



Parental Guide to the 'Schools White Paper (Every Child Achieving and Thriving) and the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Reform consultation (Putting Children and Young People First)

This information is based directly on the official GOV.UK documents.

The White Paper and the SEND Reform aim to fix a system that families say is confusing, inconsistent, and too often fails children. The reforms promise clear national standards, stronger accountability, earlier intervention, and a simpler, fairer process for SEND support from nursery to college. The government acknowledges that the current system is failing children, parents, schools, and local authorities. These reforms are designed to reduce conflict between families and services; to ensure that children get the right support at the right time and, to create a national SEND system that is fair, transparent, and accountable.

The Schools White Paper is trying to achieve:

- A broad, modern curriculum for all children
- A move away from the 'one size-fits-all' model
- Higher expectations for attendance, behaviour, and literacy
- A more consistent national approach to school standards

SEND Reform

The proposed SEND Reforms sit alongside the White Paper. The SEND Reform consultation identified several core problems. These problems included the following fundamental issues in relation to SEND:

1. Children with SEND and their parents had inconsistent levels of support depending upon their postcode
2. Assessments for children were slow with many families waiting years for an assessment, a diagnosis and relevant treatments
3. Weak accountability for local authorities
4. Overstretched specialist services with many children not getting the support required

SEND Reform focuses specifically on children with SEND, including those:

- Receiving SEND support in mainstream settings
- Attending special schools
- With EHCPs (Educational and Health Care Plan).

The proposed solutions which are outlined in the SEND Reform are:

1. **There will a set of National SEND Standards:** clear expectations for what support must be provided, by whom, and when
2. **Stronger legal duties** for schools, colleges, early years settings, local authorities and health services
3. **Earlier identification of need and early intervention** to prevent needs escalating
4. A more **transparent EHCP process**, with digital plans and consistent templates
5. **Better training for teachers and SENDCos**
6. **Real accountability** when standards are not met

What do these SEND Reforms mean for your child.

1. If your child receives SEND support in a mainstream setting. You should see:
 - Clearer information about what support they are entitled to
 - More consistent provision across schools
 - Earlier help without needing an EHCP
2. If your child is in a special school.
 - Expand specialist school places
 - Improved coordination between health, education, and social care
 - Ensure that families are listened to in placement decisions
3. If you child has an EHCP
 - A more streamlined, digital process
 - Clearer timelines
 - Stronger accountability for local authorities
 - More consistent decision-making nationally

What every parent can expect from the reforms:

1. **Clarity** – you will know what support your child should receive
2. **Consistency** – standards will be the same across England
3. **Accountability** – services must meet legal duties
4. **Simplicity** – processes will be easier to navigate

If you want to find out more about, SEND Reforms, please go to one of the following:

1. **GOV.UK** – the official source. If you want a direct breakdown, search 'DfE SEND reforms'
2. **Gloucestershire's Local SEND Offer**
3. **SENDIASS** (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Information, Advice & Support Service) – every local area has a SENDIASS team offering free, impartial advice
4. **Parent-Carer Forums**

5. National SEND charities which include:

- **IPSEA** – legal rights, EHCP guidance, tribunal support
- **Contact** – parent-friendly SEND reform explainers
- **NASEN** – updates on SEND practice in schools
- **Council for Disabled Children**