



## Choosing A Primary School for Children with an Education, Health Care (EHC) plan

This information sheet will give you,

- Basic information on the law when choosing a primary school
- Information on how to apply for a primary school
- Some questions that you might want to ask and points to consider when deciding on the primary school you would prefer your child to go to.

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

If your child has an Education Health Care (EHC) plan, you do not fill in an application form on the Wandsworth Council website. Instead your child's EHC co-ordinator in the Special Needs Assessment Section (SNAS) will contact the school you are interested in, by sending them a copy your child's EHC plan with up-to-date reports about their SEND.

Most children who have an EHC plan go to mainstream schools however you can also ask for a \*special school too.

### **Reception Transfer(children moving from nursery class/school to reception class)**

If your child is due to go through reception transfer, the LA **must** follow certain steps which includes looking at your child's EHC plan to make sure their needs and the support they require for primary school is included in the plan. This will need to happen during an annual review of their EHC plan.

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## The Steps the LA follows.

- Annual Review is held to consider if changes need to be made to EHC plan for reception year.
- LA updates the EHC plan, if agreed.
- The EHC Co-ordinator in the SEN team(SNAS) will let you know (usually from September) when your deadline is, to tell them which school/s you are interested in. You can put forward one or more school/s, there is no legal limit. **We advise that you only put down school/s that you would want your child to go to.**
  
- The EHC Co-ordinator consults the school/s (\*government approved school/s) that you have expressed an interest in.
- By the 15<sup>th</sup> of February of the year your child will be starting the reception year, the LA must send you a copy of the Final Amended EHC plan with the name of the school they will be attending for reception class.
- Your child's current school with the named early years provider/nursery school and you, then plan your child's transition into reception year.

## If your child already attends a primary school and you want to change their school.

If you would like to change your child's primary school, that they are already attending and is named in their EHC plan, you will need to speak to the school and the LA(their EHC Co-ordinator in the SNAS team) about this first.

We would advise that if you want to request a change of school, then to do this during the annual review of your child's EHC plan.

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For information about what happens if the LA agrees to change the name of the primary school named in your child's EHC plan -please read our page on Annual Reviews, by clicking on our website link: [wiass.org.uk](http://wiass.org.uk)

## Deciding on and visiting a school/s

### The Law:

You have the right to request the following types of primary schools(\*government approved school's) to be named in your child's EHC Plan.

**Please note:** The school does not have to be a Wandsworth school)

- A maintained school or nursery (**mainstream or special school**). These are schools that are funded by the Local Authority (LA)
- An Academy or free school (**mainstream or special**) These are schools that are funded by the Secretary of State (Government)
- A non-maintained special school. These are charitable foundations and “not for profit” schools.
- A Section 41 school. These are independent schools or specialist colleges that have been approved by the Secretary of State (Government)

The LA must consult the above schools if you ask them to - which means they **must** send your child's EHC plan to the school for a view on meeting your child's needs.

The LA **must** name one of the above schools unless it can prove one of the following:

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- It would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of your child or young person, or
- the attendance of your child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient  
-Education of others, or  
-Use of resources

## **Independent Schools** (that are not non-maintained or Section 41 schools):

You can ask the LA to consider **(this is not a right)** a request for an independent school that is **not** a non-maintained or Section 41 school. If you request the LA to consult an independent school, please ensure you have a **confirmed** offer of a place, first.

## **Mainstream and Special Schools:**

Most children and young people are educated in a mainstream school, if you want your child to continue to or attend a mainstream school, **the LA must not disagree on the basis that mainstream is unsuitable, or that your needs or disabilities are too great or complex.**

This means the LA can only refuse, if a mainstream placement would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, **and** there are no reasonable steps the LA could take to avoid this.

For a list of mainstream Wandsworth and out borough primary school please click on the [Choose a Wandsworth Primary School booklet](#).

For more information about your rights about a mainstream school please follow the link below to the IPSEA website:

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[The right to a mainstream education | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#)

### Special Schools:

You also have the right to ask for a special school too.

You can find a list of special schools(in and outside of Wandsworth) and accessible schools(**mainstream**) by clicking on the link to our website: [wiass.org.uk](http://wiass.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>	School's 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

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<b>SEN units/resource bases</b>	These are attached to mainstream schools and usually provide support for children with certain types of SEN (for example, autism). Children will usually need an EHC plan to access this support.
<b>Special Schools</b>	Schools that provide an education for children with SEN. Children would need an EHC Plan to go to one of these schools if it maintained or an academy or free school.
<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>	<p>These are charitable foundations and are “not for profit”.</p> <p>These types of schools will admit children with or without EHC Plans</p>



## 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?

Go to with their sibling(brother/sister)	
Your local school	

#### Before visiting schools

Planning your visit	Your Notes
Make a list of schools you want to know more about.	
Read the -SEN policy or Special Educational Needs (SEN) Information Report.	

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<p>All maintained, academies and free schools <b>must</b> publish information on 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

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

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What is the distance to the school from your house?

Will you be able to walk to school or need use public transport with your child?

Will you need \*travel assistance from the council?  
\* For more information about travel assistance, please contact **WIASS**

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## The Visit

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

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

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Was the school/classroom space and equipment clearly organised?	
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?	

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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)	
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 (ASD), Attention Deficit & Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia)?	
How does the schoolwork with support services (e.g., Wandsworth ASD Advisory Service, Literacy & Numeracy Support Service), to meet the needs of children with SEND?	

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<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?</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>	

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<p>Will your child miss certain lessons for specific SEN interventions/support?</p>	
<p>How do Teaching/Learning Assistants support children in school and class?</p> <p>Are they subject related(Numeracy/Literacy) or can they support specific children?</p> <p>Will there be other school staff will be involved in supporting your child?</p> <p>How do the class teachers and teaching assistants 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>	

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What assessments are used for children with SEN(i.e., reading, writing and numeracy)?	
How will the school 'assess, plan, do, review' your child's needs and progress?  What would happen if your child were not making enough progress?	
Anything else?	

<b>Moving into primary school</b>	<b>Your Notes</b>
How will the school get to know your child and prepare for their admission into reception class(will they have a staggered entry, i.e. build them up to full time over a couple of weeks?  Will staff come and visit them in their nursery class and or at home?	

<b>School organisation</b>	
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What time does school start and finish?	
Is there a breakfast club?	
Are there any after school clubs (e.g. homework, sports, dance, art)	
How many children per class?	
How many children are there in school? Do they go into the same playground at the same time/	
Do the children learn a foreign language or British Sign Language(BSL)?	
What supervision (adult support) is there at lunchtime/break-time?	
Can children have packed lunches or restrict the type of food they can bring in, i.e., nut free?	
How will the school include your child on school trips?	

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Anything else?	
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<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, EHC plan, 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?	

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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>	<b>Your Notes</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?	

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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>	
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? (Class teacher/SENCO?)	
When can you talk/get in contact with class teacher and other staff working with your child	

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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:  
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- Our Helpline Number: 020 8871 8065 (24 hours answering message)  
Or
- Email us: [wiaass@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:wiaass@wandsworth.gov.uk)

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