

SEN FUNDING Guide

This guide provides information about funding for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream schools. This includes academies and free schools.



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WHAT IS SEN FUNDING FOR?

Schools must use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people’s SEN.

Schools should use some of their budget to buy resources and make provision for children who need additional help. This can take many forms. For example, children with SEN might need:

- Some changes to the curriculum
- Special equipment or teaching materials
- The use of additional information technology
- Small group work
- Support in the classroom
- A base to work in or have quiet time

WHERE DOES FUNDING FOR SEN COME FROM?

All mainstream schools have money for SEN (Special Educational Needs) support and resources. Schools can decide how to spend this money. This is called delegated funding. This part of the school's income is sometimes called the notional SEN budget.

Funding for SEN provision is from three elements:

Element 1

All schools get money for each pupil at the school. This is called the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) and it is part of schools' delegated funding. Some of this money is to make general SEN provision. This might, for example, include the cost of providing the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and some other resources.

The Local Authority provides Element 1 funding for the schools it is responsible for. The local Schools Forum agrees the formula that determines how much money the school gets for each pupil. The Education Funding Agency provides Element 1 funding for academies and free schools.

Element 2

Element 2 funding is to provide SEN support that is additional to or different from the support that most other children get. SEN support is also for children who used to have help through School Action and School Action Plus.

The Local Authority provides Element 2 funding for schools it is responsible for. The local Schools Forum agrees the formula that determines the amount of money the school gets. The Education Funding Agency provides Element 2 funding for academies and free schools. Element 2 funding is also part of schools' delegated budget.

Government guidance says schools should provide up to the first £6,000 of additional or different support for those children who need it, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (or a Statement of Special Educational Need). This does not mean that the school will spend £6,000 on every child with SEN. Sometimes schools use funds to help groups of children. Some children will need less help – and some children may need more.

You can ask your school how it uses its SEN budget to support your child. The Local Authority also publishes a Local Offer that explains what type of resources this money might be spent on.

Element 3

Some children have such complex needs that the school may request some additional funding to 'top-up' Elements 1 and 2. The Local Authority is responsible for managing Element 3 funding (sometimes called the 'high needs block'), which can be used to make specific provision for an individual child or a group of children, if the school or academy can show there is an exceptional level needs. You can find details of how Element 3 funding is allocated in the Local Offer.

WHO MANAGES THE SCHOOL'S SEN RESOURCES?

School governors are responsible for the school's policy on SEN and how the resources are used. The headteacher and the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) ensure that the policy is put into practice. The SENCO organises support for individual children, but every teacher is responsible making sure that your child's SEN are met in the classroom.

The SEN Information Report on the school's website tells you more about the arrangements for SEN support and how to contact the SENCO.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT WHAT SUPPORT AND RESOURCES MY CHILD IS GETTING?

The first step is to talk with your child's teacher or the SENCO. This may be at a parents' evening, a support plan meeting or a review. You can ask for a written copy of any support plan in place for your child.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care plan (or Statement of Special Educational Need) it should set out the support and resources that are provided.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION, ADVICE OR SUPPORT?

Look for the SEN Information Report on the school website.

The Local Offer is the place to find out about services available locally and the arrangements that schools and others are expected to make for children and young people with SEN.

Contact Us

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) provides free impartial, confidential and accurate information, advice and support about education, health and social care for children, young people and their parents on matters relating to special educational needs and disability.

Contact your local SENDIASS to find out more about SEN Support in schools.

Visit our SENDIASS website: <https://www.kids.org.uk/sendiaass>