

SEND Reforms: What Parents Need to Know

The Government is changing how support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) works. Here is a simple overview of what is proposed and what it could mean for your family.

A New 4-Level Support System (from 2029)

- Universal Support – Help available to all pupils in school. Teachers will receive more SEND training.
- Targeted Support – If your child needs extra help, the school will create an Individual Support Plan (ISP) with you.
- Targeted Plus Support – More specialist support, possibly including short-term expert input.
- Specialist Support – For children with the most complex needs. EHCPs are most likely to be issued at this stage.

EHCPs will no longer be automatic and will usually be reserved for children with the highest levels of need.

What About Existing EHCPs?

- Existing EHCPs will be reviewed during key school transition points from 2029–30.
- Children in Year 3 or above when reforms begin are expected to keep their EHCP until at least age 16.
- Some younger children may move to an Individual Support Plan instead.

What Schools Must Do

- Publish an annual Inclusion Strategy explaining how they support SEND pupils.
- Follow a new SEND Code of Practice.
- Show how SEND funding is being used to support children.

Your Rights as a Parent

- You should be involved in planning support for your child.
- Mediation and complaints processes aim to improve.
- You will still have the right to appeal to a SEND tribunal if you disagree with decisions.

What This Could Mean for Families

Potential Benefits: Clearer support pathways, more consistent school expectations, improved teacher training.

Possible Concerns: Fewer EHCPs may be issued and some families may feel legal protections are reduced.