



## **Choosing A Secondary School for Children with Special Educational needs (SEN) without 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 points to consider when deciding on the secondary school you would prefer your child to go to.

### **How to apply for a secondary school and the law:**

There are two ways to apply for secondary school if your child has SEN and **does not have an** EHC plan:

- **Applying for a secondary school place when your child is moving from a primary school to a secondary school (Year 7)** or
- **In year transfer** (when your child is already attending or has a place at a secondary school)

### **Applying for a secondary school place for Year 7**

You will need to complete an application form via Wandsworth Pupil Services, please click on the link below

[Secondary school admissions - Wandsworth Borough Council](#)

All mainstream secondary schools (\*maintained (state), academies and free schools) have their own admission criteria which you can find in Wandsworth Secondary School brochure, by clicking on the link below:

[Choose a Wandsworth Secondary School.](#)

**The above brochure also explains following:**

- How you can apply for a place
- How to apply for a mainstream school in neighbouring boroughs
- The deadline to complete the application form by
- When you will be told of the school place offered to your child(usually 1<sup>st</sup> March of the year your child will be going Secondary school)

**In year Admissions(if you are new into the borough, country or want to your child to change school):**

If you require a place in a Wandsworth secondary after the school year has begun(for example, you have moved into the borough from another borough or country), you will need to complete 'in-year' admission for secondary school" form below.

[In-year admission to a secondary school application form](#)

**Please Note:** You should also contact the Pupil Services section to find out the availability of places in the schools listed in the [Choose a Wandsworth Secondary School](#) brochure.

**If your child already has a school place in a Wandsworth school:**

If your child already has a place in a Wandsworth school but you want them to transfer to a different school in Wandsworth, you should discuss this with the Headteacher of their current school before making an application.

**Please Note:** If you decide to change the school, you should first find out if there are places available at other local schools by contacting the schools or the Council's Pupil Services team.

You will also need to obtain an 'in-year' transfer application form from your child's current school. **The form has a section which must be completed by the school.**

**The Law:**

**It is unlawful for an admission authority (LA or school governing body) to refuse admission if a child has SEN, but has no EHC plan because:**

- Of a child's challenging behaviour (except in very limited circumstances), or

- It believes child requires an EHC Needs assessment or requires additional support and/or EHC plan
- Or a child is not toilet trained

**More information on School Admissions:**

For information on the law and school admission for children without EHC plans please follow the link to the Child law advice website below

[School admissions \(childlawadvice.org.uk\)](http://childlawadvice.org.uk)

**\*Types of schools:**

<b>Mainstream Schools:</b>	Schools which provide an education for all children including those with SEN and a disability.
<b>Maintained (state) Schools</b>	Schools that are funded by the local authority (LA) which includes community, foundation, and voluntary aided schools
<b>Academies/Free Schools</b>	Schools which are state-funded independent schools. They 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
<b>Independent Schools:</b>	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
<b>Non maintained schools</b>	These are charitable foundations and are "not for profit". These types of schools will admit children with or without EHC Plans

**Deciding on and visiting primary 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.

**Checklist**

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

<b>Would they like to go to a school they could?</b>	<b>Your Notes</b>
Travel to on their own or near where you live?	
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**

<b>Planning your visit</b>	<b>Your Notes</b>
Make a list of schools you want to know more about.	
Look at the schools' admission criteria  Will your child meet the school's Admissions Criteria?	
Read the -SEN policy or Special Educational Needs (SEN) Information Report. All maintained, academies and free schools <b>must</b> publish information on	

<p>their website about how they support children with SEN in their school.</p> <p>-School's Disability, behaviour, bullying, administering medicines, equal opportunities policies which should be on the school's website Ofsted information on SEN <a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a></p>	
<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? <b>(The SENCO is responsible for organising SEN provision for children in the school and liaising with parents about their children's SEN)</b></p>	
<p>You can contact the school to arrange a visit during a school open day/evening or to make an appointment to visit</p>	

**Your child**

<p><b>Are there questions your child wants to ask about the schools?</b></p>	<p><b>Your Notes</b></p>
<p><b>Your child's strengths</b></p> <p>How will the school build on these?</p>	
<p><b>What does your child enjoy at school?</b></p> <p>Will the school offer this to them?</p>	
<p><b>Your child's needs</b></p> <p>What support will your child need in school?</p>	

<p>You could ask everyone who is working/advising about your child's education, what kind of support they feel they will need at primary school.</p> <p>If your child has had an assessment of their needs and report is available, you may want to take this to share with the Senco/s at the school you are visiting.</p>	
<p><b>Traveling: Home to school and back</b></p> <p>What is the distance to the school from your house?</p> <p>Will your child be able to walk to school or use public transport on their own or with friends?</p> <p>Will you need *travel assistance from the council?  <b>* For more information about travel assistance, please contact WIASS</b></p>	

**The Visit**

**(Highlight Key Areas on this sheet, that you want to observe and ask about during the school visit )**

<p><b>Class and school environment</b></p>	
<p>Were the school corridors and classrooms calm - how were the children supported to move around school?</p> <p>What were the acoustics (sound quality) like?</p> <p>How noisy was the school/classes?</p>	
<p>Size of the classrooms– was there space on/between tables, space for small group activities or quieter area?</p>	
<p>Was the school/classroom space and equipment clearly organised?</p>	

Was the school accessible for your child's physical needs? (e.g. easy wheelchair access, lifts, wide doors, ramps)	
Was there a place for movement breaks, specific small groups?(e.g. social skills) and movement at break-times?	
Was the main entrance (Reception area) and all exits secure?	
Were there visuals that would help your child (e.g. symbols, now and next boards, visual timetables)?	
The size of the school – distance between areas, easy layout/	
Where did children have lunch or their breaktime?  What was the size of hall or playground?  Where there quiet areas and use of calming/sensory rooms?	
Anything else?	
<b>SEN Provision(support) at School</b> (this information must be available on the school's SEN Information Report-which can be found on their website)	<b>Your Notes</b>
Where there other children who have similar needs to your child?  How are school supporting them?  What specialist SEN approaches do the school use?	
What expertise does the school already have in meeting children's SEND (e.g. Hearing impairment (HI) Visual Impairment (VI), Autism	

<p>(ASD), Attention Deficit &amp; Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia)?</p>	
<p>How does the school work with support services (e.g., Wandsworth ASD Advisory Service, Literacy &amp; Numeracy Support Service), to meet the needs of children with SEND?</p>	
<p>Are there other professionals based at or coming into school? (e.g. Speech and Language therapist, Occupational therapist, Educational Psychologist)</p> <p>How do they work with the school?</p>	
<p>What additional SEN provision(support) does school already offer? e.g. social skills groups, nurture groups, learning mentors, play therapy?</p>	
<p>Did the school have a buddy/mentoring system/Learning mentor?</p>	
<p>What training have school staff received on SEND?</p>	
<p>What teaching methods and strategies are used to help children's learning in class?</p>	
<p>How does the school differentiate the work to support children within class?</p>	
<p>Does the school use small group or individual teaching?</p> <p>Will your child miss certain lessons for specific SEN interventions/support?</p>	
<p>Does the school offer GCSEs or alternatives to GCSEs?</p>	



<p>How do Teaching/Learning Assistants support children in school and class?</p> <p>Are they subject 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?</p> <p>How do the teaching assistant and subject tutors work together?</p>	
<p>How do the school go about adjustments 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?</p> <p>What assessments are used for children with SEN(i.e., reading, writing and numeracy)?</p>	
<p>How will the school 'assess, plan, do, review' your child's needs and progress?</p> <p>What would happen if your child is not making enough progress?</p>	
<p>What support is available for tests and exams?</p>	
<p>Anything else?</p>	

<b>School organisation</b>	
<p>What time does school start and finish?</p>	

Is there a breakfast club?	
Are there any after school clubs (e.g. homework, sports, dance, art)	
How many children per class/subject?	
How many children are there in school?  Do they go into the same playground? Do they have an upper and lower school?	
What is the timetable like? How long are the lessons?  How many classrooms/school areas do the students move between?	
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?	

<b>Communication between Staff</b>	<b>Your Notes</b>
How does the Senco oversee your child's SEN provision in school?	
How will all staff be informed about your child's SEN, outcomes, and provision? (e.g. sharing SEN information from their nursery school/class, Pupil profile/passport, discussion with SENCO?)	
Who advises teaching staff on the best ways to teach your child?	
How will teaching staff class teacher/teaching assistant feedback on your child's SEN progress/needs?	
Anything else?	
<b>Communication between Staff and Children</b>	<b>Your Notes</b>
Were the children happy and/or interested in what they are doing?	
Were you and your made to feel welcome?	
How did the staff and children engage with each other?	
<b>Supporting children's social emotional wellbeing and behaviour</b>	
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?	
How does the behaviour lead and Senco work together to support behaviour?	
Are all staff talked about potential triggers for difficult behaviour?  What plans are in place if behaviour happens?	
How does the school manage difficult behaviour?	
What space or room is available for a child to have time out or to calm down?	
Anything else?	

<b>Home School Communication</b>	<b>Your Notes</b>
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?	

After the visit:	Your Notes
Did you feel welcome at the school?	
Would your child be happy in this school?	
Did you get answers to all your questions? – if you still have questions then you can contact the school again.	

If you want to talk to somebody about choosing a school and/or have any questions about this sheet, please ring/email **WIASS** on:

- **Call back Service: 020 8871 8065 (24 hours answering message)**  
Or
- **Email us: [wiaass@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:wiaass@wandsworth.gov.uk)**