



Visiting a school to see if you think it will be right for your child with Special Educational Needs (SEN) can be worrying and stressful. In theory, all schools of a similar type, e.g. all mainstream schools, should be able to offer the same quality of provision. But there can be differences between them that might affect your decision, such as the size or layout of the building, etc. The main thing that you will want to consider is:

- Do I feel that my child can be happy here?

Depending on the nature of your child's special needs, it's likely that no school will be exactly the way you would wish it to be. You will need to think about the things that do not seem perfect and ask yourself:

- Can my child and I adapt or learn to put up with this?
- Are there some changes that the school could make that would solve this problem?

You will need to be completely honest and open with the school about the special needs that your child has and how this affects them at school. If it is difficult to do this in front of your son/daughter, then consider making the first visit without them.

It might be helpful to discuss:

- What would be the general routine/structure of the school day?
- How many children would be in his/her class?
- How many teachers/teaching assistants would there be?
- Does the school have (or have they ever had) children with similar difficulties to your son/daughter. If so, was it a successful placement?
- If you can think of particular problems that your child has, ask how they might deal with these.
- If you are worried that your child might stand out as different, ask how the school will try to help them fit in.
- If you feel your child will not cope with a particular school rule, ask if they will be able to be flexible for your child.
- How will the school communicate with you, and do you feel that they want to listen to your views and concerns about your child?
- How do they monitor and review small steps of progress and how will they involve you?

Your overall aim is to try and gain an idea of what life might be like for your child if they attend this particular school.

Other things to consider:

- Is the school local to you?
- Will other children in your street be going to this school?
- If not, will it be difficult for your child to make and maintain friendships, see children after school, meet them in the park and become part of the local community?
- For older children you might want to consider if the journey to school is one they can easily learn to do alone or with friends?
- Do you use before/after school clubs and can this school provide these?
- If the school you are looking at is a special school, you may want to ask what opportunities there are for having experiences in mainstream schools or mixing with children who do not have difficulties.

For further information about choosing a school, including types of schools and placements:

SOS! SEN have a helpful information sheet on [Choosing a School](#) and the differences between 'special' and 'mainstream' and what you need to consider.

Where can I get more information, advice and support?

Milton Keynes Special Educational Needs & Disability Information, Advice & Support Service (MK SENDIAS) can give you:

- Information about SEND support, including information about SEND funding
- Advice about what to do if you are not happy with the support your school is providing
- Support to prepare for school meetings and Annual Reviews.
- Information and advice about your rights to request an EHC needs assessment and support with the process
- Help to navigate Appeals and Complaints procedures
- Information about other organisations, support groups and information services that could help

You can contact us:

- By completing a [referral form](#)
- Via our [website](#) for lots of useful information and factsheets
- To discuss your concerns by **phone** on 01908 254518
- By [email](#), briefly outlining your concerns
- On [Facebook](#)