

Information Advice and Support Kent

A service for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Helping you to make informed choices



**Funding for special educational needs in
mainstream schools**

Funding for special educational needs in mainstream schools

This information is about funding for special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools. This includes academies and free schools.

What is SEN funding for?

The **SEND Code of Practice**** says schools **must**:

...use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people's SEN (6.2)

Schools should use some of their budget to buy resources and make provision for children who need additional help. This can take many forms. For example, children with SEN might need:

- some changes to the curriculum
- special equipment or teaching materials
- the use of additional information technology
- small group work
- support in the classroom
- a base to work in or have quiet time.

Where does funding for SEN come from?

All mainstream schools have money for special educational needs support and resources. Schools can decide how to spend this money. This is called delegated funding. This part of the school's income is sometimes called the notional SEN budget.

Funding for SEN provision is from three elements:

Element 1

All schools get money for each pupil at the school. This is called the **Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)** and it is part of schools' delegated funding.

Some of this money is to make general SEN provision. This might, for example, include the cost of providing the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and some other resources.

The local authority provides Element 1 funding for the schools it is responsible for. The local **Schools Forum** agrees the formula that determines how much money the school gets for each pupil. The **Education Funding Agency** provides Element 1 funding for academies and free schools.

Element 2

Element 2 funding is to provide **SEN support** that is *additional to or different from* the support that most other children get.

The local authority provides Element 2 funding for schools it is responsible for. The local Schools Forum agrees the formula that determines the amount of money the school gets. The **Education Funding Agency** provides Element 2 funding for academies and free schools. Element 2 funding is also part of schools' delegated budget.

Government guidance says schools should provide up to the first £6,000 of additional or different support for those children who need it, including those with an **Education, Health and Care plan**. This does not mean that the school will spend £6,000 on every child with SEN. Sometimes schools use funds to help groups of children. Some children will need less help – and some children may need more.

You can ask your school how it uses its SEN budget to support your child.

Element 3

Some children have such complex needs that the school may request some additional funding to 'top-up' Elements 1 and 2. The local authority is responsible for managing Element 3 funding (sometimes called the 'high needs block' or 'high needs funding'), which can be used to make specific provision for an individual child or a group of children, if the school or academy can show there is an exceptional level of need.

You can find out about Element 3 funding at the SEND Information Hub – (Kent's Local Offer) * using this link:

[**www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/support-for-school-age-children/support-for-education-providers/send-funding-for-schools**](http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/support-for-school-age-children/support-for-education-providers/send-funding-for-schools)

Who manages the school's SEN resources?

The **SEND Code of Practice**** says:

It is for schools, as part of their normal budget planning, to determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with SEN. The SENCO, head teacher and governing body or proprietor should establish a clear picture of the resources that are available to the school. They should consider their strategic approach to meeting SEN in the context of the total resources available, including any resources targeted at particular groups, such as the pupil premium.
(6.97)

School governors are responsible for the school's policy on SEN and how the resources are used. The head teacher and the SENCO ensure that the policy is put into practice.

The SENCO organises support for individual children, but every teacher is responsible making sure that your child's special educational needs are met in the classroom.

The **SEN Information Report** on the school's website tells you more about the arrangements for SEN support and how to contact the SENCO.

How can I find out what support and resources my child is getting?

The first step is to talk with your child's teacher or the SENCO. This may be at a parents' evening, a support plan meeting or a review. You can ask for a written copy of any support plan in place for your child.

If your child has an **Education, Health and Care plan** (or Statement of Special Educational Need) it should set out the support and resources that are provided.

Where can I get further information, advice or support?

Look for the SEN Information Report on the school website.

The **SEN Information Hub – KCC's Local Offer*** is the place to find out about services available locally and the arrangements that schools and others are expected to make for children and young people with SEN.

Information, Advice and Support Kent can also give you:

- more information about SEN support and funding
- advice about what to do if you are not happy with the support your school is providing
- information about other organisations, support groups and information services that could help
- information and advice about your rights to request an EHC needs assessment if your child might need more intensive and specialist help.

*** SEND Information Hub - KCC's Local Offer** link:
www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs

**** SEND Code of Practice** link:
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/342440/SEND Code of Practice approved by Parliament 29.07.14.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/342440/SEND%20Code%20of%20Practice%20approved%20by%20Parliament%2029.07.14.pdf)

On request, this information can be provided in alternative formats.

HELPLINE: 03000 41 3000

**Oakwood House, Oakwood Park,
Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8AE**

Meetings at our office are by appointment only

Office Tel: 03000 412 412

Email: iask@kent.gov.uk

Website: www.iask.org.uk



**Find us on Facebook –
Information, Advice and Support Kent IASK**



October 2025