

FAQ'S: How do I decide which is the best school for my child with SEN?

This question applies whether you have a child starting school at 5, transferring to secondary school or when expressing a preference for a placement in an Education Health and Care Plan.

All children are different, so are all schools. The best way to decide which school will suit your child and meet their needs is to visit a range of schools to get a clearer picture of what is available. In the first instance, **visit the school's websites** and decide which are most likely to meet your child's needs by looking at the SEND Policy, the Ethos of the school and take into account your child's preference, if possible. Once you have a short list **make contact with the school and arrange a visit**. If you have a child with an EHCP you can inform the Local Authority that you will be visiting the school and request that they consult with the school beforehand– this ensures the school has had sight of your child's EHCP before your visit.

SENDIASS's leaflet provides questions you might like to ask during your visit. It helps if you ask the same questions at each school. Choose the questions you feel are most relevant for your child and situation. You could draw a grid and make a note of the answers, even give them scores out of 5, so you can remember each school's answers when you get home. Also **take notes about the feel of the school**, the environment, how welcoming the staff were and whether you could see your child being part of the school.

It is also helpful to **talk to other parents** who live locally; perhaps there is a support group for parents of children with SEN in your area. Information about schools can very quickly go out of date, so it is good to talk to parents who have children in those schools currently.

If you are deciding which school to name in your child's Education Health and Care Plan, the discussions you had when writing their EHCP with professionals, who know your child well, may give you some pointers as to the school which can best meet your child's needs. **Most children stay in the same local mainstream school they attended before they had the EHC Plan.**

You can **ring SENDIASS** to talk things through. Should your child require a specialist placement and you are not aware of such schools in your local area it is useful to **ask your Assessment and Reviewing Officer** which school's the Local Authority would consider consulting with. You can also contact SENDIASS for a list of specialist schools. We hear from parents with children who have a wide range of SEN and are in different schools all across the county.



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