

SEND: Frequently Asked Questions

These are the questions parents ask us most often about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). If your question is not answered here, please speak to your child's class teacher or our SENCo, Miss McKay, at senco@st-tc.co.uk.

If you are worried about your child

I'm worried my child might have SEND. What should I do?

Start by talking to your child's class teacher. They know your child well and can share what they see in class. If you or the teacher still have concerns, the teacher will involve our SENCo, who can look more closely at your child's needs and agree next steps with you.

How does the school identify if a child has SEND?

We check every child's progress regularly. If a child is not making the progress we would expect despite high-quality teaching, or we notice other difficulties, we gather more information. This might include observations, assessments, talking to you and your child and advice from specialists. We use this to decide whether your child has a special educational need and what support would help.

Does my child need a diagnosis to get support?

No. Support is based on your child's needs, not a diagnosis. We will put help in place as soon as we see a need, while any assessments or referrals are taking place.

What is the SEND register?

It is the school's record of children who receive SEN Support or have an EHCP. Being on the register means we are giving your child extra or different help, and we will review it regularly with you. We will always talk to you before adding your child to the register. Children can come off it if they no longer need extra support.

Who is the SENCo and how do I contact them?

Our SENCo is Miss McKay. You can contact her at senco@st-tc.co.uk, or ask at the school office to arrange a meeting. She works as SENCO 2 days per week.

Support in school

What support will my child get?

Every child benefits from high-quality, adaptive teaching in class. Children who need more may also receive targeted interventions, such as small-group or 1:1 sessions, or specialist support informed by outside professionals. Support is matched to your child's individual needs. Refer to the documents on the SEND and Inclusion page on high-quality teaching and on Wave 2 and Wave 3 support for more detail.

Will my child be taken out of class?

Sometimes, for short interventions. We plan these carefully so children do not regularly miss the same lessons, and so that what they learn links back to their classwork. Most support happens in the classroom.

How will I be involved?

You know your child best, so we work with you at every stage. We will share your child's support plan with you, ask for your views and your child's views, and meet with you to review it three times per year (Autumn 2, Spring 2 and Summer 2). You can ask to speak to us at any time in between.

How will I know if the support is working?

Every intervention has clear targets, and we measure progress at the start and end. We review your child's plan regularly using the assess, plan, do, review cycle, and we share what we find with you. If something is not working, we change it.

Which outside professionals does the school work with?

We work with a range of specialists, including Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, the Autism and Social Communication Team, CAMHS, and Sheffield's vision and hearing support services. We will always ask your permission before referring your child to an outside service.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

What is an EHCP?

An Education, Health and Care Plan is a legal document for children with more complex needs. It describes your child's needs, the outcomes they are working towards and the support they must receive. The local authority writes it, using advice from you, the school and other professionals.

Does my child need an EHCP?

Most children with SEND are well supported through SEN Support, without an EHCP. A plan may be needed when a child's needs cannot be met from the resources normally available in school, even after a period of well-planned support that has been reviewed.

How do I request an EHC needs assessment?

Parents and schools can both ask the local authority for an EHC needs assessment. We are happy to talk this through with you, and we usually make the request together. You can also ask Sheffield City Council directly, and SENDIAS can help you with this.

How long does it take?

The local authority must decide whether to carry out an assessment within 6 weeks of the request. If it goes ahead, the whole process, from request to final plan, should take no more than 20 weeks.

What happens once my child has an EHCP?

We put the support in the plan in place and check progress regularly. The plan is reviewed at an annual review meeting at least once every 12 months, with you, your child, school staff and other professionals.

School life, wellbeing and transitions

Can my child take part in trips, clubs and events?

Yes. All children are included in the whole life of the school. We plan reasonable adjustments ahead of time, such as extra adult support, a visual plan of the day or a quiet space, and we talk to you about what will help.

What help is available for End of KS2 Assessments and other tests?

Children may be able to have access arrangements, such as extra time, rest breaks, a reader, a scribe or a separate room. These must reflect how your child usually works in class, so we plan them well in advance and will discuss them with you.

How do you support my child's emotional wellbeing?

Wellbeing is part of everyday school life through PSHE, emotion check-ins and calm spaces. Children who need more can have support such as ELSA sessions or Caritas wellbeing mentoring, and your GP can refer to services such as CAMHS where needed.

My child is anxious about coming to school. What can I do?

Please tell us as early as possible. We will listen, work out what is making school hard, and agree a plan with you that we review together. Our signposting document also lists Sheffield services that can help with emotionally based school avoidance.

How will you support my child when they move class or school?

We plan transitions carefully. This might include extra visits, photo books of new classrooms and staff, a meeting with the new teacher and passing on information about what helps your child. When children move to secondary school, we work closely with the new school and share your child's support plan.

What if I'm not happy with my child's SEND support?

Please talk to your child's class teacher or our SENCo first, as most concerns can be resolved quickly. If you are still unhappy, you can speak to the headteacher, and then follow our complaints policy, available on our website. SENDIAS can also give you free, impartial advice.