



Moving to Secondary School

Information and guidance to support families with children with SEND to choose a school and to support a successful move to secondary school.





Transfer from primary to secondary school is an important time for all children. Secondary schools are much larger with bigger buildings, more pupils and more staff. Pupils move between lessons with different subject teachers and are expected to be more independent.

For parents with a child with special educational needs the prospect of moving to secondary can be particularly daunting. The experience of deciding and applying for suitable school placements can often cause great anxiety and stress.

Croydon 0-25 SEND Service and PIP Parent Forum have worked together to create a guide that sets out the timeframes and processes for choosing a suitable secondary setting as well as explore best practice of joint work between schools and families in preparation and action to support successful move.

This guidance includes:

Part 1: Choosing and Applying for a Secondary School:

- ◆ Choosing a School: Guidance to support your decision for a school preference
- ◆ When should I start looking for schools
- ◆ Other sources of information
- ◆ Timeframes for the process for applying for schools for Children with SEND without an EHC plan (with SEN support plan)
- ◆ Timeframes for the process for applying for schools for Children with SEND with an EHC plan
- ◆ Key activities and timeframes
- ◆ Frequently asked questions
- ◆ Sources of support and information

Part 2: Preparation for secondary school

- ◆ Getting your child ready for secondary school

Choosing A School

Guidance to support parents and carers to decide on a school preference

When should I start looking for schools?

It is important that you start preparing and looking at secondary schools during the **Year 5 autumn term**.

A good starting point is to view the **Online Prospectus** available on **the School Admission website**.

This will give key details about all Croydon mainstream and special secondary schools and give details of open days and evenings.

These usually take place in September and October. For details go to:

[Apply for a secondary school place: step by step | Croydon council](#)



Further details about Croydon special schools and Enhanced Learning Provisions (ELPs), specialist units attached to mainstream schools, can be found on the Croydon Local Offer:

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs>

Before deciding which schools to visit, you may want to find out how each school makes arrangements to plan and support its pupils with SEND. Most parents tend to start with the schools OFSTED report, however, there are other documents: **SEN Policy** and **SEN Information Report** (these can sometimes be combined), that will highlight how each school makes arrangements to plan and support its pupils with SEND.

Each school MUST have these documents published on their website.

You may also want to look at their **Equality Policy** which will show how they meet statutory duties to support access and engagement for pupils with disability.

If you cannot find these documents on the website you can ask for a copy from the school office.

Other Sources of Information

Ofsted Report

You may want to look at the most recent Ofsted reports. These are usually available on the school website or you can find them by using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/find-ofsted-inspection-report>

The Ofsted report will give an overview of standards across the school including comment on the provision and outcomes for SEN pupils.

When looking at Ofsted reports:

- Remember to check the date of the last Inspection; schools graded as outstanding may not have had an inspection for some time and there may have been changes in the school since the last inspection.
- Try not to dismiss a school because the outcome of the inspection was less than good; schools judged as 'required improvement' or in 'special measures' may have demonstrated strong SEN provision and/or the school will be receiving a lot of support and regular monitoring to ensure that they make rapid changes to improve.

Pupil Outcome Measures/ Academic Information

Details about the standards of academic achievements of each school can be found by looking at the following sources:

School Performance Data website:

<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>

This will compare the exam results at the end of Year 11 for all pupils at the school with a breakdown for some groups. It will provide comparisons with national data as well as give 'destination data', which looks at the success of each school to ensure that pupils are able to continue their education and training in Post 16 settings.

For more details about the outcomes for pupils with SEND at each school you could ask about this when you visit the school. You could also look at the **Annual Report on SEND Provision** produced by the school's Governing Body.

When thinking about outcomes for pupils, as well as academic performance, you should take in to account other features of inclusive practice such as how well pupils with SEND are represented in wider aspects of school life such as inclusion in clubs, representation on the school council, access to school trips.

If your child has some learning difficulties and may struggle to achieve GCSE grades, you might like to find out about **alternative courses and accreditations** that are available and which will offer more appropriate level of challenge and opportunity to succeed.

Additional Visits to School:

Having attended the general open days and narrowed down your choice of schools, you may find it useful to arrange a separate visit to meet the school SENCO and look at the school during school hours.

This will give you an opportunity to talk about your child's individual needs and discuss in more detail the nature and level of support he/she will be able to access.

You may find it helpful to take someone with you, a friend, relative or professional who knows your child well.

A representative from a local parent support group could also attend with you.

Views of others:

It can be useful to talk to family and friends and other parents about their views and experiences of different schools. However, be mindful that what has or has not worked well for one child may not be the same another; all children are different.

If you are not a member of a support group and would like to attend a meeting, there is a list of local parent support groups on [Croydon SEND Local Offer](#)

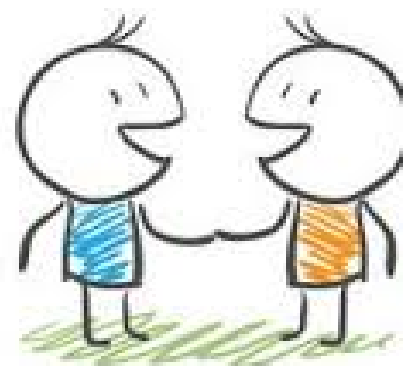
Alternatively you may prefer to contact Parents in Partnership (PIP Croydon), a local charity supporting parents of children and young people with SEN (Croydon Parent Forum) for information about local support groups (those formal ones as well as informal and online support communities).

Parents in Partnership (PIP) Croydon

office@pipcroydon.com

www.pipcroydon.com

020 8663 5626



Getting the most out of visits to schools

Any final decision about your school preference should be informed by school visits.

In order to get the best out of the school visit, you may want to prepare a list of questions in advance.

The aim of a visit is to get a general feel of the school, to see how your child will fit in and to find out more about how the school makes arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and how they seek to ensure that pupils can be fully involved in all aspects of school life.



Don't hesitate to ask questions and challenge schools on their provision.

It may be helpful to think about:

How welcoming the school feels?

What is the learning environment like? Are displays current, interesting and well cared for, classrooms well-organised?

How accessible is the school?

What are facilities like for sport, science or arts (including music and drama)?

What the arrangements for break and lunch times?

How is teaching organised? Are there ability sets for all or core subjects?

Are you able to meet and talk with pupils as well as staff?

How is behaviour managed?

If you are visiting during normal school times, you may see some challenging behaviour but all schools will have its share of difficult behaviour and pupils may also have difficult days. Look at how the behaviour is managed.

What is the school's approach to tackle bullying?

What clubs and other activities are available for pupils outside school hours? Are these accessible for pupils with SEND?

Is there a homework club?

In terms of support for your child you may wish to find about:

The SEN department in the school – how is this staffed and organised?

What training and support is in place to ensure that all staff understand and can modify lessons to support pupils with SEND?

How is information about your child's strengths and needs shared and communicated with all subject teachers?

What additional support is in place to target your child's particular area of difficulty?

How will this be managed? How will your child access specialist support such as Speech and Language therapy?

How are teaching assistants used to support pupils with SEND?

What arrangements are in place to ensure there is regular communication with parents to plan and review progress and support?

Will you get a copy of a SEN Support Plan which sets out the targets and outcomes your child is working towards and details the support in place? If not, how will this information be shared with you?

Who should you contact if you any concerns?

How will child's views be considered?

What additional arrangements are in place to help your child become more familiar with the secondary and adapt to a different learning environment?

What arrangements are in place to ensure that your child can take part in school outings?

Secondary transfer information for children with SEND but without an EHC Plan

My child has special educational needs but does not have an EHC plan nor a Statement, is there a different process for applying to secondary schools?

If your child has SEND but does not have an EHC plan you must follow the transfer process for all children. You must apply using the Common Application Form. The form should be completed online at www.croydon.gov.uk/admissions

The form is available from September when your child is in Year 6. You are allowed to select up to 6 schools which you must name in order of preference.

It is important that you check the admission criteria for each school carefully before choosing a school as a preference.

You can find details about all Croydon secondary schools, including admission criteria and open days by looking at the online prospectus which can also be found using the link above.

Termly review meetings at the end of year 4 and through year 5 should consider the progress your child is making and the level of support currently in place.

If there is evidence to show that:

- Your child has received a lot of additional support over time with regular input from external services.
- Current attainment and/or indicate that he/she will struggle to cope academically and/or socially in a secondary school setting without a more tailored support plan

School staff, yourself and other key professionals may consider that your child will require an assessment for an EHC plan to meet needs in a secondary setting.

If this is the case the school will collate relevant information and submit a request to the 0-25 SEND Service. This should be during Year 5 to allow enough time for the request to be agreed, needs assessed and a final plan issued.

My child has SEND but doesn't have an EHC Plan. I think they may require higher levels of support and interventions to succeed at secondary school or a special secondary school and should have an EHC plan. What should I do?

You are able to make a parental request for an assessment stating your reasons why you think an assessment for an EHC plan is needed. You will need to include information which will demonstrate that your child has significant needs which require support from resources over and above which a school is able to offer.

The local SEND Information, Advice and Support service (SENDIAS) will be able to help you make a request.

Croydon@kids.org.uk

020 8663 5630/31

My child has SEN support in primary school but I feel strongly EHC Plan to ensure that they are able to access the right level of support in secondary schools. The school don't think this is needed. What should I do?

Your child's school will be asked to give information about the support that has already been put in to place and the impact of this support. This information will be considered as part of the evidence to decide whether a request for an assessment should be agreed.

An assessment for an EHC plan has been requested, should I still use the Common Application Form?

If a request for an assessment for an EHC plan has been requested or an assessment for a request has been agreed but a plan not finalised before the autumn term in Year 6, you must still complete the Common Application Form and submit it before the deadline of 31st October.

If an assessment has been agreed the SEN team will consider your views on a preferred schools. They will liaise with both the school admission team and your preferred schools to confirm that they will offer you a place.

Once a school has confirmed that they are able to offer a place you will be sent a letter to say that this school be named on the final plan.

If you disagree with the named school you have the right to appeal.

The 0-25 SEND Service will be able to advise you on this process.

If you are happy with the proposal the school will be named in the final EHC plan which will be issue no later than the 15th February.

Like primary schools, all secondary schools must comply with the duties set out in The [SEND Code of Practice](#) issued by the Department of Education (DfE)

All schools have to produce a **SEND policy** and a **SEND Information Report** which shows how they will meet their duties in relation to SEND. Both documents should be available on the school website. You can also request a hard/paper copy from the school office. These documents give more details about the arrangements, resources and additional support in place to meet the need of pupils with SEND.

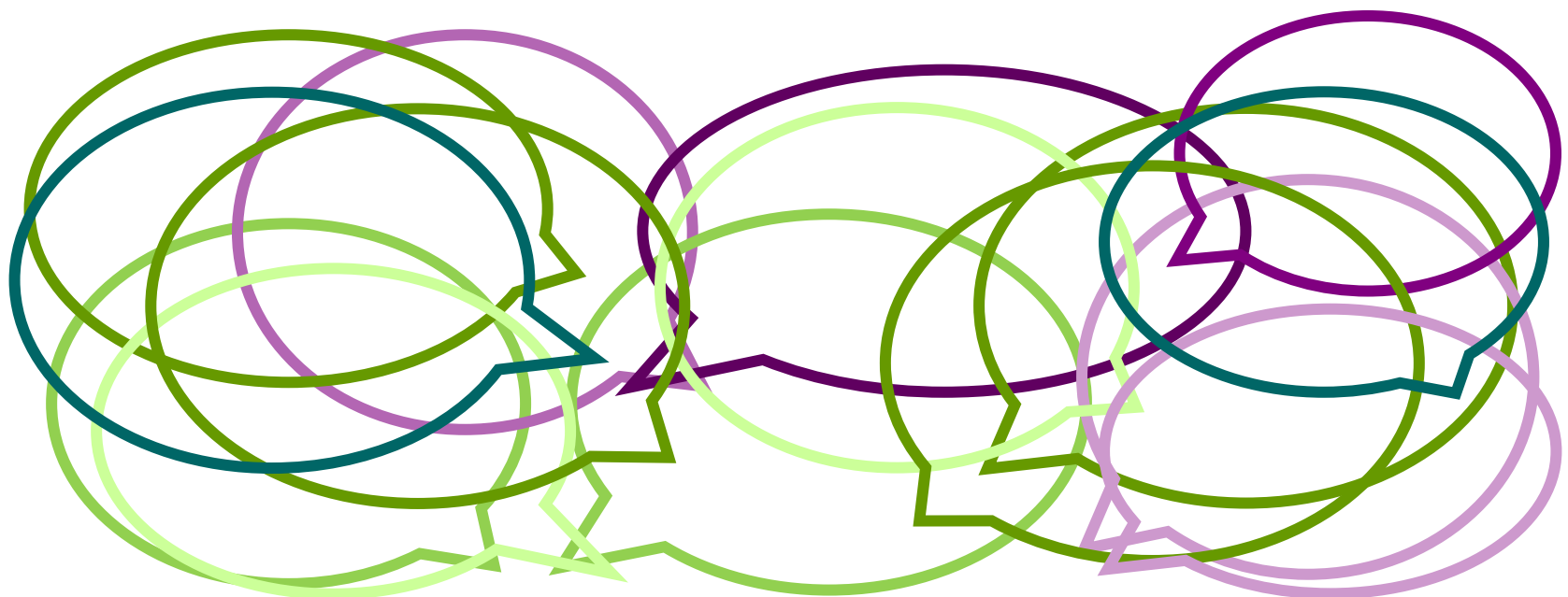
To help schools provide alternative and additional learning support and resources to aid inclusion of pupils with SEND, every school and academy receives additional funding.

The range of support and additional resources each school makes available should be broadly similar. To reinforce this expectation the Croydon 0-25 SEND Service has produced a document called mainstream offer for pupils with SEND.

This guidance provides 'descriptors' of the actions, teaching approaches, strategies and resources expected in all schools to effectively identify and assess needs and tailor provision for individual children.

This document can be found on the [Croydon SEND Local Offer](#) website

What SEN Support will my child get in secondary school?



Secondary transfer information for children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP)

It is worth noting that arrangements for the secondary transfer of pupils with EHCPs are different to those children who have SEND without an EHC Plan.

For children who have an EHC plan the transfer process is managed directly by the Local Authority Special Educational Needs Service (0-25 SEND Team) rather than by the Local Authority Admissions Service.

Parents are able to express a preference for a maintained school. The LA must agree with your preference providing that:

- The school is suitable for your child's age and ability and special educational needs
- Placing your child at the school will not affect the education of others at the school
- Placing the child at the school is an efficient use of the limited funding available to support all pupils with SEND in Croydon.

There are a number of options for secondary school placements for children with EHC Plans:

Maintained mainstream secondary schools and academies:

The majority of children with EHC plans are educated in mainstream schools. These are funded directly by the Government.

Enhanced Learning Provisions (ELPs):

ELPs provide specialist provision for specific types of special needs as part of mainstream school or academy. Children who are placed in ELPs do not require full time specialist provision but require some additional specialist support to access the curriculum. Their time is split between mainstream lessons and activities and the ELP. There are five ELPs in Croydon for secondary aged children.

Maintained Special Schools:

These cater for children with more complex needs which require a highly tailored curriculum and regular access to additional specialist support. Croydon have four special schools offering secondary specialist provision.

Similarly to other LA's, Croydon will consider placement within borough's own special schools before considering schools in other areas or in the independent sector. If your preference is for a maintained special school in another LA the SEN Team will consult with both the school and LA about possible placement but places in out of borough schools will be prioritised for pupils who live in that LA.

Independent and Non Maintained Special Schools:

These offer similar provision to maintained special schools but are not government funded so they charge for places. The cost for a place can be much higher than supporting a pupil in a local maintained special school or academy.

The LA SEND Team will only consider an independent school if they are satisfied that no local maintained mainstream or special school can meet needs. This is because placement in local schools is a more efficient use of limited public funding. The LA may also challenge this preference if they feel the school cannot meet your child's needs.

[Croydon SEND Local Offer](#) has further details on range of local mainstream and specialist secondary school settings You can also find a link to a list of independent schools accredited by the DfE.

Key activities and timeframes:

Year 4 Summer Term / Year 5 Autumn Term

Preparation



Things to consider:

- Begin discussions with school staff and other key professionals about the nature and type of provision your child will require to support a successful move to secondary school

- Arrange visit to a range of local secondary schools in your area. A good starting point is to view the online prospectus available on the School Admission website. This will give details about all Croydon Secondary schools together and dates and times of open days and evenings. These usually take place in September and October. For details go to:

[Apply for a secondary school place: step by step | Croydon council](#)

More detailed information about Croydon special schools and ELPs can be found on [Croydon SEND Local Offer](#).

To find out more about how each mainstream secondary school supports and provides an inclusive learning and social experience for children with SEND you can look at both: the **School SEN policy** and **School SEN Information Report** which should be published on the school website, usually in the policy section, SEN section or Parents section.

If you cannot find them on the website you can ask for a copy from the school office.

You may also want to look at information about **disability access**.

After attending open days you may find it useful to arrange separate visits to schools you are most interested in. This will provide opportunity for you to meet the school SENCO and tour the school during normal school hours.

You will be able to talk about your child's individual needs and to hear about how your child's needs can be met and how he/she will be included in wider aspects of school life. You may find it helpful to take someone with you, a friend, relative or professional, who knows your child well.

Year 5 Spring and Summer Terms

Planning

Year 5 Annual Review of EHC Plan

A key focus of this annual review is to start planning to secure placement at the most appropriate secondary school.

It should be held during the spring/early summer term of Year 5 to allow sufficient time to consider the type of secondary school that would best meet your child's needs.

Discussions should take account of your views and your child's views as well as those from school staff and key professionals.



If your child is currently attending a mainstream primary school the review should consider if:

- Your child's needs can continue to be met in a mainstream school but with adjustments to the nature and type of support to meet the demands of a secondary setting. This will be the case for most children with EHC plans.
- A special school or an ELP setting may be a more appropriate setting. This will only be the case for a small number of children.

If your child is currently attending a primary special school or ELP, the review should consider if:

- Your child's needs should continue to be met in a specialist setting;
- Re-integration into a mainstream school is now appropriate due to the progress your child has made.

At this stage, your child's EHC plan will be updated with any amendments with respect to ensuring appropriate outcomes during the remaining time in the primary setting. The current school will be named in these updated draft or final plans.

Information sharing from the Year 5 annual review will inform your decisions on schools to prioritise on the:

School Preference Form

At the beginning of the Summer Term in Year 5 your child's EHCP coordinator (caseworker) will send you a school preference form along with guidance on how to complete this form.

You will be asked to list up to three schools in order of preference. If your child is currently in a mainstream school but a review of needs indicate that he/she may require transfer to a special school you should still name a mainstream school. This is because your preferred special school may not be able offer you a place or the LA do not agree with your views that this would be an appropriate setting.

This form must be returned as soon as possible after the annual review but no later than the end of the summer term. This is to allow enough time for the SEN team to make formal applications to secondary schools. If you return this form late it can make it more difficult to secure a place at your preferred schools.

The majority of children with EHC plans will be offered their first preference for secondary school.



Year 6 Autumn and Spring Terms

Consultation with Schools

During the autumn term the SEND Service will contact the schools you have listed as your preferences to see which schools can meet your child's special educational needs.

Naming a School

When a school has agreed that they can offer your child a place you will be notified in writing. This is likely to happen from the end of the autumn term and early Spring term. If you are happy with this placement you should confirm this with the SEN service.

An updated EHC plan with the named school will be shared with you no later than the 15th February - this is a statutory requirement set out on the Code of Practice for SEND.

The majority of children with EHC plans are offered their first preference for secondary school.

In a few rare cases the SEND Service may not be able to name a school but will identify the type of provision or an alternative school that would be most suitable. Your EHCP coordinator will contact you to discuss this.

What if you disagree with the named school?

If your preferred choices are not named and/or you disagree with the named school you have a right to appeal to the special educational and disability tribunal. The SEND Team will provide you with information on the process for appealing.

Tribunal appeals can take some time to be heard. In the interim, the SEND team will continue to work with you to find a suitable placement.

The local SENDIASS service can also offer advice and support for mediation and appeals.

Year 6 Summer Term

Transition Planning

Your child's primary school should invite a representative from the named secondary school to attend the Year 6 annual review meeting or summer term review meeting. This is most likely to be the SENCO if the named school is a mainstream school. You should also attend and, as appropriate, your child should be invited too.

This is a good opportunity to share information about your child including:

- ◇ Strengths and areas of interests
- ◇ Support and interventions that have been put in place in the primary school and discuss what this might look like in the secondary school.
- ◇ A review of the progress that has made towards the outcomes set for the end of primary school.
- ◇ Planning new or updated outcomes to be achieved at the end of Key stage 3.
- ◇ Highlighting any concerns that you or your child may have in relation to the move and how these can be minimised.
- ◇ Arrangements and activities that will support the move and familiarity with the secondary school environment such as additional induction visits or participation in summer school activities.

If the secondary school does not send a representative to this meeting your primary school will seek to arrange another meeting to ensure that key information about your child is shared and appropriate arrangements are planned to help your child settle in and adapt to the new setting.

The primary school will pass on all your child's records to the new school before the end of term.

Frequently Asked Questions:

If your child has an EHC plan he/she will not automatically be entitled to travel assistance.

Eligibility for travel assistance for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities is considered on an individual basis. Parents/carers will need to complete an application form to determine eligibility. Travel assistance is provided to ensure access to education for children and young people who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school or travel on public transport because of mobility difficulties or associated health and safety issues as a result of the complex nature of their special educational needs and/or disability.

If you would like further information about this contact

Travel Assistance Commissioner - Deputy Head of Independent Travel,

Jackie.S.Wright@croydon.gov.uk

My child has an EHC plan: will they get transport to school?

Staff at secondary school would not have the necessary information to suggest that your child will require an EHC plan to meet his/her needs in a secondary school.

Secondary schools have additional funding and the same duties as primary schools to make provision for children with SEND.

The organisation of the school day at secondary school is different so the school should be able to consider how provision which has supported inclusion of your child in primary school can be mirrored and/or adapted for the secondary learning environment.

Once a secondary school has been confirmed, more formal information sharing between your current primary school and secondary school should take place to plan in more detail arrangements to help your child move to secondary school and the support the school will put in place when he/she is there.

Once in secondary school, provision can be reviewed as part of the usual graduated response which may include a recommendation

My child has SEN but does not currently have an EHC plan. The secondary school I visited say that he will need one for secondary school?

Should I take my child with me to visit the school?

You know your child best. Taking your child on visits to a number of open events at different schools may cause additional stress and anxiety and/or raise expectations for a particular school that may not be able to offer a place.

It might be better to take your child to the open days at the beginning of year 6, once you have narrowed down your choices. This is the time all children in Year 6 will be looking at schools and it will be a key topic of conversation. You should talk openly about moving onto secondary school but be mindful to remain open minded about final school choices to avoid unnecessary disappointment if, for whatever reason your preferences are not offered. Once a school has been confirmed there will be opportunities for child to visit the school again and be involved in a range of induction events.

Most schools would welcome the opportunity to meet with parents and talk through both strengths and needs of your child.

SENCOs are usually available to speak to parents at the scheduled open events. If your child is receiving SEND support or has an EHC plan and you were unable to attend this event or you would like to find out more about SEN provision after this initial event, it is perfectly reasonable to make a request for a further visit or have other opportunities to speak with the SENCO.

I have asked to meet with SENCO but the school have said this is not possible?

You may also wish to speak to the Head of Year 7 or any other staff who lead on induction of Year 7 pupils.



Sources of Support and Information

Croydon SEND Local Offer

[Croydon SEND Local Offer](#)

Croydon Local Authority 0-25 SEND Service

SEN Helpline: 02086047263

senenquiries@croydon.gov.uk

CROYDON
www.croydon.gov.uk

Croydon Local Authority Travel Assistance

Travel Assistance Commissioner - Deputy Head of Independent Travel,

Jackie.S.Wright@croydon.gov.uk

CROYDON
www.croydon.gov.uk

Croydon Special Education Needs Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

0208663 5630

Croydon@kids.org.uk



Parents in Partnership (PIP) Croydon

020 8663 5626

office@pipcroydon.com

www.pipcroydon.com



National Autistic Society/ Autism Education Trust

0808 800 4102

A Parent and Carer Guide to Finding a School For your Child with Autism



Independent Support Service

parentssupportherts@familylives.org.uk

www.familylives.org.uk/

020 3131 3150

Independent Parental Special Education Advice (IPSEA)

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>

0800 018 4016



Contact a Family

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk>

0808 808 3555



SOS SEN

<http://www.sossen.org.uk>

020 8538 3731



