



HOUNSLOW SENDIASS

Information Advice and Support Service

Choosing a school for a child with SEND Factsheet

Summary

This can be quite a worrying time for parents, especially if your child has Special Educational Needs (SEN). Knowing which school will be best for your child can be hard. This factsheet gives you some ideas which might help you make this decision.

This Hounslow SEND Local Offer page link has details on how to choose a suitable educational setting: [Guide to choosing a school or education setting | London Borough of Hounslow](#)

It is important to visit the schools you are considering. This is so you can ask any questions you may have and can gain a better understanding of which option is best for you and your child. You can visit schools on their open day events or arrange a visit directly with the school. Visiting during school hours may be more helpful for you to make up your mind.

If your child has significant SEN, you may want to start planning the change of school well in advance.

Discovering local schools

To find your school options, your Local Authority's website will list them online. Check out Hounslow's schools here: [Directory of Schools in Hounslow | London Borough of Hounslow](#)

This website contains further information on both mainstream and special schools. Depending on your child's SEND needs, and whether they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) it is important to consider which option is best suited for your child.

To find independent mainstream schools which may suit you, the website School Search has a search function with useful filters: [Independent Schools Guide UK | John Catt's School Search](#)

To find independent Special schools, the GOV.UK website has a list for you to choose from: [Independent special schools and post-16 institutions - GOV.UK](#)

This IPSEA link explains how to select a placement with or without an EHCP: [Selecting a school or college | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#)

What to do before you visit a school

Once you have made a list of schools you are interested in, it is important to prepare for your visit so you are able to gain as much information as possible to help in your decision.

Every school must publish a SEN Information Report, which details its approach to teaching children and young people with SEN. It is important to read this report along with other school policies before you visit, which will be available on the school website. School websites will contain lots of information about the school, so make sure to read this and take notes.

All schools will have copies of their most recent Ofsted inspection report and governors' report to parents available for you to read.

It may also help you to meet with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) to find out more about what support your child could receive. You can arrange this by speaking to the school before your visit.

All secondary schools provide information for parents and will have open days in the Autumn Term when parents can visit the school. It is a good idea for parents to visit all the schools you are considering. In the transition to secondary school, it is important to involve your child in the process. This could include taking your child to the open evenings, talking to them about the schools, asking for their opinion and allowing them to share in deciding which school they should go to.

It is important to know what information you would like to know about the school during your visit. To prepare for this, write a list of questions you would like to ask the school, to make sure you receive all the information you want and don't forget any key points that could help you in your decision. It may help to bring a notepad and pen to write down the information given to you.

Questions to ask the school

Below is a list of questions that could help you decide what sorts of questions you would like to ask. You do not need to ask all these questions; they are simply a guide to give you information that could help you in your decision-making process.

- What will the school day look like for your child?
- Is the teaching flexible enough for your child to take part in as much of the curriculum as possible?
- Do any of the staff have specialist training linked to your child's needs?
- Are there any other children in the school with similar Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND) to those of your child? If so, has their experience been successful?
- How many students attend the school and how many classes are in each year group?
- What is the average number of students per class?
- Are all areas of the school accessible to your child? Are any adaptations required (wheelchair access, ramps, wide doors etc)?
- How will staff be informed about your child's needs?
- How will school ensure that your child's views and wishes on how best to support them are heard?
- Will your child be supported by the same people? What happens if your child's teacher or teaching assistant is absent?
- If your child needs help with things like collecting lunch at lunchtime or changing for PE, how will the school provide this help?

- Do the classes change for every lesson? If so, does your child need help getting from one to another? What can the school offer if they do?
- Does your child require any therapy e.g. physiotherapy? If so, how would this be managed?
- Does your child require medical support? If so, how would this be managed?
- What support or activities are available during break times and lunch times?
- How does the school support students to make friends?
- What are the homework expectations?
- What about pastoral care? Who can your child talk to if they have a problem?
- What are the access arrangements for exams?
- Do parents/carers have open access to school staff, or do you need to make appointments?
- How will the school communicate with you?
- What extra-curricular activities are offered and what support is put in place for students to access them?
- How will your child travel to and from school?
- Ask for a copy of the school prospectus to see the school policies such as SEND, Antbullying, Behaviour & Discipline, Uniform, Homework etc.
- How will the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) of the new school liaise with the SENCO of your child's current school?
- Will the new school continue to build on the current Individual Educational Plan/targets?
- If your child currently has Teaching Assistant (TA) support, how will the new school ensure that TA support is in place when your child starts the new school?
- How will the move to the new school be planned? Is there a Transition Plan in place? (This could include visits to the school, meetings with members of staff that will be working with your child, meetings with the SENCo, a photo book to help your child become familiar with the new environment, a map and timetable, a buddy programme etc.)
- Will your child be invited to visit the school before they start?

What to do after the school visit

Once you have visited a school, it is important to reflect on the experience and whether the answers to your questions made you feel like it was the right environment for your child. If you are happy with the experience and the answers you received, then it may be the right choice for your child.

If you were not satisfied with the visit, you can arrange to visit the school again or meet with school staff to discuss any outstanding concerns. However, this could also indicate that this is not the right school for you and your child.

You should compare the visit to other schools you are interested in.

Other important things to consider

If your child has significant SEN, you may want to start planning the change of school well in advance.

You could:

- Visit schools two years before your child is due to transfer.
- Talk to other parents or pupils about the schools.
- Talk to professionals who work with your child about the schools.
- Talk to teachers in your child's present school and ask them for their views about what your child needs and which school might suit your child.
- Start to talk about secondary schools during review meetings in Year 5.
- If your child has an EHCP, the Year 5 Annual Review should begin to look ahead to secondary school.
- At the review in Year 6 the SENCo from the secondary school should come to the meeting so they have a chance to find out what support your child might need.

What to do if your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

If your child has an EHCP, then transitioning to a new school will be managed by your Local Authority's SEND Team.

Once you have visited all the schools you are considering, you should discuss your preferences and concerns with your Casework Officer. They may be able to guide you in your decision making. If you require transport assistance, it is important to discuss this with them as access to school transport can be very limited and you may not be eligible for it.

If your child has an EHCP and is going through a phase transfer, you need to contact the Hounslow SEND Team and tell them of your preferred school. There are two phase transfer deadlines in the year. For school age phase transfers, this must be completed by 15th February in the previous academic year. For post-16 phase transfers, this must be completed by 31st March in the previous academic year. They will then find out whether the school you requested is suitable for your child's needs through the EHCP consultation process.