Special Educational Needs (SEN) At a glance

Information about Special Educational Needs (SEN) and what to do if you think your child has SEN.

What are Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a legal term. It describes the needs of a child who has a difficulty or disability which makes learning harder for them than for other children their age.

SEN covers a broad spectrum of difficulty or disability. Children may have wide-ranging or specific problems. Eg, a child might have difficulty with one area of learning, such as letters or numbers. Or they might have problems relating to other children, or to adults.

Having English as a second language is not considered by law to be a SEN.

What if I think my child has SEN?

You know your child better than anyone else, if your child attends a pre-school speak to their teacher or key worker. If your child is already in school (including nursery or pre school) talk to their teacher. Ask also to speak to the school's Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), who organises extra help for children with SEN.

Talk to the teacher/SENCO about:

why you think your child has SEN

whether your child learns at the same rate as other children their age

what the school can do to help

what you can do to help

What will the school do?

Schools are required by law to provide an education for all pupils, regardless of their ability or special needs. All schools should have a SEN/Inclusion policy. If the SENCO and your child's teacher agree that your child has SEN, the school will probably take a 'graduated approach' - this means 'step-by-step', as set out in the Code of Practice for SEN. They will offer your child extra support, with the possibility of more support if needed. Whatever the school decides to do, you have the right to be informed and for your views, and your child's views, to be taken into account.

You can find further information about SEN from your local Parent Partnership Service. In North Somerset this is: www.supportiveparents.org.uk