Additional support in schools in England

1. What are the education options?

State Schools

All children in England between the ages of 5 and 16 years are entitled to a free place at a state school. Sometimes called maintained schools, they are funded by their local authority (LA) or local council, or directly from the government. They include:

a) community schools
b) foundation schools and voluntary schools
c) academies and free schools
d) grammar schools (secondary age only)
e) some special schools

- **Mainstream Schools**

These provide education for pupils of a wide range of abilities. They may be community schools, foundation schools and voluntary schools, or academies and free schools

A very small number have a specialist "unit" which may provide extra support for children with physical disabilities.

- **Special schools**

These provide education only for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN); this can include physical disability.

- **'Section 41' Independent Special Schools**

These have been approved by the Secretary of State as schools which a parent or young person can request to be named in an EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan) – see 4 below.

Other Options

- **Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)**

This is where the local authority provides home tutoring.

- **Home Education**

Sometimes called 'home schooling', this is when parents teach their child at home, either full or part-time.

- **Independent (or Private) schools**

These charge fees and are not Government funded

Some have places specifically for children who have SEN. Some offer schemes to help pay all or part of the fees.

For more information: gov.uk/types-of-school

2. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

This teacher is responsible for assessing how much and what sort of extra support is needed by any child with SEND in their school. The SENCo then works with teachers and liaises with parents to make sure the support is put in place and is working.

3. SEN Support Plan

Children and young people with SEND have the right to extra support, whatever their educational setting.

An SEN Support Plan sets out what outcomes a child is expected to achieve, and what support is being put in place to get to them. The Plan should be based on an individual assessment of the child and parents should be fully involved in discussions.

Any child who can be supported by an SEN Support Plan has a legal right to attend a mainstream school – if this is what the family wants. Most children with SEN go to mainstream school.

The school should regularly check how well the Plan is working and make changes if necessary. They should meet with the parents at least three times a year to review progress and what the next steps will be. This should be in addition to the usual parents' evening meetings. The child's views should be included. The school should provide a progress report at least once a year.

If needed, the school can ask specialist support services (such as educational psychology or speech and language therapy) to carry out assessments and provide further advice and support. There may be a waiting list.

Schools may, or may not, be able to seek extra SEN funding from their Local Authority.

Independent schools, where parents pay fees, are not legally required to identify SEN or provide SEN support in the same way as a state school.

4. Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCPs)

Many, but not all, children who have SMA, need a lot of support at home and when out and about. They may need therapies from external specialists, or specialist equipment beyond what a mainstream school can provide. They may need an EHCP to support this.

How does a child get one?

Parents and / or the child's education provider can make a written application to the Local Authority for an EHCP Assessment. This can be at any stage during a child's education, including when they are at pre-school or nursery.

It is important to be as prepared as possible before requesting an EHCP assessment. See our booklet xxx for organisations that provide support and advice about the sort of evidence of additional needs that is helpful, and what to do when.

What happens next?

If the local authority agrees to assess a child, information is gathered from the people who know and support them. This is summarised in the assessment which will say if the local authority will issue an EHCP.

If the LA has agreed, an EHCP is drafted. If they do not agree, parents can appeal.

The charity **Contact** tells you more in their information sheet: **tinyurl.com/3xv972b7**

You can also read more on our website: **smauk.org.uk/kd1x**

It should not take more than 20 weeks from assessment to the date the EHCP is issued.

What sort of school can a child go to?

Children who have an EHCP may go to a state mainstream school or special school, an independent school, or be home-schooled.

Suitable schools are considered as part of the process. Parents may say what option they prefer when the plan is being drafted. The final decision about which school will depend on the child's needs, parents' preferences and the school's admissions criteria.

If the LA agree to an EHCP for a child, the school is named on the final plan.

How is an EHCP paid for?

An EHCP may or may not be linked with extra funding, depending on the local authority.

5. Individual Healthcare Plan

This must be agreed between the parents and the health professionals that support any child with health needs. When a child starts school, this should also include the school nurse and /or whoever has responsibility for First Aid and health.

Whether or not they have an EHCP, many children who have SMA will have health needs that need careful management and monitoring. This may be from early on or needs may develop later.

Your child's school will need to know about the current and possible impact your child's SMA may have – especially what the signs are that your child needs urgent medical attention and what to do in case of any emergency.

The plan may include, for example:

- who will give any medication
- what to do in an emergency
- any other special arrangements such as:
- the need for your child to use an accessible toilet
- assistance with any suctioning or non-invasive ventilation.

It is important that the plan is shared with, and understood by, all staff and that you make the school aware of any Emergency Healthcare Plan (see tab 11 smauk.org.uk/j60x) your child has.

6. Continuing Healthcare Plan

Continuing Care is a way of funding healthcare packages for babies, children and young people (from birth to 18 years old) with complex healthcare needs whose needs cannot be met by existing mainstream or specialist health services. This is free and not means tested.

Some children who have SMA may already receive this support at home. There will be a review to discuss whether this support can continue at school. If it is agreed, usually, the nurses who provide this care would come from the same agency the family are already working with. This will mean that either the child's current nurses would cover the extra hours, or others would be recruited by the same agency.

For more information see: **Tab 1 Continuing Healthcare packages for children with complex needs. (smauk.org.uk/51uw).**

7. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEPs) Plan

There must be an individual PEEP in place for every pupil who has mobility difficulties. It must describe their needs and how they will be managed in any building where they will be.

8. Reasonable Adjustments

If you choose a state-funded school and your child is allocated a place, by law the school will need to make "reasonable adjustments" for your child, including to the building.

"Reasonable" can be interpreted differently.

> ‘It is important to ask how willing the school seem to make necessary adaptations. If they seem negative, how important is it to you that your child goes to this school? Will you continue to have battles?’ **Parent.**

9. What else must a school do to support additional needs?

- ### SEN Information Report

All schools must have one of these. It explains such things as:

- The kinds of SEN the school is able to support
- How children’s needs are identified and assessed
- What support is offered
- How the curriculum is adapted

- ### SEN Policy

Every school should also have a policy which says how it supports disabled pupils to be included in school activities. Examples of what this must include are:

- The expertise and training of school staff and how other specialist expertise will be available.
- The support the school provides for improving emotional and social development and what it does to prevent bullying.
- How children with SEN are supported to access activities in the school that are available to pupils without SEN.

Accessibility Plan

This includes information about what the school is doing to make both the environment and the curriculum more accessible for disabled pupils. It may be included within the SEN Information Report.

Medical Needs Policy

All state-funded schools must make arrangements to support children with medical needs – and say what these are.

Behaviour Policy

All state-maintained schools must publish this on the school's website. This covers how the school encourages good behaviour and what happens if school rules are broken. It must also cover what the school does to prevent bullying.

Academies and Independent Schools must also have a behaviour and anti-bullying policy. There is no legal duty to publish it on the school's website, though this is good practice.

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