Dear Colleagues

**Support in Schools for Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

We are writing to you to share an information resource which we hope will be helpful for you to share with parents and carers of children with special educational needs.

We are aware that parents often feel pressured to get a diagnosis for their child especially those who display Autism or Attention Deficit traits or to apply for an Education, Health and Care Plan. However, there are specific legal duties on schools to assess the needs of all children and put appropriate support in place to meet their individual needs, regardless of diagnosis. Schools should conduct their own observations or assessments or ask a specialist like an Education Psychologist or Advisory Teacher, who can recommend specific strategies or teaching programmes to support a child in school. Schools should utilise their notional SEN budget to put the necessary support in place and review it regularly with parents and where appropriate, the child. This should usually happen before an EHC needs assessment is considered.

North Somerset Council has a resource for parents called the Graduated Response which sets out what they expect schools to put in place. For example, we expect schools to have opportunities to access personalised individual or group based structured reading, spelling and numeracy programmes; to set personalised learning goals; offer visual resources and timetables or use attention and listening prompt cards where appropriate; offer support during unstructured times of the day and have inclusive teaching practice and policies which parents must be able to access.

We would be grateful if you could share the attached information which also provides them with a further signpost to independent and impartial information and advice.

With thanks

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**My child is having difficulties in school. Does my child need a diagnosis or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to get extra help?**

Most children and young people will not need an EHCP to have their needs met in school. EHCP's are for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability (SEND) and need support over and above that which can normally be provided in educational settings. Schools are expected to follow the Graduated Approach (see overleaf) to identify children with SEND, put in support for those who need it and review their progress regularly. This should be planned and reviewed together with you as parents and carers as well as your child or young person.

North Somerset Council have drawn up a guide to help you to understand the different kinds of support that your child or young person can expect to receive from school if they need more support to reach their full potential. You can view this guide, known as the "Gradated Response" along with the associated "Profile of need" for your child's age group, to learn more here: Education Health and Care Plans in North Somerset | North Somerset Online Directory (n-somerset.gov.uk)

There are no requirements in law that state a child needs a diagnosis to have their needs met in school. The SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2015* promotes a needs led approach. This means your child's school should be led by your child's needs and put support in place to help them with the things they find difficult. School staff can also ask specialists to give them advice such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists or occupational therapists.

All educational settings have a "best endeavours" duty, meaning they must do everything they reasonably can, or put in every effort to meet the child or young person's needs. In addition, where a child has a disability – "a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities"** schools also have to make reasonable adjustments to make sure your child is not put at a significant disadvantage to other children in the school. Again, there is no need for a diagnosis to prove that your child has a disability although some evidence from a health professional, including GP, paediatrician, therapist or school nurse could support you with this if you are having difficulties at school.

If your child has SEN please read the Graduated Approach flowchart on the next page to help in explaining what this is. You could ask to speak to your school's SENCO about what additional support can be put in place for your child if they are not making progress in school or struggling with particular aspects of school life. You could discuss in conjunction with the North Somerset "profile of need" what additional support can be put in place for your child. There can be a conversation about the different areas that your child may have needs within and what these needs are.

If, after reading this information and reviewing our Frequently Asked Questions resource on EHCP's (scan the barcode below) you have further questions or would like more information, advice or support please contact SEND and You at sendandyou.org.uk/contact-us/ or call 0117 992 6009

SCAN ME

References:
*Special Education Needs and Disability Statutory Code of Practice 2015, Department for Education and Department for Health
**Equality Act 2010

SAY
SEND AND YOU
SENDIAS

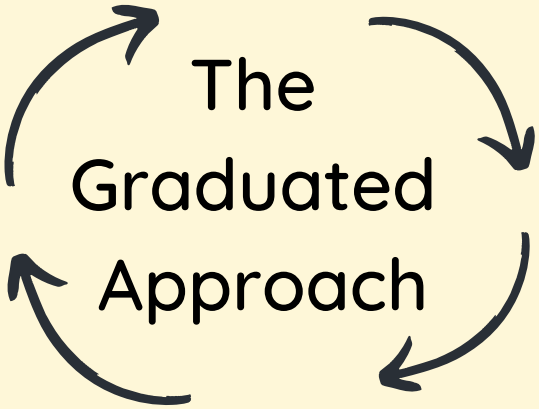
**Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This can be done by using a four-part ongoing cycle of "Assess, Plan, Do, Review". This aids understanding of a pupil's needs and what support may be required.**

## REVIEW

The support plan should be reviewed at least 3 times a year between the setting and yourself. The impact and effectiveness of the support and interventions, as well as progress made should be discussed and evidenced. Where progress has not been discuss next steps. Clear information should be given so parent/ carers can be jointly involved with planning.

## ASSESS

Settings should gather information to help understand strengths and difficulties and what may help support progress and needs. Assessments will typically take place by teacher or subject teacher but they may include external professional guidance as well.




## DO

When the plan has been agreed the support should be put into place. The class or subject teacher remains responsible for the pupil's plan, even when interventions involve being away from the classroom.

## PLAN

Once your child's needs have been identified, a plan, to outline all support needed, should be made between the teacher and SENCo in consultation with yourself and your child. A plan will usually outline: SEN needs identified, outcomes, interventions, the expected impact, how often support will happen, who will provide this and when the plan will be reviewed.