

West Berkshire Council's expectations of schools concerning their arrangements for children with SEN and Disabilities (SEND)

SEN & Disabled Children's Team / School Improvement Service



This document fulfils the requirement under the Children and Families Act 2014 for Local Authorities to set out their expectations of schools concerning their arrangements for children with SEN & Disabilities. Parents and schools have been involved in the production of this document.



Contents

Section	page
1. Introduction	3
2. Vision	4
3. Involvement of parents/carers and children and young people	4
4. Governance / roles and responsibilities	5
5. Identification of SEND	5
6. Assess, plan, do, review cycle	6
7. Monitoring progress and attainment	7
8. Working with support services	7
9. Resources	8
10. Staff expertise	8
11. Access and equality	9
12. Provision of information for parents	9
13. Admissions and exclusions	9
14. Transitions	10
15. Children with medical and personal care needs	10

1. Introduction

Local Authorities are required under the Children and Families Act to set out their expectations of schools concerning their arrangements for children with SEN and Disabilities (SEND).

Schools are required to have regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25 in particular Chapter 6, when making arrangements for children with SEND.

This document does not attempt to replicate the contents of the Code of Practice and needs to be read alongside it. What it attempts to set out are the particular expectations which West Berkshire has of its maintained schools, free schools and academies and of all other schools where West Berkshire children are placed. Reference is made to procedures and documents which are specific to West Berkshire.

This document has been developed with the involvement of parents and schools.

West Berkshire Council expects the following of schools in respect of children with SEN & Disabilities (SEND)

2. Vision

Schools should:

- 2.1 Have a vision for the sort of environment and provision they wish to offer for children with SEND, which is clearly set out in their SEN Policy / SEN Information Report / Local Offer.
- 2.2 Offer a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- 2.3 Strive for continuous improvement of their arrangements for children with SEND.

3. Involvement of Parents / Carers and Children / Young People

Schools should:

- 3.1 Ensure parents and children are fully involved in discussions about identification and assessment of the child's needs, provision to be made and reviews.
- 3.2 Listen carefully to the views of parents and children about the needs of the child and the provision required.
- 3.3 Use person centred approaches when working with children with SEND and their families.
- 3.4 Ensure the views of the child are always sought and represented, using a variety of methods to capture these to suit the individual child.
- 3.5 Ensure the child or young person attends review meetings, at least for part of the meeting, with appropriate preparation and support.
- 3.6 Ensure all reports / documents about a child with SEND capture the voice of the child and the family.
- 3.7 Ensure parents have a good understanding of the SEND processes which will be followed.
- 3.8 Enable parents to support their child's learning and to help them achieve the outcomes which have been identified for them.
- 3.9 Work closely and sensitively with parents to maintain good working relationships.
- 3.10 If it becomes necessary, make use of disagreement resolution and mediation services.
- 3.11 Ensure parents are clear about how to provide feedback to the school, including compliments and complaints.
- 3.12 Involve parents and children in the planning of SEND provision in the school and evaluating its effectiveness.

4. Governance / Roles & responsibilities

Schools should:

- 4.1 Designate a Governor to oversee the school's SEND arrangements and act as a champion for SEND within the school.
- 4.2 Designate a SENCO and allow adequate time and support for the SENCO to fulfill the role effectively, including administrative support.
- 4.3 Ensure the SENCO is a qualified teacher.
- 4.4 Ensure a newly appointed SENCO achieves the National Award in SEN Coordination within 3 years of appointment unless they have previously been the SENCO at that or any other relevant school for a period of more than 12 months.
- 4.5 Strongly consider making the SENCO part of the school's senior leadership team if this is not already the case.
- 4.6 Involve the SENCO in senior leadership decisions relating to SEND.
- 4.7 Ensure there is regular liaison between the Headteacher, the SENCO and the SEN Governor.
- 4.8 Ensure there is a clear understanding of the respective roles of the Head, SEN Governor, SENCO and class or subject teacher (See Special Educational Needs Information Report and SEN Policy Checklist for guidance on roles).
- 4.9 Ensure class and subject teachers take responsibility for children with SEND and there is not over reliance on the SENCO or teaching assistants.

5. Identification of SEND

Schools should:

- 5.1 Ensure high quality teaching is in place for all children.
- 5.2 Ensure that the first response to less than expected progress is high quality teaching targeted at areas of weakness.
- 5.3 Not assume that under achievement is necessarily caused by a SEND; consider all factors influencing the child's performance, including the quality and appropriateness of teaching.
- 5.4 Not assume that achievement in line with age related expectations necessarily means there is no SEND; consider the child's potential.
- 5.5 Listen carefully to and address any concerns parents may raise about their child possibly having SEND.
- 5.6 Ensure parents are fully involved when the school first identifies a concern that a child may have SEND and arrange to meet with parents for an early conversation.
- 5.7 Discuss and explain the SEND identification process with parents, avoiding jargon and acronyms; the West Berkshire SEN Support flowchart may be helpful for this purpose.
- 5.8 Discuss any possible referrals to external agencies with parents and obtain their consent.
- 5.9 Ensure that conversations with parents are carried out sensitively, in an appropriate environment and that confidentiality is respected.
- 5.10 Refer to external services and agencies if necessary as part of the identification process.
- 5.11 Ensure the child's views are considered when identifying needs.
- 5.12 Ensure parents are involved in decisions about whether or not a child should be identified as having SEND.

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- 5.13 Ensure parents are formally notified if SEND is identified (although this should never come as a surprise as parents should have been involved in the identification process).
 - 5.14 Have clear systems for identifying children with SEND, having regard to the West Berkshire guidance on identification of SEND.
 - 5.15 Have a system for recording children with SEND, generally known as the SEND Register.
 - 5.16 Record SEND categories of need (primary need and additional needs) using the published West Berkshire SEND descriptors.
 - 5.17 Monitor the SEND Register to identify any patterns in the identification of SEND and use this data to consider the quality of teaching.

6. Assess, plan, do, review cycle

Schools should:

- 6.1 Follow the “assess, plan, do, review” cycle as set out in SEND Code of Practice.
- 6.2 Use a planning format, preferably the West Berkshire Support And Achievement Plan (SAP), to record outcomes to be achieved, strategies and timescales for action and review.
- 6.3 Involve the child and their parents in the development of the Support and Achievement Plan (or equivalent document).
- 6.4 Use a range of interventions and strategies which are up to date, effective and evidence based.
- 6.5 Refer as appropriate to external services and agencies and implement advice given through the Support and Achievement Plan (or equivalent document).
- 6.6 Ensure that planning for children with SEND is outcome focused.
- 6.7 Ensure that planning is based on high expectations and that targets are sufficiently challenging.
- 6.8 Ensure that assessment and planning is holistic, having regard to the six domains in the West Berkshire SAP and Education, Health and Care planning processes: Development and Learning; Communication; Behaviour and Emotions; Health; Everyday Life; Family and Community.
- 6.9 Use best endeavours to involve and obtain information and advice from other agencies to inform assessment and planning.
- 6.10 Ensure that all staff working directly with the child are involved in and familiar with the child’s plan, the outcomes to be achieved and strategies to be used.
- 6.11 Ensure that all staff who may come in to contact with the child are briefed on relevant aspects of the plan, subject to parental consent and maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
- 6.12 Ensure that the class or subject teacher retains responsibility for the child’s programme, with support from the SENCO and effective deployment of support staff.
- 6.13 Ensure that planning for children promotes independence and that support from staff, including teaching assistants, is given in a way which fosters independence as far as possible.
- 6.14 Meet with parents at least three times per year to review the Support and Achievement Plan and to develop and agree the new SAP (or equivalent document).
- 6.15 Ensure that key staff are available to take part in SAP review meetings, including school staff who are working directly with the child.

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- 6.16 Ensure that strategies have been implemented in a sufficiently sustained and consistent way to achieve progress; however, if progress is clearly not being achieved, be prepared to change strategies and approaches.
 - 6.17 Produce a record of SAP review meetings which should include actions to be taken and share this with parents and professionals, together with the updated SAP.
 - 6.18 Ensure that there is a consistent approach for children with SEND and those with other needs, such as Looked After Children and those who attract Pupil Premium, and that there is good communication between staff who have responsibilities for different vulnerable groups.

7. Monitoring progress and attainment

Schools should:

- 7.1 Have high expectations of children with SEND and set targets which are sufficiently challenging and allow children to achieve their academic potential.
- 7.2 Ensure children are making good progress in relation to their potential, their own previous progress and taking in to account the achievements and progress of children who do not have SEN.
- 7.3 Monitor data on the attainment and progress of children with SEND.
- 7.4 Be aware of the gap in attainment between children with SEND and without SEND and have plans in place, including targets, to narrow the gap.
- 7.5 Use national data to compare the SEND gap at school level with the national SEND gap.
- 7.6 Be aware of additional vulnerabilities which may impact on a child's performance including social deprivation (Free School Meals eligibility), being a Looked After Child, having English as an additional language, or factors which may have persistently disrupted a child's education including being part of a service family.
- 7.7 Monitor the attendance of children with SEND, compare with attendance of non SEND children and identify any patterns.
- 7.8 Have in place systems to measure the impact of non academic interventions, such as ELSA, sensory diet etc.
- 7.9 Ensure that data on progress of children with SEND is used to inform strategic decisions about the school's provision for SEND and interventions which are used.
- 7.10 Ensure that interventions are tracked and aim for double acceleration ratio gain during their duration.

8. Working with support services

Schools should:

- 8.1 Negotiate with the support service the most efficient and effective ways of working within a framework of time allocation, where this exists (eg. Educational Psychology Service).
- 8.2 Provide copies of the child's Support and Achievement Plan and any other relevant records, subject to parental consent.
- 8.3 Obtain parental consent prior to any individual work with a child.
- 8.4 Agree with the professional providing support the type of record that is required, who will write and own the record and suitable time lines for its completion.
- 8.5 Make time available for key staff and parents to consult with the professional providing support.
- 8.6 Provide appropriate accommodation when a child or parent needs to be seen individually.
- 8.7 Inform the relevant service as soon as possible if it is necessary to change an appointment, eg. because the child is absent

9. Resources

Schools should:

- 9.1 Make use of the school's notional SEN budget, and the wider school budget, to make high quality appropriate provision for children with SEND.
- 9.2 Consider the total resources available including resources targeted at particular groups such as pupil premium grant.
- 9.3 Provide additional support for children with SEND up to £6,000 (the current nationally prescribed threshold).
- 9.4 Be aware of the cost of interventions for individuals or groups of children with SEND, preferably through use of costed provision maps.
- 9.5 Ensure that "top up" funding for children with Statements/ EHC Plans is used for that pupil's additional support and not to fund the school's SEN infrastructure, eg. costs of the SENCO.
- 9.6 Keep under review the school's resources and materials for SEN and invest in keeping them up to date.
- 9.7 Consider financial contingency arrangements for in year admissions of children with SEND.
- 9.8 Ensure staff are aware of the full range of SEND support services available to schools (many of which are free to West Berkshire maintained schools and academies) and that optimum use is made of services available.

It is noted that special schools, resourced units and Pupil Referral Units have a different funding methodology from mainstream school SEN funding.

10. Staff Expertise

Schools should:

- 10.1 Keep under review general staff expertise in SEND and promote professional development of all staff in this area.
- 10.2 Ensure the SENCO undertakes accredited training where this is a requirement (see 3 above) and support and encourage SENCOs to complete accredited training even where this is not a requirement.
- 10.3 Ensure the SENCO receives ongoing professional development to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.
- 10.4 Support and encourage the SENCO to attend West Berkshire SENCO Network Meetings and any Local Authority SEND related briefings.
- 10.5 Ensure teachers and teaching assistants undertake SEND training as appropriate for their roles.
- 10.6 Ensure that where specific interventions are being delivered, staff have the necessary training and expertise to deliver them effectively.
- 10.7 Where necessary, source training which is tailored to the specific needs of individual children.
- 10.8 Address any training needs which may arise from particular patterns in identification of SEN within the school.

11. Access and Equality

Schools should:

- 11.1 Ensure children with SEND have full access to the curriculum through appropriate differentiation.
- 11.2 Ensure children with SEND can access activities with other children including after school clubs and trips. Carry out risk assessments where necessary to ensure children with SEND can participate safely in activities.
- 11.3 Make reasonable adjustments for children with SEND to enable them to access the curriculum and the wider activities of the school.
- 11.4 Plan to improve access to the curriculum, information and the school's physical environment and set this out in an Accessibility Plan.
- 11.5 Provide aids and equipment to enable children with SEND to access the curriculum.
- 11.6 Ensure school policies and procedures do not discriminate against children with SEND. Avoid blanket policies which could be discriminatory; be prepared to be flexible in application of policies and procedures to take specific SEND needs into account.
- 11.7 Ensure policies and procedures promote equality and prevent discrimination against children and adults with disabilities.
- 11.8 Identify and tackle any SEND related bullying.
- 11.9 Ensure children with SEND can access accredited courses at an appropriate level; secondary schools should provide alternatives for children with SEND who cannot access GCSEs.
- 11.10 Publish equality information and objectives and keep under review.

12. Provision of Information for parents

Schools should:

- 12.1 Publish a SEN Policy/ SEN Information Report and provide information on the school's SEND Local Offer for the Local Authority's Local Offer website. (These three sets of information can be incorporated into one document, using the West Berkshire Local Offer proforma and SEN Information Report and SEN Policy Checklists).
- 12.2 Keep this information up to date and respond to requests from the Local Authority to update the school's online Local Offer submission.
- 12.3 Encourage parents to use the Local Offer and help to facilitate access to it where possible.
- 12.4 Ensure parents are informed about the SEN and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), the Independent Supporter Service and the Parent Forum.

13. Admissions and exclusions

Schools should:

- 13.1 Operate as an inclusive school for all children in the local area and be open to accommodating a wide range of needs.
- 13.2 Be welcoming and supportive to parents who may wish to place their disabled child at the school.
- 13.3 Accept all children with SEND who wish to have a place, unless there is no place available in the school, or unless the child has a Statement or EHC Plan which specifies a specialist placement (Note that schools may be asked to accept a child with a Statement or EHC Plan even when there is no place available, although the Local Authority will always consult the school and take into account their representations in these circumstances).

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- 13.4 When considering exclusion, ensure that the child's SEND has been taken in to consideration and that the exclusion would not be discriminatory
 - 13.5 Ensure that the school's behaviour policy is appropriately differentiated / used flexibly to take in to account a child's SEND.
 - 13.6 Avoid exclusions of children with SEND where possible; consider what else could be done to address the difficulties.
 - 13.7 Consult with parents and the Local Authority about calling an early annual review if there is a concern about the school's ability to meet the needs of a child with a Statement or EHC Plan.

14. Transitions

Schools should:

- 14.1 Have arrangements for well planned transition in to school, between classes, between key stages, to the next school or placement or to FE/HE/ employment.
- 14.2 Ensure that transition arrangements for children are tailored to the specific needs of the individual.
- 14.3 Both seek and share data to facilitate good transition in to or out of school.
- 14.4 Provide independent careers guidance for young people with SEND in Years 8 to 13.
- 14.5 Give specific consideration to transition to adulthood for young people in Year 9 and above, when reviewing SAPs, Statements or EHC Plans.
- 14.6 Monitor outcomes for children with SEND when they leave school in terms of how many go in to education, training or employment, and how many do not, and use this data to inform strategic planning of the school's SEND provision.
- 14.7 Work with Social Care and Health (where they are involved) to help support transition from Children's to Adults' Social Care and from paediatric to adults' health services.
- 14.8 Work collaboratively with other agencies which are involved in supporting transition, such as Adviza.

15. Children with medical and personal care needs

Schools should:

- 15.1 Follow DfE Guidance, "Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions" September 2014.
- 15.2 Have a policy on supporting children with medical needs, (as required by the above guidance), including arrangements for the administration of medication.
- 15.3 Consider, with parents and healthcare professionals, whether a child may require an individual healthcare plan (for example, in cases where emergency intervention may be needed or for children with particularly complex needs).
- 15.4 Provide support for children who are unable to attend school because of illness, including work to do at home, if appropriate (depending on the nature of the child's illness).
- 15.5 Meet the personal care needs of children where those needs are associated with the child's SEN or disability.
- 15.6 Include responsibilities for personal and medical care (such as administration of medication) in job descriptions for teaching assistants, so that the school always has staff available who are willing to undertake these duties.