



SEN What Does It Mean?



Here are some of the terms that are commonly used within the area of Special Educational Needs.

SEN – Special Educational Needs

A child with special educational needs might experience difficulties in one or more of the following areas

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Behaviour, social and emotional development
- Sensory and/or physical
- Medical need



As many as one child in five of all children at school will have special educational needs at some time in their school lives. Children with **SEN** will need extra help in school. Most of the children who have special educational needs stay at their local mainstream school and the extra help is given to them there.

Learning Difficulties

What is a learning difficulty?

This is where a child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children the same age.

The Code of Practice (COP)

The SEN Code of Practice for Wales gives practical guidance to local authorities (LAs), the governing bodies of schools, and settings that receive local government funding to provide early education. It also applies to those who help them, including the health services and social services. The SEN COP gives guidance on how to support pupils who have SEN. Not all children's special needs will be the same, so the COP says that there should be a graduated response to meeting their needs. All Schools and LA's should have regard for the Code of Practice, which means they must not ignore it.

Partnership with Parents

The Code of Practice says that if schools are going to help a child, they must listen to what the parents' have to say as well. It says that the school must take notice of the parent's views, and treat their concerns as important. The Government says that the support parents give their children is vital, so the Code of Practice advises schools on how to improve partnership with parents.

Local Authority - LA

The Local Authority is made up of an Education Committee of Councillors – elected by the public – and an Education Department, whose role it is to make sure schools are working well. They are responsible for building maintenance, the rules about who should be admitted to schools etc. They also employ and support a team of staff to help children with special needs. This team includes Educational Psychologists, support teachers/tutors – for those children who have specific difficulties, such as hearing or sight problems – and also advisory teachers. They allocate funds to schools in order to meet the needs of the children who attend, and they make sure that the schools are meeting the needs of the children.

Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator – SENCO

All schools have a teacher who is responsible for co-ordinating the help for children in the school who have special educational needs. This teacher is called the SENCO. The school should be able to tell you the name of their SENCO. Sometimes in smaller schools the SENCO is the Head Teacher, or the Deputy Head. In bigger schools, such as comprehensives, the SENCO will be the Head of the special needs department. The SENCO should be able to explain to parents how the school is helping their children and how the children are progressing.

Educational Psychologists – Ed Psych

Educational Psychologists understand how children learn and develop. They are trained to work with children, from birth to 19, who are having difficulties with learning or behaviour. They work with parents, teachers and other professionals to assess what learning difficulties a child might be having. They also work with children who are having problems with their behaviour. They help others to understand what difficulties a child may be having, and what help they will need.

Independent Parental Supporter (IPS)

This is someone who can give parents and families impartial information, advice and support in making sure their children get the support they need. This person can talk with parents about their concerns, help them understand how their child can receive help, help them understand the stages of assessment; support them at meetings, etc. SNAP Cymru offers this free service to families within Wales.

Assessment

This is the collection of information that builds a picture of a child's needs and progress. The school can administer some assessments. Some schools test all children during the school year. Parents are often asked to contribute information about their children for the school to get a better picture.

Statutory Assessment

A statutory assessment is a very detailed examination of a child's special educational needs. Information is gathered from parents, school, educational psychologist, health and Social Services. This may lead to a statement or a note in lieu.

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

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

The term Additional Learning Needs (ALN) is used by the Welsh Government and is much broader than the term 'special educational needs'; it includes learners who, for whatever reason, require additional learning support because they are struggling to learn in comparison with their peers.



About SNAP Cymru

SNAP Cymru delivers the Parent Partnership Service 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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