced provisions are often within mainstream schools.

The options for your child will be discussed at the review of the statement.

Filling the application form in.

When filling the form in please don't forget to tick the box to let us know that your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Will transport be available to school?

This will depend on your child's needs and the distance from your child's home to school. See Section 6 on Home to School Transport. Again this will be discussed with you before your child starts school.

If I do not agree with the naming of a school on my child's statement, can I appeal and where would I go to do this?

Yes you can. However the first thing you should do is speak to your child's special educational needs officer and let them know that you are unhappy with the named school. You may be able to sort this between you.

If you are still unhappy, the Parent Partnership Service may be able to help. They offer impartial advice and guidance to parents and carers of children who have Special Educational Needs. They are there to help with all issues that may affect your child including admission to schools, school placements and the Council's special needs procedures.

Their aim is to work with you and the Council to try to find a solution. They will also explain what you need to do if you want to make an appeal. Appeals are dealt with by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

Contact:

Wakefield Parent Partnership Service

Tel: 0800 587 8042

Email: parentpartnership@wakefield.gov.uk.

Please don't hesitate to contact them they will be only too happy to help. You can telephone them or they can visit you at home.

For children who do not have a Statement of Special Needs the appeals process is the same as for mainstream schools.

Who else can I talk to about my child's needs?

If you need more information you can also talk to staff at your child's current or new school. You can also talk to the Council's Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team. You can contact them on 01924 302465. Don't forget that the Parent Partnership Service or Choice Advice Service can also help.

Telephone: 0800 587 8042