

## Special Educational Needs Transferring to Secondary School A guide for parents /carers

The move from Primary to Secondary school is significant for all children and their parents, who may wonder what will be best for their child, and how they will cope with the change. If your child has special educational needs or learning difficulties/disabilities (SEN/ LDD), those concerns can be even greater.

For more help and advice about choosing and applying to a secondary school, you can contact Wiltshire's Choice Advice Service at **ask**, or the **ask** Parent Partnership Service (formerly SENSS).

A Choice Adviser will be able to help you with the process of choosing and applying for a school place, if necessary, and will also have local knowledge of what individual schools have to offer.

My child has learning difficulties/disabilities (LDD) and currently has provision made at School Action or School Action Plus. Can I choose which secondary school I would like them to attend?

You have the same rights as other parents to name three schools in order of preference, at which you would like a place for your child. Each school has a designated area, a limited number of places, and its own admission criteria.

My child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Can I choose which secondary school I would like them to attend?

If your child has a statement you will not need to apply for a place, as the allocation of a school place is completed through the annual review process. You will still be able to research the options for your child and state your preference.

How do I find out more about schools?

If you have access to the internet, you can find useful information on Wiltshire Council's website. Click on main menu – schools and learning – schools and colleges – schools directory, for detailed information and links to individual schools.

You can **ask any school for a copy of their prospectus**, and this is often a good first step, along with attending open evenings and other special events at secondary schools. However, once you have narrowed down the choices, it is important to **arrange an actual visit to the school** or schools. Staff are quite used to showing parents the school facilities and discussing how the school can meet the needs of individual children.

How do I decide which school is best for my child?

The needs of most children with a Statement of SEN are met in mainstream schools. All non-selective schools are committed to meeting the needs of **all** children within

their local area. All schools have equal access to support for SEN, which can include outreach staff, specialist services and resources.

Since September 2008, all 27 non-selective secondary schools in Wiltshire have been funded to offer Enhanced Learning Provision. This means that they are able to provide appropriate support and intervention for pupils with complex learning and communication needs, who are at school action plus or have a statement of SEN. However, all schools are individual and vary in the way they organise and manage support for children with SEN. Listed below are some examples of additional **questions you may want to ask** when you are considering which school you would prefer for a child with SEN/LDD.

- How is support organised for children with special educational needs? Is it usually provided within the class?
- How does the school make sure that children with SEN are included in after school activities, trips, sports and residential opportunities?
- How do specialist SEN staff liaise with other teachers about individual children?
- how would the school plan for a successful transfer between schools for my child?
- What arrangements are in place for pastoral support?
- Are there likely to be any difficulties with physical access?
- Does the school have experience of helping children with similar needs to my child?
- How would the school plan for a success transfer between schools for my child?
- What will the school do to make sure that all staff know about my child's individual needs?
- What should I do if I have concerns about my child?
- How will I be involved in meetings to review my child's targets?

When you are arranging a visit to a school, you may want to **ask to see the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)** as they will be able to give the most detailed responses to the above questions.

You may also want to ask for written information such as the:

- Special Needs Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Accessibility policy
- School profile
- Latest OFSTED Report

After a visit it is useful to make a note of what you have seen and heard - you may need to refresh your memory weeks or months later.

If your child has a physical impairment which affects mobility, the design of the building and grounds can also be important in deciding whether a school is suitable for your child. Wiltshire Council's website offers information about the facilities and accessibility of maintained schools in Wiltshire. Click on main menu – schools and learning – schools and colleges – find a school – accessibility search.

How does the application/ placement process work?

If your child is at School Action/ School Action plus you will need to apply for a school place in the usual way. Details about how to do this can be found on the Wiltshire Council website. Click on main menu – schools and learning – schools and colleges - school admissions. Alternatively, you can phone Wiltshire Council 01225 713010.

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Need, this is what will happen:

- The move to secondary school will initially be discussed during the annual review in Year 5 (the Transfer Review)
- The Local Authority will consider recommendations and will consider which type of school would best meet the needs of your child
- You will receive a proposed statement, stating the type of school the local Authority consider best for your child. You will also be invited to comment on the proposed provision and tell the local authority which school you would prefer
- You will receive the final statement by 15<sup>th</sup> February, when your child is in year six. This will name the school where your child has a place.

If you would like to discuss the school placement offered in your child's statement, or if at any time you wish to discuss provision for your child, you should contact the assistant education officer (AEO) named on the letters you received from the Statutory SEN Service. The local authority is always happy to discuss individual pupils and whenever possible tries to reach agreement with parents. If you are not happy you do have the right to appeal. Details on how to do so are included in the letter which you received with the final statement and on the Wiltshire Council website.

Remember! You can also contact your Choice Adviser or the parent partnership Service (formerly known as SENSS in Wiltshire) at **ask**, at any time during this process.

My child has special transport needs. How can I find out if they are eligible for help?

The Statutory SEN Service is responsible for deciding if pupils with special educational needs are entitled to transport provision. Detailed information about eligibility for help with transport can be found on the Wiltshire Council website: **SEN Transport: A Guide for Parents and Carers**.

Once we have agreed upon a school, what will the primary and secondary schools do, to ensure a smooth transition for my child?

- Good practice guidelines have been published for schools, which aim to provide effective communication between primary and secondary schools, concerning children with SEN. This should mean that the secondary school will have up-to-date information about your child's learning needs well before they arrive in their new school, to ensure that appropriate provision can be put in place
- Additional transition arrangements (such as extra visits to the new school) may be in place at your child's school. Contact the SENCO at your child's primary school for details

- SENCOs in both schools will be used to supporting children through the transition process and will have a range of strategies in place to support individuals
- You may find it helpful to keep in contact with the SENCOs at both schools, who will also be liaising with each other.

For further information about schools, admissions or SEN in Wiltshire, visit the Wiltshire Council website at [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

To discuss provision for a child/ young person with a statement of SEN, please contact the Statutory SEN Service on 01225 718095.

For further information, support or advice contact a choice adviser (advice on the transfer to secondary school), or the Parent Partnership Service (other aspects of SEN)

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