

Planning for moving to high school

This factsheet explains:

- what you should expect your local authority to do to plan for your child moving to high school
- how decisions will be made about which school your child will attend
- how your child's support might be different at high school.

How should my child's move to high school be planned?

Planning for a pupil's move from primary to high school is often called 'transition planning'.

When should planning take place?

Transition planning should start early to make sure that:

- the support your child will need at high school is identified and in place ready for when they start
- they have a place at a school where their support needs can be met
- they have time to prepare for the move.

Under the law, local authorities must:

- gather information and advice about your child's needs from you and the professionals that work with them **no later than 12 months before your child is due to start high school**
- provide information about your child's needs (with your consent) to the people who will be supporting your child at high school **no later than six months before they are due to start high school**
- send a copy of this information to you.

These duties do not apply to every child with additional support needs. For example, if a child has very short-term support needs, this amount of planning may not be necessary.

How will my child and I be involved?

You and your child should be involved throughout the process of planning for them starting high school. You should both have the opportunity to give your views about the support they will need to prepare for the transition and when they start at high school.

Who is responsible for planning my child's transition?

One person should co-ordinate the plan for your child's move to high school. This could be someone at your child's primary school or another professional who works closely with them, such as a social worker.

What is 'enhanced transition'?

Some children will have an 'enhanced transition' to high school. This usually means extra visits to their new school before they start so they can meet some of the staff and become familiar with the environment. It usually also involves opportunities for you to have joint meetings with staff from your child's primary school, their new school, and any other professionals who work with them so that you can work out the support your child will need.

Which school will my child go to?

Most children will go to their local catchment high school or another local mainstream school. Others may need more specialist support and will go to a specialist unit attached to a mainstream school, or to a special school. Find out more about different types of schools in our factsheet on [School placements](#).

Can the local catchment school meet my child's needs?

As part of the transition planning process, you and those working with your child should identify whether the catchment school can meet your child's support needs. Together, you should identify what extra help your child would need to be able to attend the school and work with the local authority to make sure this will be in place.

I am worried there will not be enough support for my child at their catchment school

You can ask for a transition planning meeting to discuss your concerns. If you are not satisfied with the plans in place after this, you can contact the local authority. Find out more in our factsheet on [Avoiding and solving problems](#).

What if the catchment high school is not suitable for my child?

In most local authorities, there are panels of people that make decisions about school placements for pupils with additional support needs. Usually, someone working with your child, like someone from their primary school or an educational psychologist, will refer your child to one of these panels. The local authority should then identify a suitable school placement for your child.

I disagree with the school that my child has been placed in

If you disagree with the school that the local authority has decided to place your child in, you should raise your concerns with your local authority. Sometimes your local authority will give you the opportunity to appeal their decision.

If you are not able to reach an agreement with the local authority, you have the right to make a 'placing request' to a school of your choice.

Find out more about school placements and placing requests in our factsheet on [School placements](#).

How might my child's support be different at high school?

For most children, moving to high school will be a big change. It is likely that their high school will be a bigger and busier environment, with more staff and pupils to get to know. The change might mean that they need different support than at primary school. There might also be changes to how your child's support is planned and delivered. Planning in advance for the move should mean that you and your child will have a good idea of what their support will look like at high school before they start.

The school must keep your child's support needs under review. If any issues come up after they start high school, the school can still make changes to their support. It may be that your child will need less support than had been planned once they have had time to settle in, or they might find certain aspects of high school more difficult than expected. You can speak to the high school in advance about what arrangements there will be for monitoring how your child is getting on and how you will be kept up to date with their progress.

Find out more in our factsheet on [Planning your child's support](#).



How Enquire can help

Enquire can help you understand your child's rights to additional support for learning and how to work in partnership with their school or nursery to make sure your child gets the support they need.

Enquire can:

- explain your child's rights to additional support for learning
- listen to any questions and concerns
- advise you on the way forward
- help you find local education and support services.

You can contact our helpline on **0345 123 2303** or info@enquire.org.uk
Access to interpreters is available.

You can also find lots more information about additional support for learning, including our full range of publications, at www.enquire.org.uk

The information on our website is available in over 100 languages and with a range of accessibility tools, such as text-to-speech.

Reach, as part of Enquire, provides advice and information for children, parents, carers and professionals about children's rights to additional support for learning: www.reach.scot

Enquire is also a partner in the My Rights, My Say service. My Rights, My Say supports children aged 12-15 with additional support needs to exercise their rights to be involved in decisions about their support in school:
www.myrightsmysay.scot

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