

Guidance Associated with Admissions to West Sussex Mainstream Schools for Pupils with EHCPs

Introduction

This guidance aims to help families, schools, early years settings, colleges, voluntary sector organisations that support families and other professionals understand the process for admissions to mainstream school for pupils with EHCPs.

Schools in West Sussex are a key part of the services and provision for children and young people with SEND and play an important role in supporting delivery of [West Sussex SEND and Inclusion Strategy \(2019–2024\)](#).

The majority of children/young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will be able to attend their local mainstream school where they will receive the support they need to do well. The range and level/type of needs that can ordinarily be expected to be supported within a mainstream setting can be found in the [Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice Guide](#).

Some schools develop their own internal provision to support the additional needs of children and young people. Schools include information on this type of provision in their SEND Information Report which can be found on their website.

Some children/young people will need an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to help make the provision they need and support them to achieve the outcomes we want them to achieve.

This guidance is about the admissions process to mainstream schools, there is similar guidance for our Special Support Centres and our Special Schools also available on the Local Offer.

Principles Underlying Placement Decisions

The principles and processes associated with deciding on suitable placements for children and young people with EHCPs are set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the associated [SEN Code of Practice](#).

It is particularly important to draw your attention to the following section:

'If a parent of a child, or young person, wants that child or young person to attend a mainstream setting, the LA can only refuse if a mainstream placement would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, **and** there are no reasonable steps the LA could take to avoid this' (section 33 Children and Families Act 2014).

Many children/young people with SEND will have a range of needs, and all schools, must make reasonable adjustments to meet the full range of needs of the child/young person in line with the Equality Act 2010.

The Consideration and Admissions Process

The WSCC Special Educational Needs Assessment Team (SENAT) are responsible for agreeing placements for children and young people they maintain an EHCP for.

Parent / carer's or a child/young person can make a request for a particular nursery, school or post-16 institution, and WSCC **must** comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHC plan unless:

- it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or
- the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others or
- it would be an inefficient use of resources.

The Consultation

Where a parent/carer or young person makes a preference for a West Sussex maintained mainstream school or academy the West Sussex SEN Assessment Team will always consult with that setting.

Alongside this consultation, SENAT will also consider the suitability of the preferred setting and, as a result, they may consult with other settings they consider may also be appropriate.

SENAT will send the draft or Final EHCP and associated documents to the governing body, principal or proprietor of the school or college. If the school/setting is in another local authority area, that Local Authority **must** be consulted too.

The school/setting has 15 days to respond, and their views will be considered carefully before deciding whether to name it in the child or young person's EHC plan. The setting must consider the child/young person's needs and required provision in their response to the consultation. They must take into account the SEND Code of Practice when providing their response.

This may include schools considering whether they can meet the child/young person's needs and make suitable provision as described in the EHCP. This should include considering what reasonable adjustments could be made to meet their needs.

SENAT will consider all responses received and make the final decision on placement.

As this process differs depending on the current situation for the child/young person the SEN Assessment Team will keep individual families informed regarding progress.

Other Things to Consider

All West Sussex mainstream schools have access to the same resources, support and guidance to assist them in meeting the needs of learners with SEN in their school.

You can learn more about this ordinarily available offer and support services on the [Local Offer Tools for Schools](#) website.

This means if the mainstream school a parent chooses is not their nearest mainstream school the Local Authority may not be required assist with transport even if the school is over the statutory walking distance.

This is because it is possible there is a nearer school with the same available resources and access to support that could meet the child/young person's needs. SEN Transport is only available where a child attends their nearest suitable school.

The SEN Assessment Team will need to consider whether there is nearer mainstream school that could meet the child/young person's needs if a mainstream school which is some distance from their home is chosen. The team will keep the parent informed regarding this consideration and process.

You can use the following search tool to [find your nearest mainstream school](#).

Post 16 Provision

The same principles listed above apply to pupils above statutory school age with EHCPs. Local college provision is also able to support a range of needs and the same process of consultation and consideration of suitability will take place.