



**Wigan**<sup>♥</sup>  
**Council**

# School places for children with special educational needs and disabilities

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The information is for parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) about the admissions process.

## School places for children with SEND

For children with SEND and an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan, the admissions process to primary school is different.

If your child has an EHC Plan, then you do not need to go through the usual admissions process.

Instead, we will ask you to 'name' the primary school you would like to be written into your child's EHC Plan.

## Children with EHC Plans

### Why is the process different for children with EHC Plans?

All councils must follow the law when changing the name of a school in a child's EHC Plan. This is to make sure that the special educational provision described in your child's EHC Plan can be delivered by the school they attend.

You must still tell us your preferred school. But before offering you a place we will need to check that the school has the right facilities and support available to help your child.

### Which schools should I consider?

We encourage you to look at a few different schools and ask them how they support children with SEND so that you can make an informed decision.

All schools have open evenings for parents, so try and attend these events – remember, not all schools can accommodate one to one visits.

Before you visit, gather as much information and look at the school's:

- Prospectus
- SEN Information Report and accessibility plan
- Ofsted report
- Policies and procedures for children with SEND.

Think about:

- The location and size of the school
- What facilities and support they have in place for children with SEND
- The school's ethos towards the inclusion of children with SEND

- Your child's current friendship groups and how the school will support them to maintain these
- How your child will get to and from school.

## What type of school will my child go to?

Most children with SEND will go to a mainstream school. Only a small number will go to a special school.

But if your child has an EHC Plan, you have the legal right to request the following types of schools to be named in their Plan:

- A maintained school (mainstream or special)
- An Academy (mainstream or special)
- A non-maintained special school
- A section 41 school – these are schools approved by the Secretary of State for Education. A list of these schools is available at: [Independent special schools and post-16 institutions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

It is important that you tell us the name of the school you would like to be named in your child's EHC Plan, and not just the type of school. We will consult with this school and any others we think are suitable.

If you state a preference for a special school to be named, we recommend you also give us the names of two other schools to consult with. We cannot guarantee that your child will be offered a place at your preferred school.

## What should I do if I'm unsure?

If you are unsure about the type of school which would be most suitable for your child or if you would like some reassurance about the options available for your child, please do get in touch with your child's EHC Coordinator.

You can contact the SEND Service:

By email: [SENDSadmin@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:SENDSadmin@wigan.gov.uk)

Or on the phone: 01942 486136

You can also contact the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) at:

[SENDIASS – Embrace \(embracewiganandleigh.org.uk\)](http://embracewiganandleigh.org.uk)

## Applying for a school place

You should let us know your school preferences by the 6 January 2025 at the latest. You can let us know these by completing the following form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/WETL55z0u9>

If you are unable to complete the form, please contact your EHCP Coordinator:

By email: [SENDSadmin@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:SENDSadmin@wigan.gov.uk)

Or on the phone: 01942 486136

We will consult with the school(s) you have asked to be named in your child's EHC Plan and any other schools we think are suitable and can deliver the special educational needs provision described in your child's EHC Plan.

When we consult with schools, we will share a copy of your child's EHC Plan with the Headteacher of the school. These consultations will take place in January 2025.

Schools have 15 days to respond to our request for a school place.

If more than one school tells us that they can offer your child a place, we will decide which school should be named in your child's EHC Plan based on the three tests set out in law. More information about this process is set out below.

We will confirm the name of your child's school in writing by the 15 February 2025.

## If we refuse your choice of school

There are only three legal reasons why we can refuse your choice of school. If:

- The setting is unsuitable for your child's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs.
- The attendance of your child at that setting would be incompatible with the efficient education for others at the school and we are unable to prevent this incompatibility.
- The attendance of your child at the school would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

Remember you have the right to appeal the decision, so please speak to SEND IASS.

## What if the school I want my child to attend says that they can't meet their needs?

Where a school has said that they would not be able to offer your child a school place, we will assess whether their response is lawful.

Where this is not the case, we will direct the school to admit your child and name this in Section I of their EHC Plan.

If this happens, we will keep you informed of the action we are taking and the progress we make throughout the process.

## What happens after I have applied for a school place?

Once you have completed your application form, we will:

- Consult with the schools you have asked to be named in your child's EHC Plan. You may be asked to go and visit the schools we have consulted with. This is so they can meet with you and your child and decide if they can offer your child a school place.
- Review the responses from the schools and assess which school is the most suitable.
- Tell you the name of the school and send you a copy of your child's amended EHC Plan by the 15 February 2025.

If you do not get the school you wanted, you can appeal this decision within 2 months of the date of the decision or within 1 month of receiving a mediation certificate, whichever is later.

## If your child does not have an EHC Plan

If your child does not have an EHC Plan or is undergoing an EHC needs assessment, **you must** make a formal application for your preferred mainstream school (up to three preferences). Applications must be made through the School Admissions Team no later than **15 January 2025**.

## I would like my child to attend a special school

The law says that most children and young people will require an EHC Plan to attend a special school.

There are some very limited situations in which a child without an EHC Plan can be considered for a special school place. These are:

- For the purposes of an EHC needs assessment.
- Following a change in the child's circumstances, but only where the Council, the headteacher of the school and the parents have all agreed to the placement.
- If the special school is established in a hospital and is either a community or foundation special school, or an Academy school.
- If the special school is an Academy, and that Academy's arrangements allow it to admit children and young people without EHC plans.

Applications for special school places for children without EHC Plans will not be accepted by the SEND Service or the Admissions Team.

If your child is having an EHC needs assessment at the time of applying for a primary school place, we may consider a request for a special school. But this decision will be made on a case-by-case basis and only once the assessment has been completed and we have decided to issue your child with an EHC Plan.

## Transition Events

We recognise that this can be a worrying time for you and your child.

We have organised some sessions in September 2024 for you to attend.

These sessions will be attended by:

- The SEND Team.
- The Early Learning Childcare Team.
- The Educational Psychology Service.
- SENDIASS.

Information will be shared by these services about the transition and support available, and you will have the opportunity to ask us any questions you may have.

The events will take place on:

- Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 13:00-15:30 at Douglas Valley Nursery
- Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 09:30-12:00 at Douglas Valley Nursery
- Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September, 18:00-20:00 – Online via Microsoft Teams.