

CHOOSING A SECONDARY SCHOOL

Choosing a school for your child is a difficult decision for any parent. When your child has a disability or special educational needs the decision can be even harder. The Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) is here to enable you to make an informed decision.

Collect information

Telford & Wrekin Local Offer (please see link on final page) is a good place to start and you should ask for your school's prospectus or visit their website. You can look at each school's OFSTED inspection report (ask the school or use the website www.ofsted.gov.uk). But don't just judge a school by its league table position or building. Smart buildings don't guarantee good teaching and schools lower down the league tables may be skilled at managing behaviour and a range of special educational needs. Each school has to produce a SEN Information Report and you should find this on their website. This will explain what extra support they can provide for children with special educational needs.

Arrange to visit your shortlist of schools

You may need to visit twice; once for a general look and a second time to meet the head teacher or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to talk about your child's particular needs and how the school can meet them. You'll need to think about whether to take your child with you. It is useful to take another adult with you too as you won't remember everything.

Tips for when you visit the schools

Use your eyes and ears as you walk round. Think about how noisy, crowded, orderly or lively it seems and what this would mean for your child. Look out for the things that matter to you and your child whether that's lots of computers, great football coaching or an emphasis on giving pupils real responsibility. What is the layout of the school? Can the school meet your child's needs? Do reasonable adjustments need to be made to make it more accessible for your child?

Ask questions

You want to find out practical details, like class sizes and arrangements for extra support. The grid below has been designed to help parents/carers who are choosing a school for their primary age child. Every child is unique and some of the suggested questions below might not be relevant so you can ignore/delete any that you don't need to ask. Blankspaces have been left at the end for you to add other questions that might be relevant to your child specifically e.g. if your child has a physical disability you will probably want to find out about the layout of the building and what reasonable adjustments a school would make to include your child in all parts of school life (including school trips). Once you have found a few schools to consider and decided what questions you need to ask you can find the answers by either looking on the school website, calling them or arranging a visit at the school.

What if I need more help?

The Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) can give you free impartial information and advice. Please call our helpline 01952 457 176 or email: info@iass.org.uk

Questions

Suggested Questions	School 1	School 2	School 3
How many pupils are in each class? how many support staff?			
How is the timetable organised?			
What are the teaching approaches?			
What subjects are offered?			
How do you help pupils find the right college, training apprenticeships, when they leave?			
What opportunities are there for qualifications in Y10/11			
How do you manage behaviour? is there a sensory/quiet space?			
How do you monitor progress?			

Questions

Suggested Questions	School 1	School 2	School 3
What are your rewards/sanctions			
What is staff experience of understanding my childs needs?			
What professionals do you work with?			
Do your staff have specialist training?			
How do you consult or communicate with parents?			
What our of school activities are there and can all children take part?			
<u>Specialist:</u>			
What range of disability does the school cater for?			
Will they get help with personal and life skills?			
what therapies are avaiable?			

After the visit...

Take time to reflect, can you see your child in this school?

Discuss your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust. Writing your thoughts down (using the grid above or another way) might help you to make a decision.

What if I don't get offered the school I want?

If you are unhappy, you can appeal. If you applied through the normal admissions process, you appeal to the admissions authority.

If your child has an EHC plan and you disagree with the school named in the final plan, you can appeal to the SEN Tribunal. Start by speaking to the local authority officer involved in your child's EHC Plan to see if you can negotiate a solution.

Don't forget the Sen Information Report for the schools you are viewing

Don't forget: Telford and Wrekin SEND local offer

You can also contact our service for support and advice throughout the process, please call on 01952 457 176 or email info@iass.org.uk

**Telford and Wrekin Sen Local Offer:
<https://www.telfordsend.org.uk/site/index.php>**