

Information on SEND reform for parents and carers of children and young people in special schools

The Department for Education has published our schools white paper, *Every Child Achieving and Thriving*, alongside a consultation on SEND reform, called *Putting Children and Young People First*.

We want to improve the lives of all children and young people, with a broad curriculum fit for the modern world, and ending the one-size-fits-all approach to education.

Throughout the process of developing these reforms, we have heard a clear and consistent message from families, professionals and children and young people themselves: the current system is not working. It is failing children, failing parents, failing schools and teachers and failing local authorities.

Parents have told us they often do not feel listened to and want to be recognised as experts on their own children. They have also told us stronger accountability will be essential to putting the system right.

We have listened to you. We are acting.

This factsheet is about specialist education settings, but you can find more information about EHCPs changes and improvements to mainstream settings in our other factsheets.

The SEND consultation is not the end of the reform process: we will continue to engage with you on what will work for you and your child. We will share information with you and your school as proposals develop further – based on the consultation responses – over the next few years.

What's staying the same

If your child has a place at a special school or special post-16 institution in September 2029, they will be able to stay in a special school until they complete their education. This includes if they need to move from their current school to a new special school e.g. if you move house or their current special school closes. Your child will not be moved from special school unless you choose to do so.

Your child will keep their EHCP until they finish education.

What you and your child will have in the new system

- Your child's place in a special school or post-16 institution will be protected if they have a special school place in September 2029

- Every child with an EHCP will also have an Individual Support Plan, setting out the day-to-day support the school or college will provide and how it will be delivered
- If you decide that your child would be happier and would be able to achieve better outcomes in a mainstream school, you have a legal right to ask your local authority for a mainstream place

Timeline

Repair and reform to this new system will be gradual with support in place before changes are made.

Phase one: 2026 to 2028 Investment and building new system	• Workforce training programmes for all staff. • Schools, colleges and early years settings receive Inclusive Mainstream Fund. • Experts at Hand comes on stream for all settings. • Specialist Provision Packages published. • National Inclusion Standards published.
Phase two: 2028 to 2029 Improved support	• We will continue to invest in and build-up the new system • New legislation expected to come into effect from September 2029
Phase three: School year 2029/30 onwards Future system	• School year 2029/30: First assessments of children take place under reformed system. • EHCP, National Inclusion Standards and Individual Support Plan legislation enacted. • First children using Specialist Provision Packages. • 60,000 new school places for children with SEND will have been created in special schools and inclusion bases.

Have your say and more information

Visit gov.uk/dfe/send-reform

- [Every Child Achieving and Thriving Schools White Paper](#)
- [SEND Consultation](#)

- [Further information and fact sheets](#)