

Mainstream Core Standards

Guide for parents



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NHS
Kent and Medway

Children and their families are at the centre of the work of schools. All schools put provision in place for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) taking in to account their individual needs.

This guide is for parents and carers. It explains the purpose of the Mainstream Core Standards and provides a summary of the guidance given to schools by the Local Area (Education, Local Authority and Health) about how they can make sure that they are doing everything they can to meet the needs of their pupils with SEND. If you would like to find out more, page references to the Mainstream Core Standards document are provided throughout this guide.

The Mainstream Core Standards document explains what schools (this includes academies and free schools) must do to support children and young people with SEND so that they are included in all aspects of school life (or are as included as they wish to be), make progress and are happy in school.

The document has been co-produced with parents, children and young people, schools, specialist teachers, educational psychologists, colleagues from health and the local authority.

Schools have varying levels of experience in supporting pupils with particular SEND and so may need support from the Local Area in putting the provision described in the document in place. This support is described later in this guide.

It may be helpful to know that usually a child or young person with SEND will not need all of the provision described or listed as helpful for pupils with similar needs in the Mainstream Core Standards. Each child or young person is an individual and their package of support may include strategies, interventions and resources from across the document (Sections 1 and 2). Schools may also use approaches that are not described in the document.

If your child has SEND (or you think they may have), or you have concerns or questions about the provision in place for your child, you should contact the school's SENCO.

Section One:

Expectations of all schools

This section outlines what schools are expected to do to meet the needs of all children and young people with SEND. It explains how your child's school provides for all children. For example, the classroom approaches suggested are part of how teachers usually work to make sure they meet the needs of all the children or young people in their classrooms.

Schools must put provision (the right curriculum and support) in place for children and young people with SEND and they must take account of their individual needs. Children and young people don't need a formal diagnosis for this support to be put into place.



Legal duties of schools in regard to Special Educational Needs and Disability

Schools have clear duties to support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities under the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2015 (the "Code").

Schools must take notice the Code. This means that they should do what it says or be able to explain why they have not done this and what they have done instead.

The law is underpinned by the principle that where a parent of a child with SEN, or a young person with SEN, wants a place in a mainstream setting, this must not be denied it on the basis that mainstream education is unsuitable, or that their needs or disabilities are too great or complex.

Mainstream schools must make sure that children or young people with SEND can take part in the activities of the school together with children or young people who do not have special educational needs (section 35 of the Children and Families Act 2014).

The 'Best Endeavours' Duty

One of the key duties is for the school to use their 'best endeavours' to support children and young people with SEN. Using best endeavours means doing everything they can to meet the child or young person's SEN.

The best endeavours duty requires schools to consider getting specialist help for children and young people, such as a speech and language therapist or educational psychologist.

These duties apply to all children and young people with SEND whether they have an EHC plan or not and whether they have any particular diagnosis or not.

The Local Area works with schools to support them to provide the educational provision that children and young people with SEND need.

Schools work in partnership with children, young people and their families to make sure they are meeting their duties. This means that schools work with families and their children when making decisions about SEND provision, taking account of their views and wishes. Schools will provide information about individual pupil's needs, provision and progress to parents in a timely manner

Guidance to schools on the expectations for working with children and young people, their families and carers (page 5)

The Code gives schools clear instructions about working with parents, carers, children and young people.

- Schools will communicate directly with parents and carers both formally and informally, as well as directly through the children and young people themselves.
- Families will be given the appropriate support and signposted to further information including the Local Offer.
- Schools, children young people and their parents will work together to support the learning journey and identify aspirations, plan how to meet those goals, and review progress towards those goals.

Guidance to schools on the expectations for Pastoral support (page 7)

All children and young people have a right to feel safe and valued. Pastoral support is the provision the school makes for the physical, social and emotional welfare of their pupils. In order to make sure that their pupils with SEND receive effective pastoral support schools will:

- Recognise and respond to the need for pastoral support for children and young people with SEND, bearing in mind the individual's social and emotional needs.
- Make sure that children and young people with SEND feel safe and valued by knowing that they can approach staff when they need to and that their opinions and concerns are valued.
- Actively help children and young people to develop their resilience and emotional wellbeing.
- Make sure that all children and young people are included in school life and the wider community.
- Staff with the required assessor qualifications make sure that reasonable examination arrangements (access arrangements) for tests and national tests and public examinations are put in place.

Guidance to schools on the expectations for how assessment should take place (page 8)

Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what your child knows, understands and can do, to inform how your child's future provision is planned and delivered. In doing this schools:

- Meet regularly with parents (and where appropriate children and young people) to look at how the support that has been put in place for their child has been working (is the child or young person making progress in learning, with their social skills and emotionally) and plan what to do next.
- Regularly review the support provided to see if something extra or different is needed or if the support should remain unchanged? This is called the Assess, Plan, Do and Review cycle and is used to make sure that pupils with SEND are making progress.
- Make sure that formative assessment and feedback are a feature of lessons and are evident in marking and assessment policy.
- Use a wide range of assessment strategies and tools to make sure that staff working with your child have a thorough understanding of the whole child or young person.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to evaluate their own performance. Self-assessment is routinely used to set individual targets.

Guidance to schools on teaching and learning approaches for children and young people with SEND (page 9)

Schools use a range of teaching strategies, including demonstrations, instruction and presentations, to activity and group work. These are all designed to develop children and young people's independent learning skills alongside their social and communication skills. In doing so:

- Schools are aware of the additional needs of children and young people, their barriers to learning and their inclusion in school. They understand how these needs can affect their pupils as individuals and know how to respond to them. They ask advice from more specialist colleagues when necessary.
- Teachers adapt their teaching and curriculum to cater for different learning needs and styles for example, teaching pupils as take part of small group or provide individual help when needed.

- Schools teach strategies so that pupils with SEND can work as independently as possible.
- Teachers make sure that their pupils have opportunities to work in a variety of ways, e.g. independently, with support, with other children in small groups.

Guidance on schools about managing the physical and sensory environment (page 11)

Schools can be busy places and can be daunting for any pupil, especially for some children with SEND. To support pupils with SEND to be as independent as possible schools:

- Make sure that buildings and outside areas are adapted to meet the needs of children and young people. The physical accessibility of the whole school is assessed. Every school publishes an accessibility plan on their website that sets out how accessibility around the school will be improved.
- Make reasonable adjustments that take into account to the needs of individual pupils and plans for those with physical and sensory needs that may be admitted to the school in the future.
- Provide extra-curricular activities and educational visits are planned to fully include pupils with SEND including those with sensory and physical disabilities.
- Regularly ask for the views of children and young people with physical and sensory needs, listen and use these views when planning adaptations.
- Make sure that all staff are aware of sensory needs and how these can affect children and young people in school.

Guidance to school on providing resources for children and young people with SEND (page 12)

Schools will make sure that:

- Resources are within easy reach of pupils so they can be as independent as possible.
- Children and young people can easily get the equipment they need e.g. writing slopes, pencil grips, wobble cushions, fidget toys and ear defenders.
- Resources are kept in clear and uncluttered spaces, labelled using text and images.
- Resources and equipment for all subjects are adapted so that pupils who need them can work as independently as possible.
- ICT is used to support alternatives to written work and to support independent learning when needed.

Guidance to schools on developing staff skills and providing training (page 13)

In order to deliver the highest quality provision for your child, schools have ongoing programmes of support and development for their staff. This includes:

- Teachers carefully planning the work of support staff, such as teaching assistants, so that their support of your child develop skills, make good progress and can become increasingly independent.

- A comprehensive staff training plan (Continuing Professional Development) to make sure that all staff have a good understanding of the needs of children and young people with SEND and know how to support them effectively.
- Staff working together with other schools and professionals to get the advice and support they may need to meet the needs of their pupils with SEND.

Guidance to schools on how to support children and young people at points of transition, change and transfer to the next stage of their education (page 14)

Schools provide support to children and young people through all the transitions, events and changes that can happen in their lives. For example:

- moving around the setting
- preparing for weekends and the start of holidays and beginning of term
- moving from lesson to lesson
- changing from structured to unstructured times
- moving from break to lesson times
- moving from one activity to the next within a lesson
- changes of staff- permanent and temporary
- special events: visitors, visits, celebrations
- life events: birth of a sibling, change in parenting arrangements, e.g. change in parents' relationship status, loss and bereavement or contact visits
- puberty.

Section Two:

Additional support

Some children and young people with SEND will require more support than most of their peers. This section explains what schools do to provide this support – this is in addition to the support described in Section One.

Schools provide this support from their own resources or from the resources ordinarily available in their area, e.g. the Local Inclusion Forum Team resource, Health or Social Care services. More information about these resources and other sources of support available to learners and their families is available on the Local Offer website.

Usually, when a child or young person is receiving this additional support, they will have an identified special educational need or disability or be presenting with characteristics that fall under one of the four broad areas of need set out in SEND Code of Practice 2015.

The four broad areas of need are:

- **Communication and interaction (split into Autism and Speech, Language and Communication needs)**
- **Cognition and learning**
- **Social, emotional and mental health difficulties**
- **Sensory and/or physical needs (split into visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disability, and multi-sensory impairment).**

Some children and young people may have needs across more than one of these areas of need so schools will use a range of approaches.

Equally some children and young people have identified SEND that falls in one area of need may not present with all the needs and difficulties described in the guidance document and so the school would not be using all of strategies, approaches and interventions listed.

The Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycle and The Graduated Approach

Each pupil's support (provision) will be made up of a range of strategies and interventions. Schools will work with you to plan the support. The support will be looked at with you regularly to see how it's working and whether it needs to be changed. This is called the Assess, Plan, Do, Review Cycle. Provision and support put in place often does not stay the same over time. During this process, sometimes it will become clear that more support will need to be put in place to make sure that they can make progress and be included in all school activities. This is called The Graduated Approach.

It's important to remember that this support is based on the need of the child or young person; there is no need for a formal diagnosis to be made before extra support is put in place.

The Mainstream Core Standards document explains to schools how children and young people can be affected by their needs in school and what school staff might see so they can better recognise when a pupil requires additional support. It then explains what teachers and other school staff can do to help across all aspects of school life.

The guidance includes the voice of children and young people with a range of needs about how they sometimes feel in school.

There is full guidance about each identified need:

- Autism - page 19
- Speech, language and communication needs – page 25
- Cognition and learning needs – page 30
- Social, emotional and mental health needs - page 33
- Physical disability – page 39
- Hearing impairment – page 42
- Multi-sensory impairment – page 45
- Visual impairment – page 48

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