



The Graduated Response



Most of the time a child's difficulties can be assessed and their needs met from within the school's resources. Each school is given money for all the children who attend, and extra money to help those children who are having difficulties.

A Brief Guide to the Graduated Response to children with Additional Learning Needs

Children are assessed when they start school – these are called “BASELINE ASSESSMENTS”. These assessments - and future ones that teachers carry out on a regular basis - will help the school to know how many children might have additional learning needs.

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales (COP) says that schools should try to recognise a child’s difficulty early, so that the child can have the right kind of help at the earliest possible opportunity.

However, a small number of children may need even more help. About 20% of all children have special educational needs at some time - that is 1 in every 5 children. If you are worried about your child, do not feel like they are the only one having these sorts of difficulties. Ask to speak to your child’s teacher or Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (**SENCO**)/Additional Needs Co-ordinator (**ANCO**).



The COP gives structured guidance to schools on meeting a child’s needs if for whatever reason they are having difficulty learning. It says that the “trigger” for providing help will be a concern about the child’s progress. Teachers are often the people who decide that a child needs some help, but the COP says that anyone who knows the child and who is concerned can ask for extra help - this includes parents/carers.

The school will be responsible for the initial help your child receives, and this will be provided with a ‘graduated response’.

School Action

The help that may be given to your child at this early stage is called School Action. Lots of children may need this extra help. Some of the reasons could be:-

- Your child is making very little progress, even when the school is helping the child with their particular area of weakness
- Your child is having difficulty with learning to read, or with their maths – or in another subject
- Your child has emotional or behavioural difficulties, which aren’t getting any better despite all the school is already doing in trying to help
- Your child has a physical difficulty, sensory difficulties hearing or sight difficulties, or needs a special piece of equipment
- Your child has communication difficulties, or is finding it hard to make friends and mix with the other children

Your child's teacher in liaison with the **SENCO** will decide what their difficulty is and how to help. They will consult with you and write an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which describes the support needed, sets targets for achievement, and outlines how the plan will be monitored and reviewed. If your child still doesn't make appropriate progress, they may then decide to move them to the next stage.

School Action Plus

The Teacher and the SENCO will have worked together for the child, but if there hasn't been enough progress they may decide to get extra help from someone outside the school. This might be the Educational Psychologist, or the Speech and Language Therapist or an advisory teacher.

This person might suggest specific strategies to use with your child or they might help the staff plan the programmes for your child. Children usually move to this stage for one of the following reasons:-

- If they continue to make little or no progress in certain areas over a long period
- If they can't manage to work at the same level of the National Curriculum as other children of the same age
- If they are still not developing skills for reading and number work

- If they are still having emotional or behavioural difficulties that are not getting easier, despite the help that is being offered
- If they have any physical or sensory needs (such as sight or hearing), which means that the school need some expert advice
- If they have ongoing communication or social difficulties, and are still not able to mix with other children in the class

If your child continues to experience significant difficulties, despite receiving support from within school and outside agencies or if the teachers and SENCO feel that they still do not really understand what your child's difficulties are, then the school or the professionals working with the child might recommend that a full assessment is necessary.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority (LA) to carry out this assessment. This is called Statutory Assessment.

You will know if the school are going to request statutory assessment, because they will talk to you about this first. You may be asked to sign a form, so that your child can have this assessment.

The parents can also request that the LA carry out a statutory assessment if they feel that their child is not progressing in school.

If you decide to request statutory assessment it is always best to discuss it first with your child's teacher.

Please also see SNAP Cymru leaflet "Applying for a Statutory Assessment"

When the LA is asked to assess a child, they will take a little time (10 weeks) to decide if a full assessment is necessary. They will then let the school and the parent know what they decide.

The LA will make a decision about whether or not to make a full assessment after looking at initial information given to them about your child. The information the LA will look at will be from the school, you as parents, and other professionals who know your child. The LA will want to know how the school has helped your child.

The LA will for ask the following:-

- What you think about the support that has been available at School Action and School Action Plus stages for your child
- What your child feels about how they are doing at school
- Copies of the IEPs
- Records of your child's progress, or lack of progress
- A copy of any reports or programmes that other professionals have given to your child
- Evidence of how people outside the school have helped your child

You will know when the assessment has begun, because the LA will send you a letter saying that it will look at your child's needs, and they might also send you a booklet to explain how they will make the assessment happen. They should also give you details of your local parent partnership service. They will be able to offer independent advice and support. They will understand what you are going through, and can help

you feel involved with the assessment. It is always important for you to explain to the LA what you feel your child's needs are, and how you think their needs can be met.

The LA has a Special Needs Department, with people whose job it is to make sure the assessment happens properly. They are also available to speak to parents on the telephone, if they have any concerns.

You may also see the following words, these are replacing the term Special Educational Needs

- **Additional Learning Needs**
- **Additional Educational Needs**
- **Additional Needs**

About SNAP Cymru

SNAP Cymru delivers Parent Partnership Services in Wales and offers accurate information, impartial advice, support and key-workers for families of children and young people who have, or may have, Special Educational Needs and or a Disability. The SNAP Cymru service is free, confidential and impartial. SNAP Cymru also provides a formal disagreement resolution service and independent issue based advocacy for children and young people.

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