



Questions to ask the SENCO

This guide has been produced to help you when you are meeting a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) for the first time at your child's school or when your child is going into a new school.

It briefly explains what a SENCO does within a school or setting and what questions you may want to ask to find out how they can best meet your child's needs. Keeping clear, friendly and honest lines of communication with the SENCO is crucial as they are an important part of your child's education.

Meeting the SENCO is usually needed when your child is starting a new school or if you have been told that the school has identified that your child has Special Educational Needs (SEN).

We recommend meeting the SENCO when:

- ✓ Transferring from one school to another - this can be stressful for parents and children. It is likely that you may be more anxious if your child has SEN or a disability.
- ✓ Starting school- your child's introduction to his or her new school is likely to be more successful if you have planned it .
- ✓ You have concerns - don't let these grow. Talk to the SENCO sooner rather than later.

All children are different and your child's needs will be unique.

There will therefore be some questions which only apply to your child.

There will be questions which should be suitable for most people.

Make a list of all the questions you want to ask and take it with you to the meeting

Example questions can be found overleaf!



Questions to ask the SENCO



1 Ask about the school SEN policy, School SEN Information Report or Local Offer - the SENCO should be able to give you a copy. There might be other policies which would be relevant and which you could ask about. These could be:

- ✓ The school anti-bullying policy
- ✓ The school behaviour/discipline policy

2 Ask how the school organises its special needs provision.

- ✓ Do they have special classes?
- ✓ Are children withdrawn from class for extra lessons in small groups?
- ✓ How does the school use its support staff, are there non-teaching staff working in classrooms to support children's learning?

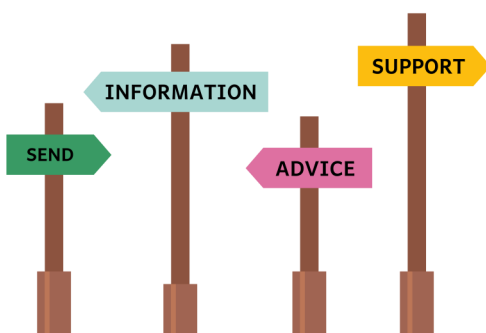
3 All children with special needs should have an individual education plan (IEP) or may have a Coordinated Support Plan (SEN Support).

- ✓ Ask to see examples of these.
- ✓ Ask how often IEP's/Coordinated Support Plans are reviewed and ask that you or your child be involved in those reviews.

4 Schools are becoming increasingly skilled at meeting special needs.

- ✓ Ask if the school has experience of working with children with difficulties similar to your child's and whether it was successful.

5 Ask what training the staff may have received. This might be individual or as a whole staff.



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You can also contact the National Helpline by calling

0808 8083555 or visit their website www.contact.org.uk