

SENDIASS West Northants Information Bulletin Issue 4

In our Information Bulletins we will focus on two topics and provide key information and useful links to services and documents. We will also share news stories from the team and highlight Parent Support Groups within West Northants.

Topic 1: Preparing for school

Starting a new school year can be daunting at any time for a child or young person. This could be at a new key stage, school or setting. It's important to allow time during the summer break to discuss with your child what they are likely to expect in their next school year. As well as you as parents/carers to understand what to expect and where to go if there are any issues.

Starting School: Advice for Parents with Summer Born Children

If you are considering delaying your (summer born) child's admission to school and are seeking information to decide what would be best for their child. There is guidance available to support this, it also provides information about the options available, and about how to arrange delayed admission. This can be found [here](#).

Schools' duty based on Legislation and Statutory Guidance

Schools and education authorities have had a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils since 2002: originally, under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA 1995); and, from October 2010, under the Equality Act (EqA) 2010.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments requires a school to take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils. Further information about reasonable adjustments can be found [here](#).

Mainstream schools and maintained nursery schools must ensure that children with SEN "engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have special educational needs" provided that this is reasonably practicable, does not prevent them from receiving the support they need, and does not prevent the efficient education of the other children and the efficient use of resources (Children and Families Act 2014, section 35). The reason for a child's exclusion from activities must therefore fall within these conditions.

The EqA 2010 should also be useful if a disabled child or young person is being excluded from activities. The EqA 2010 duties to make reasonable adjustments for children and young people with disabilities are anticipatory duties – schools and colleges must take reasonable steps to ensure children and young people with disabilities can be included when they are planning activities.

All schools and academies are required to identify and address the special educational needs of the pupils that they support. This is clearly outlined in the Statutory Guidance – SEND Code of Practice. This can be found [here](#). Further information about SEN support in schools can be found [here](#).

Children's rights under The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child can be found [here](#).

School SEND Policy

The school/setting your child is in or going to will have an area within their website for their policies. This should include their inclusion and/or SEND policy, depending on what the school call it. They may also have a recent SEND report and accessibility documents. In preparation for the next school year looking through these documents will allow you to understand on a more day to day basis what SEND support and provision will look like ahead of the new school year.

Topic 2: Transport

Local authorities (LAs) have a duty to make necessary travel arrangements for all 'eligible children', and a discretion to make travel arrangements for all other children. There are different duties relating to young people, depending on their age and where they are studying. For some children and young people with SEND, it may not be possible for them to make their own way to school. Either accompanied by a parent/carer or independently, because their school is too far away or because they are not able to walk or use public transport in the same way as other children. An assessment must be made on the child's individual needs.

The law also says that even if a child lives within statutory walking distance, they may still be entitled to free transport if they:

- are from a low-income family
- have an unsafe route to school
- have SEND

The Home to School Transport Policy for West Northants Council (WNC) can be found [here](#). The Post-16 Transport Policy for WNC can be found [here](#).

Under 5's

Most children now start school in the September after their 4th birthday. There is no duty to provide transport until children reach compulsory school age – the term after they turn 5 – but there is discretion to do so.

Transport for Children with an EHC Plan

This applies to children 16 years old or under with an EHC Plan. If the school named in the EHC Plan is the nearest suitable school - which is decided by the LA – then they must provide free school transport if your child is eligible. Further information about the conditions and how to apply can be found [here](#).

Transport for Children without an EHC Plan

There are 3 other ways your child may be able to get free travel assistance to school, including if:

- They are not in walking distance of their nearest school
- You are on a low income
- They are aged 16 to 24, have a disability and you are on a low income

Further information about this and how to apply can be found [here](#).

Transport for post-16s

Post-16 students in full-time education may be eligible for assistance with transport.

Students may qualify for school travel assistance if they are:

- aged 16 to 18
- in full time-education (12 hours or more a week)
- living more than 3 miles away from their nearest school or further education establishment

For further information and how to apply for transport can be found [here](#).

Staff Training

Guidance is clear that all staff involved with home to school transport should have up-to-date training, including on:

- Safeguarding.
- Handling emergency situations, including medical emergencies.
- Supporting and communicating with children with disabilities.

- Meeting the specific needs of the children travelling.

Transport Appeals

If an application for transport is declined, you may submit an appeal.

A decision may be challenged on the following grounds:

- eligibility
- distance measurement
- safety of the route
- transport arrangements offered

There is no moral right to challenge a decision where the entitlement to transport assistance has been removed on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour. Further information about the process and submitting an appeal can be found [here](#).

SENDIASS News:

We attended the Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) Personal Care and Support (PCAS) Providers Event at the Guildhall. We were joined by many other services and teams for PCAS Providers to find out about who we are and what we do. NCT also provided a presentation about the Safer Recruitment Process to support the Providers with what to do and advise with any queries Providers may have.

Parent Support Group Highlight – Northamptonshire Carers:

SENDs Northamptonshire Carers aims to provide a comprehensive support service to the unpaid Carer, including Parent Carers, of Northamptonshire. We recognise the contribution that all Carers give to society and the community, and we endeavour to empower Carers to improve their quality of life.

Our organisation is Carer-led, and our developments are a response to Carers needs.

Our Carers support line can be accessed by calling 01933 677907 option 2 or by emailing carers@northamptonshire-carers.org

The support line can provide access to;

- Initial registration and carers conversation to enable access to Carer support and universal services.
- Carers assessments, a Carer led assessment in line with the Care act 2014.
- Signposting and referrals to relevant services.
- Emotional and listening support for Carers.
- One to One telephone support.
- Information, advice, and guidance and ongoing support as needed.
- Specialist support groups, such as our Parent Carer group in the north of the county (Kettering and Corby) or our online support group for Parent carers.

Parents Carers are welcome to attend any of the groups listed in the Caring for Carers booklet which can be found [here](#). They include our Walk and talk group in Whittlebury to Cinema groups that visits cinemas all over Northamptonshire.

