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The local SENDIASS, working in partnership with children and young people with SEND and their parents

Choosing A Secondary School for Children with an Education, Health Care (EHC) plan

This information sheet will give you,

- Basic information on the law when choosing a secondary school
- Information on how to apply for a secondary school
- Some questions that you might want to ask and/or points to consider when deciding on the secondary school you would prefer for your child to go to.

How to apply for a secondary school and the law:

If your child has an Education Health Care(EHC)plan, **you do not fill in an application form** on the Wandsworth Council website. Instead the Local Authority(LA) -your child's EHC Co-ordinator in the Special Needs Assessment Section (SNAS) will contact the school/s you are interested in, by sending them a copy your child's EHC plan with up-to-date reports about your child's SEND.

Secondary phase transfer(Children moving from primary to secondary school):

If your child is due to go through secondary phase transfer (moving to Year 7 from primary school) the Local Authority(LA) **must** follow certain steps which includes looking at your child's EHC plan to make sure their needs and the support they require for secondary school, is included in the plan. This will need to happen during an annual review of their EHC plan.

The Steps the LA follows:

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- The LA reviews your child's EHC plan - to consider if there are any amendments(changes) that need to be made to the plan, to reflect their needs and the support required at secondary school, including long term outcomes.
- The LA then considers updates to the EHC plan and then sends you a proposed amended EHC plan (with changes) to look through and give your views on.
- Your child's EHC Co-ordinator will then let you know when your deadline is for you to tell them in which school/s you are interested. You can put forward one or more schools, there is no legal limit. **We would advise that you only put down school/s that you would want your child to go to.** The EHC Co-ordinator will then consult with the school/s (*government approved school/s) in which you have expressed an interest.
- By the 15th of February of the year your child starts secondary school, the LA **must** send you a copy of the Final Amended EHC plan with the name of the school they will be attending for Year 7.
- Your child's current school, new secondary school will plan their transition into year 7 with you.

If your child already attends a secondary school and you want to change their school.

If you want to change your child's secondary school which they are already attending and is named in their EHC plan, you will need to speak to the school and the LA(their EHC Co-ordinator in the SNAS team) about this first. **We would advise that if you want to request a change of school, then you should do this during the annual review of your child's EHC plan.** For information about what happens, if the LA agrees to change the name of the secondary school named in your child's EHC plan - please read our Annual Review Information sheet by clicking on our website link: wiass.org.uk.

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Deciding on and visiting school/s

You have the right to request the following types of secondary schools(*government approved school's) to be named in your child's EHC Plan.
(Please note: The school does not have to be a Wandsworth school)

- A maintained school or nursery (mainstream or special school). These are schools that are funded by the Local Authority (LA)
- An Academy or free school (mainstream or special) These are schools that are funded by the Secretary of State (Government)
- A non-maintained special school. These are charitable foundations and “not for profit” schools.
- A Section 41 school. These are independent schools or specialist colleges that have been approved by the Secretary of State (Government)

The LA **must** consult the above schools if you ask them to, which means they **must** send your child's EHC plan to the school for a view on meeting your child's needs.

The LA **must** name one of the above schools unless it can prove one of the following:

- 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
-Use of resources

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Independent Schools (that are not non-maintained or Section 41 schools):

You can ask the LA to consider (this is not a right) a request for an independent school that is not a non-maintained or Section 41 school. If you request for the LA to consult with an independent school, **please ensure you have a confirmed offer of a place first.**

Choosing a mainstream or special school:

Most children and young people are educated in a mainstream school. If you want your child to continue to or attend a mainstream school, the LA **must** not disagree on the basis that mainstream is unsuitable, or that your child's needs or disabilities are too great or complex.

This means 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.

For a list of mainstream Wandsworth and Out Borough primary schools please click on the Choose a Wandsworth Secondary School booklet https://wandsworth.gov.uk/media/9381/choose_a_wandsworth_secondary_school.pdf

For more information about your rights about a mainstream school please follow the link below to the IPSEA website: [The right to a mainstream education | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#)

Special Schools

You also have the right to ask for a special school too.

You can find a list of special schools(in and outside of Wandsworth) and accessible schools(mainstream) by clicking on our website link: wiass.org.uk

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Types of Schools

Mainstream Schools:	Schools which provide an education for all children including those with SEN and a disability.
Special Schools	Schools that provide an education for children with SEND. Children will usually need an EHC plan to access this support.
Maintained (state) Schools	Schools that are funded by the LA (community, foundation, and voluntary aided schools). These can be mainstream or special schools.
Academies/Free Schools	Schools which are state-funded independent schools. These are set up by sponsors from business, faith, or voluntary groups in partnership with the Department for Education (DfE). They receive money directly from the Government but are not maintained by LA.
SEN units/resource bases	These are mainly attached to mainstream schools and usually provide support for children with certain types of SEN. Children will usually need an EHC plan to access this support.
Independent Schools:	Non-maintained schools. Fee-paying schools that are not funded by LA or Government. Some are run by charities (and therefore, "not for profit") whereas some are private "for-profit" owners. These are charitable foundations and are "not for profit." These types of schools will admit children with or without EHC Plans.

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Checklist

Deciding on and visiting secondary schools:

Visiting a primary school is usually the best way to find out if it's the right one for your child. We have put a checklist of questions that you may want to consider where relevant before, during and after visiting schools.

What type of school would you like your child to go to?

Travel to on their own or near where you live?	Notes
With their friends or other children they know from their primary school?	
The same school their sibling/s attend(brother/sister)	
Build on their interests/strengths(dance, sports, drama, IT)?	

Before visiting schools Planning your visit

Make a list of schools you want to know more about. -School's Disability, behaviour, bullying,	
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<p>administering medicines, equal opportunities policies which should be on the school's website Ofsted information on SEN www.ofsted.gov.uk Will your child want to visit with you? Or you may want to visit on</p>	
<p>Read the -SEN policy or Special Educational Needs (SEN) Information Report. All maintained, academies and free schools must publish information on their website about how they support children with SEN in their school.</p>	
<p>Read the school's Disability, behaviour, bullying, administering medicines, equal opportunities policies, which should be on the school's website</p>	
<p>Read the school's latest Ofsted report</p>	

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<p>Will your child want to visit with you? Or you may want to visit on your own and if you like the school, visit again with your child.</p>	
<p>Do you want someone else to visit with you (for example, a relative or a friend)?</p>	
<p>Do you want a guided tour of the school or a meeting with the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO)/Inclusion Manager? (The SENCO is responsible for organising SEN provision for children in the school and liaising with parents about their children's SEN)</p>	

Your child

<p>Are there questions your child wants to ask about the schools?</p>	
<p>Your child's strengths</p>	

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<p>How will the school build on these?</p>	
<p>What does your child enjoy at school? Traveling: To school/home What is the distance of the school from your house? Will your child be able to walk to school or use public transport on their own or with friends? Will they need *travel assistance from the council?</p>	
<p>Your child's needs. What support will your child need in school? You could ask everyone who is working/advising about your child's education, what kind of support they feel they will need at secondary school</p>	
<p>Traveling to school and home What is the distance of the school from your house?</p>	

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Will your child be able to walk to school or use public transport on their own or with friends?

Will they need *travel assistance from the council?
For more information about travel assistance, please read our Information sheet on Transport Support.

The Visit (Highlight Key Areas on this sheet that you want to observe and/or ask about during the school visit)

Class and school environment:

Were the school corridors and classrooms calm?

How were the children supported to move around school?

What were the acoustics (sound quality) like?

- How noisy was the school/classes?

Was the school accessible for your child's physical needs? (e.g. . easy

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wheelchair access, lifts, wide doors, ramps)	
Size of the classrooms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Were there space on/between tables, space for small group activities or a quieter area?	
Was the school/classroom space and equipment clearly organised?	
Is there a space for small group work(e.g. Social skills groups)	
Was the main entrance (Reception area) and all exits secure?	
Did you see visuals/pictures to support children's understanding?	

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<p>For example, visual timetables, now or next boards?</p>	
<p>How big is the school? Is it easy for children to move around the school?</p>	
<p>What size is the playground?</p>	
<p>Are there quiet/calming areas in the school? For example, a sensory room?</p>	

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SEN provision

<p>Are there other children who have similar needs to your child?</p>	
<p>What specialist SEN approaches do the school use?</p> <p>What expertise does the school already have in meeting children's SEND (e.g. Hearing or visual needs, Autism (ASD), Attention Deficit & Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia)?</p>	
<p>How does the school work with support services (e.g., Wandsworth ASD Advisory Service, Literacy & Numeracy Support Service)?</p>	

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Are there other professionals based at or coming into school? (e.g. Speech and Language therapist, Occupational therapist, Educational Psychologist) How do they work with the school?	
What additional SEN provision(support) does the school already offer? e.g. social skills groups, nurture groups, learning mentors, play therapy?	
Does the school have a buddy/mentoring system/Learning mentor?	
What training have school staff received on SEND?	
What teaching methods and strategies are used to help children's learning in class?	

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How does the school differentiate the work to support children within class?	
Does the school use small group or individual teaching already?	
Will your child miss certain lessons for specific SEN interventions/support?	
Does the school offer GCSEs or alternatives to GCSEs?	
How do Teaching/Learning Assistants support children in school and class? Are they subject	

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<p>related(Numeracy/Literacy) and/or do they support specific children?</p>	
<p>Will there be other school staff will be involved in supporting your child? How do the teaching assistant and subject tutors work together?</p>	
<p>How will the school go about making adjustments that your child will require, i.e., movement breaks, assembly, P.E, leave 5 minutes before end of lesson for transition)?</p>	
<p>Will your child be assessed when they start at school? What assessments are used for children with SEN(i.e., reading, writing and numeracy)? How will the school review your child's progress over the school year?</p>	

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What would happen if your child were not making enough progress?	
What support is available for tests and exams?	
Anything else	

School organisation

What time does school start and finish? Is there a breakfast club? Are there any after school clubs (e.g. homework, sports, dance, art)	
How many children are there in school? How many children per class/subject?	

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Do they all use the same playground? Does the have an upper and lower school?	
How long are the lessons? What subjects are compulsory (they must do?) What foreign languages are studied?	
What supervision (adult support) is there at lunchtime/break-time? Can children have packed lunches?	
How will the school include your child on school trips?	
Anything else?	

Communication between Staff

How does the Senco oversee your child's SEN provision in school?	
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<p>How will all staff be informed about your child's SEN, outcomes, and provision? (e.g. sharing SEN information from their nursery school/class, EHC plan, pupil profile/passport, discussion with SENCO?)</p>	
<p>Who advises teaching staff on the best ways to teach your child?</p> <p>How will teaching staff class teacher/teaching assistant feedback on your child's SEN progress/needs?</p>	
<p>Anything else?</p>	

Communication between Staff and Children

<p>Were the children happy and/or interested in what they are doing? How does the school ensure that all children are welcome, and differences are respected?</p>	
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Were you and your child made to feel welcome?	
How did the staff and children engage with each other?	

Supporting children's social emotional wellbeing and behaviour

How does the school ensure that all children are welcome, and differences are respected?	
How does the school adapt its discipline policy to take a child's SEN into account?	
How is positive behaviour praised?	

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How does the behaviour lead and Senco work together to support behaviour?	
Are all staff informed about potential triggers for difficult behaviour?	
How does the school manage difficult behaviour?	
What space or room is available for a child to have time out, dysregulate?	
Anything else?	

Home School Communication

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How will the school communicate relevant information and encourage you to communicate with them?	
Who is the best person for you to communicate with about your child's SEN, learning and behaviour (SENCO, head of year, form tutor)?	
When can you talk/get in contact with form tutor/subject teacher and other staff working with your child?	
How are parents involved in their child's learning?	
How will you be told if there are concerns about your child's progress?	
Does the school hold parent coffee mornings or workshops?	

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After the visit:

Did you feel welcome at the school?	
Would your child be happy in this school?	
Were you able to get answers to all your questions?	
If you still have questions then you can contact the school again	

If you would like to talk to somebody about choosing a school and/or have any questions about this sheet,

Please ring/email WIASS on:

- Our Helpline number: 020 8871 8065 (24 hours answering machine) Or
- Email us: wiass@wandsworth.gov.uk