

This leaflet aims to help you decide which school you would prefer your child to attend.

Where can my child go to school?

A school may not refuse to admit your child because they have a special educational need or disability. Most children with special educational needs are able to attend a mainstream school. It is the school's responsibility to make sure they understand how they can help your child to learn and provide appropriate support.

If a child does not make the same progress as other children of their age, even with additional support, the local authority may decide to make a statement of special educational need. This describes a child's needs and all the extra help they require. Most children with statements continue to attend mainstream school but some may need more specialist support which is provided in a designated special provision (DSP) or in a special school.

What sort of help might school provide?

- a teaching support assistant or extra teacher who can provide small group or 1:1 support
- work that is differentiated
- help with recording and completing homework
- making sure that pupils have access to named adults or peer mentors
- consultation with a specialist teacher, educational psychologist or medical professional

How do I decide?

It is important that you have as much information as possible to help you make the decision about which school you feel is right for your child. You will probably want to visit schools that you think might be suitable and may wish to take your child with you.

You might find it helpful to consider the following points before you go:

- Do you want to visit the school when the children are in class?
- Would you like to meet the special needs co-ordinator?
- What information could you take that would help the school to understand your child's needs?
- Would you like to read some information about the school before you go? For example:
 - the school prospectus
 - the Special Educational Needs Policy
 - the Behaviour Policy
 - the latest OFSTED inspection report
 - the Equal Opportunities Policy.

What Questions should I ask?

You should try to find out as much information as possible about how the school would help your child and how they would involve you.

- Does the school have experience of helping children with similar difficulties to those of my child?
- How will school arrange the sort of support my child needs?

- How does school make sure that all the staff, who will be working with my child, understand his or her special educational needs?
- How many children would be in my child's class or tutor group?
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- How will I be involved in my child's education?
- How does the school ensure that there is good communication between home and school?
- How are children supervised at break time?
- How does the school make sure that all pupils are able to take part in school trips and other extra-curricular activities?
- If my child needs medication, who would be responsible for storing and administering it?
- How is bullying dealt with?
- How are pupils able to have their views heard?

Some things to look out for:

- When you arrive are you made to feel welcome?
- Are the classrooms bright and interesting?
- Do the children seem happy and busy?
- Is pupils' work displayed attractively?
- Is everyone treated with respect?
- Does the school look well cared for and are you confident that it is a safe place for your child?
- Are the toilets accessible to your child?
- Would your child be able to access the whole school?
- What does your child think about the school?

Finally

It is important to keep an open mind and consider several possibilities whilst trying to decide on a school. Talk to people who know your child before making up your mind.

They won't be able to tell you which school to choose but they will be able to talk about the things that are likely to help your child to learn and be happy. Or, if it would help you to discuss matters with someone independent of the situation, contact SN-IP, Northamptonshire's Parent Partnership Service.

If you would like help, please contact:

 **SN-IP** www.snipnorthants.org

Special Needs - Informed Parents

Springfield, Cliftonville,
Northampton, NN1 5BE
Tel: 01604 636111

or Fairlawn Centre, Spring Gardens
Wellingborough, NN8 2AA
Tel: 01933 271673

Fax: 01604 630283

e-mail: contact@snipnorthants.org

This information can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.