

SEND Jargon Buster

SEND support comes with many abbreviations and specialist terms. This A to Z explains the ones you are most likely to hear, in plain English. If a word you have heard is not here, please ask your child's class teacher or our SENCo.

Term	What it means
AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)	Ways of communicating other than speech, such as signing, symbols, picture cards or communication devices.
ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)	A condition that affects attention, activity levels and impulse control.
Annual review	A meeting, held at least once a year, to review a child's EHCP with parents, the child, school and other professionals.
APDR (Assess, Plan, Do, Review)	The cycle schools use to plan support: find out what a child needs, plan support, put it in place, then check how well it is working. Also called the graduated approach.
ASC / ASD (Autism Spectrum Condition / Disorder)	Autism: a lifelong difference in how a person communicates, interacts with others and experiences the world.
CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)	NHS services that assess and support children and young people with mental health needs.
C&I (Communication and Interaction)	One of the four areas of SEND. It covers speech, language and communication needs, and autism.
C&L (Cognition and Learning)	One of the four areas of SEND. It covers difficulties with learning, including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.
Code of Practice	The SEND Code of Practice (2015): the government's statutory guidance that schools, councils and health services must follow.
DCD (Developmental Coordination Disorder) / Dyspraxia	A condition that affects physical coordination, movement and organisation.
Dyscalculia	A specific learning difficulty with understanding numbers and learning maths facts.
Dyslexia	A specific learning difficulty that mainly affects reading, spelling and processing written information.
EAL (English as an Additional Language)	A child whose first language is not English. EAL on its own is not a special educational need.
EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance)	When a child finds it very hard to attend school because of emotional distress, such as anxiety.
EHC needs assessment	A detailed assessment of a child's needs, carried out by the local authority. It may lead to an EHCP. Parents or the school can request one.

Term	What it means
EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)	A legal document for children with more complex needs. It sets out their needs, the outcomes they are working towards and the support they must receive.
ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)	A member of staff trained by educational psychologists to support children's emotional wellbeing through 1:1 or small-group sessions.
EP (Educational Psychologist)	A specialist who assesses how children learn and their wellbeing, and advises schools and families on support.
Exam access arrangements	Adjustments for tests, such as extra time, a reader or rest breaks, so that children can show what they know.
Graduated approach	See APDR.
HI (Hearing Impairment)	Hearing loss that affects a child's access to learning.
High-quality teaching (HQT)	The good, adaptive everyday teaching that every child receives. It is the first step in supporting children with SEND. Also called Wave 1 or universal provision.
Intervention	A planned programme of extra support, for a set time, to help a child make progress in a specific area.
LA (Local Authority)	The local council. It is responsible for EHC needs assessments, EHCPs and the Local Offer.
Local Offer	Information published by every local authority about the SEND services and support available in its area.
Mainstream school	A school that educates all children, including those with SEND, rather than a specialist setting.
MLD (Moderate Learning Difficulties)	General difficulties with learning that mean a child needs extra support across the curriculum.
Neurodiversity	The natural differences in how people's brains work. It often refers to autism, ADHD, dyslexia and similar conditions.
One-page profile / Pupil passport	A short summary, written with the child, of their strengths, needs and what helps them. We call them 'Learner Profiles' in our school.
OT (Occupational Therapist)	A specialist who helps children with everyday skills such as handwriting, dressing, coordination and sensory needs.
Parent Carer Forum	A local group of parents and carers of children with SEND who work with the council and health services to improve local services.
PD (Physical Disability)	A physical condition that affects a child's mobility or access to learning.
PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)	A way of communicating by exchanging picture cards, often used with autistic children.

Term	What it means
Physiotherapist	A specialist who helps with movement, strength and physical development.
PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties)	Severe learning difficulties together with other significant needs, such as physical or sensory disabilities.
Provision map	A school's overview of the support and interventions it offers, and which children receive them.
Reasonable adjustments	Changes a school makes so that children with disabilities are not disadvantaged, such as a movement break or a quiet workspace.
SALT (Speech and Language Therapist)	A specialist who assesses and supports speech, language, communication and swallowing. Also called SLT.
SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health)	One of the four areas of SEND. It covers emotional wellbeing, mental health and difficulties with behaviour or relationships.
SEN Information Report	A report every school must publish each year explaining how it supports children with SEND.
SEN Support	Extra support in school for children with SEND who do not have an EHCP.
SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator)	The teacher who leads and co-ordinates SEND provision in school. Also written SENDCo.
SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)	When a child has a learning difficulty or disability that means they need support beyond what most children of the same age need.
SENDIASS (SEND Information, Advice and Support Service)	A free, impartial and confidential service that gives advice to parents and children about SEND.
SEND Tribunal	An independent court where parents can appeal some local authority decisions about EHC needs assessments and EHCPs.
Sensory and/or Physical	One of the four areas of SEND. It covers hearing, vision and physical needs, and sensory processing differences.
Sensory processing	How the brain takes in and responds to information from the senses. Some children are over- or under-sensitive to sound, touch, light or movement.
SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs)	Difficulties with talking, understanding language or using language socially.
SLD (Severe Learning Difficulties)	Significant difficulties with learning that mean a child needs a high level of support.
SpLD (Specific Learning Difficulty)	A difficulty with one particular area of learning, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia or dyspraxia.
TA (Teaching Assistant)	A member of staff who supports learning in class and often delivers

Term	What it means
	interventions.
Transition	Moving from one setting or stage to another, such as starting school, changing class or moving to secondary school.
VI (Vision Impairment)	Sight loss that affects a child's access to learning.
Wave 1, 2 and 3	The three layers of support: Wave 1 is high-quality teaching for all, Wave 2 is targeted interventions, and Wave 3 is specialist, personalised support.

Useful link: the government's [SEND guide for parents and carers](#).