

SEND Jargon Buster

Plain-English explanations of the words and abbreviations you may hear about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This is general information, not legal advice. If something is not on the list, or you need help, get in touch.

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A

AAC – Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Ways of communicating that add to or replace speech, such as signs, symbols, picture boards or a speech device.

Academy

A state-funded school that is run by an academy trust rather than the council. Academies must follow the same SEND law as council schools.

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

A condition that affects attention, activity levels and impulse control.

Annual Review of an EHCP

A meeting to check whether an EHCP is still right for your child, held at least once a year. You can ask for changes to the plan as part of it.

AP – Alternative Provision

Education arranged outside mainstream school for pupils who cannot attend school, for example because of illness, exclusion or other reasons.

APDR – Assess, Plan, Do, Review

The cycle schools use to give SEN Support, also called the graduated approach. They assess your child's needs, plan the help, put it in place, then review how it is going, and repeat.

ARFID – Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder

An eating condition where a child avoids certain foods, or eats very little, often because of how food tastes, feels or smells, or fear of what could happen when eating. It is not about body image.

ARP – Additionally Resourced Provision

A specialist base within a mainstream school, offering extra support for pupils with a particular type of need. Also called a resourced provision or unit.

ASC – Autism Spectrum Condition

Autism affects how a person communicates, relates to others and experiences the world. You may also see ASD, autism spectrum disorder.

B

Braille

A system of raised dots that blind and partially sighted people read by touch.

BSL – British Sign Language

The sign language used by many Deaf people in the UK. It is a full language with its own grammar, separate from English.

BSP – Behaviour Support Plan

A written plan, made with the child and family, that explains what can lead to distressed behaviour and how adults should respond to help.

C

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

NHS services that assess and support children and young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.

Carer's Allowance

A benefit for people who spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone who gets certain disability benefits, subject to an earnings limit.

Ceasing an EHCP – Ceasing to maintain an EHCP

When the council decides to end an EHCP. It must tell you first and consult you, and you can appeal to the Tribunal if you disagree.

CFA 2014 – Children and Families Act 2014

The law that sets out the SEND system in England, including EHC assessments, EHCPs and the Local Offer.

CIN – Child in Need

A child the council's children's social care decides needs extra services to be safe, healthy or to develop well. Disabled children count as children in need. Support is set out in a Child in Need plan.

Co-production

Parents, young people and professionals planning services together from the start, rather than parents being asked for their views once decisions are made.

SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years

The official guidance councils, schools, colleges and health services in England must follow when supporting children and young people with SEND.

CP – Cerebral Palsy

A group of lifelong conditions that affect movement and coordination, caused by differences in the brain that happen before, during or soon after birth.

CP plan – Child Protection Plan

A plan made by children's social care and other services when a child is at risk of significant harm, setting out what will be done to keep them safe.



DCD – Developmental Coordination Disorder

A condition that affects movement and coordination, making tasks like writing, dressing or sport harder. Also called dyspraxia.

DCO / DMO – Designated Clinical Officer / Designated Medical Officer

The health professional in each area who makes sure health services play their part in the SEND system, including in EHC assessments.

Developmental Delay

When a young child reaches milestones, such as walking, talking or play, later than most children their age.

DfE – Department for Education

The government department in charge of schools, colleges and children's services in England, including SEND policy.

Direct Payments

Money paid to a family or young person so they can arrange some of their own support, instead of the council arranging it.

DLA – Disability Living Allowance

A benefit for children under 16 who need more care or supervision, or have more difficulty getting around, than other children their age.

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

The government department that runs benefits such as DLA, PIP, Universal Credit and Carer's Allowance.

Dyscalculia

A specific learning difficulty with numbers and maths, such as understanding amounts, counting or remembering number facts.

Dyslexia

A specific learning difficulty that mainly affects reading, spelling and writing. It is not linked to how intelligent a child is.



Early Review – Early or Interim Review

An EHCP review held before the annual review is due, because something has changed. You or the school can ask for one.

Early Years Setting

Any place that looks after and educates children before school age, such as a nursery, pre-school or childminder.

EHC Coordinator or Caseworker

The person at the council who manages your child's EHC needs assessment and EHCP, and should be your main contact about it.

EHC needs assessment – Education, Health and Care needs assessment

The detailed assessment the council carries out to decide whether a child or young person needs an EHCP. A parent, a young person aged 16 to 25, or the school can ask for one. The council should decide within 6 weeks whether to assess, and the whole process should take no longer than 20 weeks.

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan

A legal document for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through ordinary SEN support. It describes their needs and the education, health and social care provision required to meet them.

EHE – Elective Home Education

When parents choose to educate their child at home instead of sending them to school. This is different from EOTAS, which the council arranges.

EOTAS – Education Otherwise Than At School

Education set out in an EHCP that happens outside a school, when the council agrees school is not suitable for that child.

EP – Educational Psychologist

A specialist who assesses how a child learns and suggests ways to support them. An EP gives advice as part of every EHC needs assessment.

Exclusion

When a school stops a pupil attending, either for a set number of days (a suspension) or permanently. Schools must follow the law and consider the pupil's SEND before excluding.

Expressive Language

How a child uses words, sentences, signs or gestures to get their message across.

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage

The stage of education from birth to the end of the Reception year, including nurseries and childminders.

F

FE – Further Education

Study after age 16 that is not university, such as sixth form colleges and further education colleges. An EHCP can continue in FE.

Fine Motor Skills

Small, careful movements of the hands and fingers, such as holding a pencil, using scissors or doing up buttons.

Functional Skills

Practical qualifications in English and maths, from Entry Level up to Level 2, often taken at college instead of or alongside GCSEs.

G

GDD – Global Developmental Delay

When a young child is behind in two or more areas of development, such as movement, speech, learning and social skills.

Gross Motor Skills

Big movements using the whole body, such as sitting, walking, running, jumping and balancing.

H

Healthwatch

An independent organisation in every area that listens to people's experiences of health and social care and pushes for improvements.

HI – Hearing Impairment

Hearing loss that affects a child's everyday life and learning. You may also see D/deaf.

I

IEP – Individual Education Plan

A school's written plan of targets and support for a pupil with SEND. Some schools call it a support plan, pupil passport or learning plan.

IMCA – Independent Mental Capacity Advocate

An advocate who speaks up for a person aged 16 or over who cannot make certain big decisions themselves and has no family or friend to support them.

Inclusion

Making sure children and young people with SEND can take part fully in school and community life alongside their peers, with the right support.

Independent School

A school that charges fees and is not funded by the council or government. The council can name one in an EHCP in some cases.

Intervention

A planned block of extra help for a pupil, such as a reading group or social skills sessions, usually for a set time with targets.

J

Joint Commissioning

When the council and NHS plan and pay for services together, so education, health and care support fit together for families.

K

Keyworker

A named person who coordinates support for a child and family, and is the main point of contact across different services.

L

LA – Local Authority

Your council. In Newham this is Newham Council, which is responsible for EHC needs assessments and EHCPs.

LAC – Looked After Child

A child in the care of the council, for example living in foster care. Also called a child looked after.

LD – Learning Disability

A lifelong condition that affects how a person understands information, learns new skills and manages everyday life. It is different from a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia.

Local Area Inspection – Local Area SEND Inspection

An inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission of how well the council and health services in an area work together for children and young people with SEND.

Local Offer – Your borough's SEND guide

Every local authority must publish a Local Offer: one place setting out all the support and services available for children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 in that area.

LSA – Learning Support Assistant

A member of school staff who supports pupils with SEND in class or in small groups. Also called a teaching assistant (TA).



Mainstream School

A school for all children, not only those with SEND. Most children with SEND, including many with EHCPs, go to mainstream schools.

Makaton

A language programme that uses signs and symbols alongside speech to help people communicate.

MDT – Multi-Disciplinary Team

A group of professionals from different areas, such as health, education and social care, working together on a child's needs.

Mediation

A meeting with an independent mediator to try to settle a disagreement with the council. Before most tribunal appeals you need to contact a mediation adviser and get a certificate, although you do not have to go ahead with mediation itself.

MLD – Moderate Learning Difficulty

A child who finds most areas of learning harder than others their age and needs extra support across the curriculum.



NAS – National Autistic Society

A UK charity for autistic people and their families, offering information, advice and support.

National Curriculum

The subjects and standards most state schools in England teach from age 5 to 16.

NMSS – Non-Maintained Special School

A special school run by a charity rather than the council, approved by the Department for Education to take pupils with SEND.

NNPCF – National Network of Parent Carer Forums

The national body that brings together parent carer forums from across England and represents their views to government.

Non-speaking

A person who does not use spoken words to communicate, or uses very few. They may communicate in other ways, such as signs, pictures or a device. Sometimes described as non-verbal.



OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

A mental health condition where a person has unwanted, repeated thoughts and feels they must carry out certain actions to ease the worry.

ODD – Oppositional Defiant Disorder

A diagnosis given to some children who show ongoing angry, argumentative or defiant behaviour, often alongside other needs such as ADHD.

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

The organisation that inspects schools, colleges, nurseries and children's services in England.

OT – Occupational Therapy

Support with everyday skills such as dressing, writing, movement and coordination, and with sensory needs.

Outcomes

In an EHCP, the goals your child is working towards, such as learning to read or travelling more independently. Support in the plan should help reach them.



Paediatrician

A doctor who specialises in the health and development of babies, children and young people.

Panel

A group of council staff and professionals who make decisions, for example whether to carry out an EHC needs assessment or issue an EHCP.

PCF – Parent Carer Forum

A group of parents and carers of disabled children in an area who work with the council and health services to improve local services. Newham Parent Carer Forum is ours.

PD – Physical Disability

A physical condition that affects movement or mobility and may need equipment, adaptations or extra help.

PECS – Picture Exchange Communication System

A way of communicating where a child hands over a picture to ask for what they want, building up to sentences.

PEP – Personal Education Plan

A plan for the education of a looked after child, reviewed regularly by the school, social worker and carers.

Personal Budget

An amount of money set aside to pay for some of the support in an EHCP. Families can have a say in how it is used.

PfA – Preparing for Adulthood

Planning from Year 9 onwards to help young people with SEND move into adult life, covering work, living independently, friends and community, and good health.

Physiotherapy

Therapy to help with movement, strength, balance and posture. A paediatric physiotherapist works with children.

PIP – Personal Independence Payment

The benefit that usually replaces DLA from age 16, for people with a long-term condition or disability.

PMLD – Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

Very significant learning difficulties alongside other needs, such as physical, sensory or health needs, requiring a high level of support throughout life.

Portage

A home-visiting service that helps pre-school children with SEND learn and develop through play, working closely with parents.

PRU – Pupil Referral Unit

A type of alternative provision for pupils who cannot attend a mainstream school, for example after an exclusion.

R

Reasonable Adjustments

Changes that schools and services must make so disabled people are not put at a disadvantage, under the Equality Act 2010.

Receptive Language

How a child understands what other people say, sign or write.

Residential School

A school where pupils live during term time, sometimes weekly and sometimes for longer. Some specialist schools are residential.

Respite

Care that gives parent carers a break. Now usually called short breaks.

S

Safeguarding

Everything schools and services do to protect children and young people from harm and to promote their welfare.

SALT – Speech and Language Therapy

Support for children who find it hard to speak, understand language, communicate, or eat and swallow. Sometimes written SLT.

SATs – Standard Assessment Tests

National tests in English and maths taken at the end of Year 6. Pupils with SEND can have access arrangements, such as extra time.

Section F of an EHCP

The part of an EHCP that sets out the special educational help your child must receive. It should be specific and clear about what, how much and how often.

Section I of an EHCP

The part of an EHCP that names the school, college or other setting your child will attend. You can ask for a particular school to be named.

SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Needs linked to wellbeing, behaviour, anxiety, relationships or mental health that affect a child's learning.

SEN – Special Educational Needs

A child has special educational needs if they find learning much harder than most children their age, or have a disability that makes it harder to use the facilities other children use, and need extra or different help because of it.

SENCO – Special Educational Needs Coordinator

The member of staff in a school or nursery responsible for coordinating support for children with SEND. Usually your first point of contact at the setting.

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision - support that is additional to, or different from, what is generally available to others of the same age.

SENDIASS – SEND Information, Advice & Support Service

A free, impartial and confidential service in every borough that helps parents, carers, children and young people understand their rights and options across education, health and social care.

Sensory Processing

How the brain takes in and responds to senses such as sound, touch, light and movement. Some children are over or under sensitive, which affects everyday life.

Sensory Room

A calm space with lighting, sounds and textures that helps children regulate, relax or engage their senses.

SEN Support

The extra help a nursery, school or college gives a child with special educational needs from its own resources, without an EHCP. It should be planned, written down and reviewed with you.

Short Breaks

Activities and care that give disabled children and young people new experiences, and give their parents and carers a break from caring.

SLCN – Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Difficulties with speaking, understanding what others say, or using language to communicate.

SLD – Severe Learning Difficulty

Significant difficulties with learning, communication and everyday skills, usually needing a high level of support.

Special School

A school just for children and young people with SEND, usually with smaller classes and specialist staff.

SpLD – Specific Learning Difficulty

A difficulty with one particular area of learning, such as dyslexia (reading and spelling), dyscalculia (numbers) or dyspraxia (coordination).

T

TA – Teaching Assistant

School staff who support teachers and pupils in class, often including pupils with SEND. See also LSA.

Tourette's Syndrome

A condition that causes tics: sounds or movements a person makes without meaning to.

Transition

A move from one stage to the next, such as starting school, moving to secondary school, or moving from children's to adult services. Good planning makes these moves smoother.

Transition Review

An EHCP annual review from Year 9 onwards, which must include planning for adult life.

Home to School Travel Assistance

Help from the council for some children with SEND to get to school or college, such as transport, a travel pass or travel training.

First-tier Tribunal (SEND)

An independent court where parents and young people can appeal certain council decisions, such as refusing an EHC needs assessment or the content of an EHCP.

U

Universal Services

Services open to all children and families without a referral, such as GPs, health visitors, schools and libraries.

V

VI – Visual Impairment

Sight loss that affects a child's everyday life and learning, even with glasses.

W

White Paper

A government document that sets out plans for new laws or policy, such as changes to the SEND system, before they are decided.

Y

Young Carer

A child or young person under 18 who helps look after a family member, such as a disabled brother or sister. Young carers can ask for their own support.

Z

Zones of Regulation

A programme many schools use to help children recognise their feelings using four colours and learn ways to manage them.