



'A brighter tomorrow'

What happens if my child
has additional needs? A
staged approach

Additional School Support – a quick guide

The term 'Additional School Support' or 'SEN' is not intended to cause you distress. It is a term that is used in school to describe a child who is finding an aspect of the curriculum or school life difficult and this has been recognised. As a result, school will be looking at how best to support them to be more confident and achieve to their potential.

As children are identified as finding areas of school life difficult school will look at ways of supporting them. Support mechanisms may include:

- short, sharp targeted intervention
- online or e-support materials
- adaptations to the classroom or teaching and learning style
- additional resources or aids
- booster groups.

Cause for concern:

This is the initial stage at which school – most probably the class teacher – recognises that a child is finding an aspect of school life difficult. It is an acknowledgement by school that they need to pay further attention to this child and monitor their progress more closely. It seeks to highlight their strengths and areas of development. It begins to look at strategies that could be used to close the gap in their achievement that has been identified. It may trigger a course of action to follow that is prescriptive and clearly identified.

Additional School Support:

As a result of an initial consultation with you and a monitoring of progress we may involve your child in booster or additional teaching opportunities to 'close the gap' between their attainment or progress and that of their peers. This will be discussed with you and your child to identify what we intend to improve or strengthen and how and when we intend to go about it. We are mindful of children having access to a broad and balanced curriculum and so seek to ensure targeted intervention is carried out sensitively to children's areas of curriculum strength and also enjoyment.

The SENCo, (Special Educational Needs Co Ordinator, (teacher in school with responsibility for SEN) class teacher and parents will discuss together targets, resources, groupings and teaching strategies that will be used to support the child. This is recorded in the school's information management system. All of those involved in writing it will be given a copy once it has been agreed to enable them to support work on the targets.

After a period of time this will be reviewed to see how things are going and whether adequate progress has been made. This is usually once a term. Parents are always invited to reviews in order to discuss progress towards the agreed targets and to think about new targets if needed.

When a child has made adequate progress and targets have been achieved over several occasions it is likely that any support will go back to being that provided through quality first teaching that all of our children access.

SEN School support:

SEN School support is triggered when, despite support at Additional School support over some time, the child is still not making what for them would be considered adequate progress. The SENCo may consult with a member of the Localities team Area 8 or one of the other support services, including Health services, to ask advice about providing additional support above and beyond that which school can offer. This is recognition that specialist advice is required in order to work out a different way of supporting the child's needs. That specialist is likely to assess the child and then suggest different ways of supporting his/her special educational needs. Throughout the process you will be kept informed of events.

As at the level of Additional School Support, parents will be involved with the SENCo and class teacher in drawing up a programme of targets, resources, teaching strategies and groupings, but this time will use the advice of the specialist. Again, this will be included in the school's information management system and the young person will be involved. Throughout this period of time parents and young people are regularly called upon to share their views of successes and areas of development through a TAC (Team Around the Child) approach, documenting meetings where discussions about progress and support mechanisms are discussed. An EHA (Early Help Assessment) approach may also be used to log these meetings and record the outcomes.

If the child makes adequate progress then support from additional agencies may no longer be needed and so support can be reduced in intensity or frequency. In a minority of cases the young person may still not make adequate progress and then the parents and the school may consider whether to request an Educational Health Care Assessment.

Education Health and Care Plan:

Before this is considered the school will discuss the process with parents and the young person concerned. Parents and the young person concerned will be consulted at all stages in the process. The LA (Local Authority) issues guidance as to when an Education Health and Care Plan assessment may be considered but this is only guidance and each case is considered individually.

There are clear expectations as to what should have happened to support a child before an EHC is requested. Inter agency work, regular feedback meetings and discussions, along with structured conversations involving the child, their family and professionals should have taken place before an application is made. This application submitted by a 'Responsible Body', which in a school is the Head teacher. Parents may make their own request for an Education Health and Care Plan but it is often more efficient where the school and parents work together as all the evidence needed will be more easily available.

All requests for an EHC assessment are considered by an assessment panel, and a decision reached and feedback given by this panel. The EHC Panel aims to support transparency and consistency in the process. It works within strict timescales which it explains at the outset of the assessment process.

If the LA decides not to go ahead with an EHC assessment it must tell the parents why. Understandably some parents may be disappointed with that decision and they have the right to ask for the matter to go before a Tribunal. The LA always tries to meet with parents where there are disagreements to try and work out a way forward together.

If the decision is to go ahead with an EHC assessment then the LA collates the information from those involved with the child including parents, the school, an Educational Psychologist, medics and anyone else who has worked with the child and has a valuable insight into their needs. This is to get a thorough understanding of the child's needs and the support that has been given and likely to be needed.

Education and Health Care Plan (EHC):

The EHC will draw together all the advice that was collected into one document setting out:

- The child's special educational needs, i.e. the nature of their learning difficulties
- The special educational provision to be made, including targets and the support that's needed to meet those targets
- The wishes of the child and their family
- Placement – where is most suitable / desired by the young person and their family
- Non-educational provision, i.e. what is needed to meet those needs such as a occupational therapy support, speech and language support etc.

An EHC has to be reviewed at least once every year to ensure that it remains relevant and to see how the young person is progressing in meeting the targets. It is the intention that this plan is reviewed and in place until the younger person reaches the age of 25 or until it is no longer appropriate.

Parent Support

Wolverhampton has a dedicated SEND support team. Wolverhampton Information Advice and Support Service are there to support you in meetings, offer advice or be a friendly ear. Their leaflets are in the entrance hall, or alternatively you can call 01902 556945.

Some useful websites are:

<https://wolvesiass.org/>