

# Choosing a School – Questions to Ask and What to Consider

## For Parents and Carers with a Draft or Final EHCP

Choosing the right school or setting is a big decision. If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you have the right to request a particular school, college, or other placement. This guide helps you understand your rights and gives you key questions to ask when visiting or considering a school.

## What Does the Law Say?

Under the **Children and Families Act 2014**, you have the right to request that the EHCP names a:

- **Mainstream school or college**
- **Special school or college**
- **Academy, free school or maintained school**
- **Non-maintained special school**
- **Section 41-approved independent special school or college**

The Local Authority **must** agree to your request unless:

1. The placement is unsuitable for your child's needs
2. It would affect the education of other pupils
3. It would not be an efficient use of public money

You do **not** have to visit multiple schools before making a request – but many parents find it helpful.

You can find a list of Section 41 approved schools here: [IPSEA: Section 41 List](#)

## Before You Visit or Decide

Ask to read:

- The school's **SEND Policy**
- Their **Accessibility Plan**
- Their **Ofsted report**
- Their **Local Offer** information

You can also:

- Speak to the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
- Ask for a tour
- Talk to other families if you feel comfortable

## Questions to Ask When Visiting or Contacting a School

### About SEN Support:

- How does the school identify and support children with SEND?
- How is support personalised to meet individual EHCP needs?
- What experience do staff have in working with children like mine?

### About Staffing and Support:

- Who will be involved in supporting my child day to day?
- Will there be a key person or caseworker for my child?
- How do they work with external professionals (e.g. EPs, SALT, CAMHS)?

### About Communication:

- How often will I receive updates?
- How is progress monitored and shared?
- What's the process if I have concerns?

### About Inclusion and Wellbeing:

- How are children with SEND included in wider school life?
- How do staff support children with anxiety, school avoidance, or transitions?
- What support is in place for emotional wellbeing?

### About Practicalities:

- What is the school day like? What class sizes and groupings are used?
- How are breaks/lunchtimes structured for pupils with additional needs?
- What facilities or resources (e.g. sensory room, quiet spaces) are available?

## What Happens After You've Chosen a School?

- Let the **EHCP Case Officer** know your preferred school during your 15-day draft plan response window.
- The Local Authority will consult the school or college.
- The setting has 15 days to respond, and can only say no for specific legal reasons.

Once agreed, the **school's name will appear in Section I** of the final EHCP.

## Things to Consider

- Does the school have experience with your child's primary needs?
- Do they seem confident and welcoming?
- Will your child feel safe, understood, and included?
- Is specialist provision needed now – or could this be reviewed later?
- Is travel or transport a factor?

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