



## PARENT LINK- INFORMATION SHEET no. 6

### CHOOSING A SCHOOL

#### **Admissions**

Parents have a right to state a preference for a school. The local education authority (LEA) at County Hall will then allocate a place for your child, taking into account your views, and their policy. For information on how it all works, contact the School Admissions Team on 01273 481000 and ask for a copy of 'Applying for a school for your child'. Or ring the Parent Link helpline on 01273 481172.

If your child has a 'statement' of SEN , or is in the process of statutory assessment, you should also talk to your SEN caseworker at County Hall on 01273 481000.

#### **Finding a school that suits your child**

- Visit at least 2 schools so that you have something to compare.
- Start with local schools, as you are more likely to get places in these.
- If the school does not already have all the things your child needs, they could probably be developed.
- Keep an open mind about your school preference until you have looked at everything and spoken to the professionals involved with your child.

## **Before you visit the school**

- Gut feelings are important, but you must be organised when looking at schools, especially if you have to give your reasons for wanting a particular school.
- Make a checklist of all the things that are important to you and your child. This will help you ask the right questions. (Use the checklist overleaf for suggestions)
- Arrange an appointment with the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). You may also like to meet the year head if it is a secondary school. Ask them to bring the school's SEN policy, governor's annual report on SEN, school prospectus and Bullying/behaviour policy to the meeting.
- You may want to look up the school's most recent OFSTED report on the internet
- Decide whether you want someone to go with you, eg a friend or someone from Parent Link.
- Root out any information about your child's special educational needs, eg their statement, educational psychology advice, recent Individual Education Plans etc.

## **Checklist (use this for ideas, or draw up your own)**

- How is SEN provision organised in the school (ask to see the school's SEN policy and the governor's annual report on SEN)
- What kind of help would your child receive?
- Depending on your child's needs ask about:
  - additional adult support (eg learning support assistant, what the class teacher and SENCO do)

- equipment/ adaptations/ materials
  - the way teaching would be organised, eg whole class, small groups, 1:1
  - SEN support services available to the school- eg therapists, education psychologist, literacy support , support from other schools
  - Medical/ personal hygiene support
- What is the school's behaviour policy? How does it apply to children with SEN. If your child has behaviour difficulties, how would they respond to this?
  - How does the school help the children to work and play well together. What support is there in the playground?
  - How does the school involve parents in school life? How will the school communicate with you about your child and his/her progress?
  - Are there any after school activities/ trips/ holidays, and how would your child with SEN access these?
  - If your child will need transport to school, ask for information on this

Other things to look at-

Do you feel welcome?

Do the children look comfortable?

If your child has any particular religious needs, would they be met?

Do the classrooms look like places where children can learn?

Does the school look under control?

Does the school celebrate different cultures/ religions?

Are the displays current and interesting and do they seem to include pupils of all abilities?

Do the staff seem interested in you and your child?

(Remember, your own experiences of school will affect the way you see the school. Try and put these feelings aside and look at the school from your child's perspective).

### **What happens next?**

Once you have completed an admissions form, the admissions department will allocate a space taking in to account your preference and also the rules on how children are placed (see admissions booklet for more detail).

### **What if you are unhappy with the school you are allocated?**

You have the right to appeal to an independent admissions panel who will consider your individual case.( see are Parentlink helpsheet for more details).

Parent Link can guide you through your decision and help communicate your views to the LEA. We may be able to visit schools with you or attend meetings. 01273 481172
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