THE SEND Code of Practice

The SEND Code of Practice provides guidance for organisations who work with children and young people aged 0-25 with SEN. All schools must take into consideration the Code of Practice when making decisions relating to pupils with SEN or disabilities.

The SEND Code of Practice is broken down into the following sections:

- The principles underpinning the Code
- The provision of impartial information, advice and support
- Working together across education, health and care for joint outcomes
- The local offer
- Early Years providers
- Schools
- Further Education
- Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years
- Education Health and Care needs assessments and plans (EHC)
- Children and young people in specific circumstances
- Resolving disagreements

The principles underpinning the Code

These are listening to the views, wishes and feelings of the child/young person and their parents/carers, recognising the importance of the child/young person and their parent/carers participating as fully as possible in decision making, recognising the need to support the child/young person and their parent/carers in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person to help them achieve the best possible education and outcomes and prepare them for adulthood.

These principles support early identification and early intervention in order for the child/young person to receive the best support possible. These principles also ensure collaboration between education, health and social care services. By following the principles, organisations are ensuring the most successful preparation for adulthood.

The provision of impartial information, advice and support

Every local authority must have an information, advice support service for children with SEN or disabilities. This is usually known as SENDIASS. This service must also be made known to local schools. This support service should be factual, impartial, confidential and accessible. The service should ensure they have the capacity to handle face-to-face, telephone and electronic enquiries, and recognise the diverse needs of children/young people and their parent/carers.

This service should be able to offer support with preparing for and attending meetings, supporting parent/carers in expressing their views, participating in decisions made about their child's education, health and social care and offering supporting with complaints and appeals.

Working together across education, health and care for joint outcomes

This chapter outlines the ways education, health and social care services should work together with relevant local partners e.g., charities, community associations to meet children/young people needs and support better outcomes. For example, this means that health professionals can work with schools to deliver things such as speech and language therapy, mental health support, physiotherapy or whatever care need a child has, while under a teacher's care.

The local offer

Each local authority has a duty to develop provisions for young people with SEN or disabilities. The local offer provides a list of all these provisions. It needs to be clear, comprehensive, and accessible and have up-to-date information about how and where to access the available provisions. It must also be responsive in involving SEND children/young people in the development of these provisions. Every local authority has an obligation to include schools, colleges, health services and other organisations in the development of the Local Offer.

Early years

Early Years providers must take actions to identify and support children with special educational needs regardless of whether they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Children under five are entitled to attend a setting that enables them to achieve the best possible outcomes and supports them to become confident to communicate their own views and be school ready. There is a particular focus on practitioners listening and understanding parents' concerns about their child's development.

Every local authority funds part-time places for some children over the age of two and most children over the age of three.

Schools

All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education that meets their needs and fulfils their potential. They must also be supported to make a successful transition to adulthood. All schools are required to address and identify SEN pupils and should have a designated SENCO.

Schools should monitor progress and put in place extra support or strategies to help promote progress in identified areas. Schools, where required, may need to involve specialists when looking at how best to support SEN children. They should work closely with the local authority and local partners to do this.

Further education

All post-16 providers should be involved in transitioning plans for young people when leaving school and starting college, so they can be prepared to meet their needs. At age 16 young people should be seen as increasingly independent, therefore, where possible colleges should discuss directly with young people decisions that affect them, this includes; what support the young person feels they need and how the college will provide this support to meet their needs. If a college can't meet a young person's needs and can show they have done all they can to try and do so then an Education, Health and Care (EHC) should be considered. A request can be made for an EHC plan up until the age of 25.

Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years

Preparation for adulthood should start as early as possible; providers should support young people to have high aspirations as this is crucial to the success of children and young people. Discussions around children and young people's long-term goals should also take place as early as possible. Young people with SEN should be supported to achieve independence and employability. All professionals involved in working with a young person should share these high aspirations.

During secondary school young people with SEN should be encouraged and supported to participate in the community and aim for employment and independent living through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Schools should form partnerships with employment services, businesses and other organisations in order to provide children information on what is available to them and what is possible for them to achieve. Every local authority has a legal responsibility to do things such as: making information, advice and support available directly to young people, making sure that all reviews of EHC plans for young people aged 13-14 onwards, include a focus on preparing for adulthood.

Education Health and Care needs assessments and plans (EHC)

An education provider will often be able to meet the needs of children, however sometimes a child or young person needs more intensive specialist support that cannot be provided by their education provider. In these circumstances, you or your child's education provider can ask your local authority for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment for your child. This assessment could lead to your child getting an EHC plan. An EHC plan brings your child's education, health and social care needs into a single, legal document. The purpose of an EHC plan is to outline the needs of a child or young person, and to secure the best possible outcomes for them. This may result in the child or young person being granted a specialist educational provision place.

Children and young people in specific circumstances

Some children with special education needs circumstances may need something different or additional to other children with SEN. Some of these groups of children include those who are looked after by their local authority, children and young people educated at home and young people in youth custody. Arrangements and entitlements for these children will differ.

Resolving disagreements

This section gives information on what parents and carers can do if they disagree with decisions made by professionals including the local authority, a child or young person's school and local health services. It outlines what parents / carers rights are and when and how decisions can be challenged. If parents / carers don't agree with decisions, they should raise this with the professional directly first and try to reach an agreement. If an agreement can't be reached, information should be given on the procedures for making complaints. Parents /carers can also speak to their local authority's Information, advice, and support service (SENDIASS) for help. Mediation is particularly important- looking at how problems can be dealt with through talking and negotiating, rather than issues going straight to appeal.