

2025/2026

Southwark LA SEND guidance

For parents



Southwark
Council

Foreword

We recently released the 2022–2025 Southwark Council SEND strategy for children and young people 0–25. The strategy is made up of five SEND standards that all educational settings in Southwark such as schools, colleges and nurseries must follow. This guide is a summary of the five SEND standards and was created to support parents of children with SEND understand what provision their child is entitled to when in a mainstream school. If you would like to read the full version of the 2022–2025 Southwark Council SEND strategy for children and young people 0–25, [click here](#).

‘Our aim is to ensure positive and productive outcomes for children and young people aged 0 – 25 with special educational needs and learning disabilities (SEND).’
(Parent Carer Forum: Southwark Independent Voice [SIV] part of mission statement 2019)

Principles

- The child or young person's views and aspirations should be central to all planning with and for them.
- Parents should be partners in all decisions and discussions about how best to support their child.
- Teachers should have high expectations for every pupil, whatever their starting point.
- Teachers should set targets which are ambitious but appropriate.
- All pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and planned for from the outset.
- Lessons are planned to address areas of difficulty and to remove barriers to pupil progress.
- Planning enables the majority of pupils with SEN and disabilities to study the full national curriculum.
- Assessment and intervention should follow a needs led approach and not be reliant on a diagnosis.

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This document has been coproduced by the Senior Adviser for SEND, SEN Team, SENCOs and wider Southwark SEND Service.

Southwark SEND Standards

For provision in mainstream schools

Standard 1 An inclusive setting: providing a positive and supportive environment for all

Schools should:

- Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching.
- Provide an education that is ambitious and promote fulfilment of potential.
- Provide an education that is appropriate to the needs of the pupils.
- Remove barriers to learning and participation.
- Promote positive relationships and well-being for all pupils.
- Adopt a pro-active and positive approach to behaviour.



Standard 2 Ensuring high quality teaching is accessible to all

Schools should:

Understand great teaching for pupils with SEND is great teaching for all.

Use the following evidence-based teaching strategies for pupils with SEND:

- Scaffolding
- Flexible grouping
- Cognitive and meta cognitive strategies
- Explicit Instruction
- Technology to support pupils with SEND.

Ensure all teachers can use these strategies confidently and flexibly in response to the needs of the pupils.

Ensure support staff do not replace the teaching from the classroom teacher.



Standard 3 Building an ongoing and holistic understanding of need

Schools should:

- Use the graduated approach of 'assess, plan, do, review' to understand pupil's learning needs.
- Assess regularly and purposefully, involving parents/carers, pupils and other professionals.
- Empower and trust teachers to make decisions on next steps for teaching a child.
- Understand the majority of children and YP with SEND will have their needs met in local mainstream schools.
- Understand the purpose of an EHC Plan is to secure the best outcomes across education, health and social care in preparation for adulthood.



Standard 4 Use targeted support and interventions to supplement high quality teaching

Schools should:

- Understand HQT reduces the need for extra support.
- Understand some pupils will require high quality, targeted and structured interventions to make progress.
- Ensure support staff can regularly access high quality training appropriate to the pupil's needs.
- Increase the intensity of the intervention with need (universal – targeted – specialist).
- Understand the effective deployment of support staff is critical to meeting needs and securing outcomes.
- Ensure school leaders regularly monitor the impact of support staff on pupils with SEND.



Standard 5 Ensuring all schools know and follow the statutory requirements

Schools should:

- Know and follow all relevant legislation.
- Review and update all statutory documentation.
- Have up to date knowledge of all access arrangements.
- Follow statutory requirements in respect of admissions, toileting, medical needs and safeguarding.
- Ensure their setting enables the majority of needs to be met without an EHC Plan, including those with complex needs.
- Follow all processes, as set out by Southwark LA, in applying for an EHC needs assessment.
- Ensure effective EHCP provision.
- Follow all statutory requirements for reviewing an EHC plan.



Standard

1

An inclusive setting: providing a positive and supportive environment for all

Southwark expects all its educational settings to be welcoming places that use the resources available to them to teach well and to support every student to achieve their very best.

Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

Special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) should regularly analyse data and monitor teaching to make clear development plans that promote better outcomes, this includes planning training for teachers and support staff.



What is the SEND code of practice?

The 'SEND code of practice: 0–25 years' is a government policy. It explains the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges to provide for those with special educational needs

Provide an education that is ambitious and promote fulfilment of potential

All staff within the setting should have high aspirations for children and young people with SEND.

Provide an education that is appropriate to the needs of the pupils

The setting should recognise supporting pupils with special educational needs is part of a proactive approach to supporting all pupils.

Children and young people with SEND should be provided with opportunities to be taught as much as possible with their peers when appropriate.

Click here for the full version
[The 'SEND code of practice](#)

Standard 1

An inclusive setting: providing a positive and supportive environment for all

Remove barriers to learning
and participation

Placing support for pupils with SEND at the heart of the school priorities means removing barriers to learning and participation.



Promote positive relationships and well-being for all pupils

An inclusive school environment for pupils with SEND is beneficial for all children and young people and supports better quality interactions. Teachers and practitioners are responsible for the learning of all pupils, including those with SEND.

"Building relationships with students is by far the most important thing a teacher can do. Without a solid foundation and relationships built on trust and respect, no quality learning will happen." Timothy Hilton 2018.

Adopt a pro-active and positive approach to behaviour

In Southwark we use recommendations from the 'improving behaviour in schools' guidance report:

1. Knowing and understanding pupils and their influences.
2. Teaching learning behaviours alongside managing misbehaviour.
3. Using classroom management strategies to support good classroom behaviour.
4. Using simple approaches as part of regular routines.
5. Targeting approaches to meet the needs of individuals.
6. Being consistent.

Standard 2

Ensuring high quality teaching is accessible to all

Ensure support staff do not replace the teaching from the classroom teacher

Children and young people with SEND should be provided with the same high quality of teaching as their mainstream peers. They should be included in mainstream activities as much as possible and have equal access to class teachers and subject specialists.

Understand great teaching for pupils with SEND is great teaching for all

High Quality Teaching (HQT) is the crucial first step in meeting the needs of all children and young people with SEND in any given educational setting.

HQT should be embedded into all subject areas, at all levels, across all years, by all teachers.

What is High Quality Teaching?
Find out more:

[HERE](#)



Standard 2

Ensuring high quality teaching is accessible to all

Teachers should use evidence-based teaching strategies for pupils with SEND

Ensure all teachers can use the key strategies confidently and flexibly in response to the needs of the pupils

Below are the key teaching strategies we expect all teachers to know and feel confident using:

Scaffolding

What do they mean?

Providing extra support to help the child or young person complete a task. Then gradually removing the support until they can complete the task independently, like a writing frame.

Flexible grouping

Students are not always in the same groups, they get mixed up depending on the task. Sometimes they are with students of the same ability so they can receive extra support. Other times they are in mixed ability groups.

Cognitive

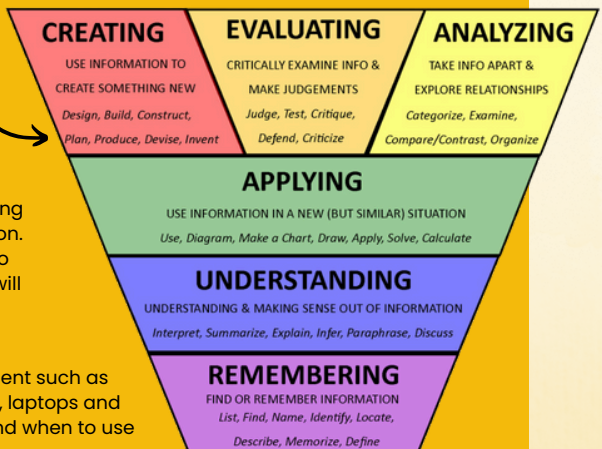
Cognition is your ability to think and learn, cognitive and metacognitive strategies could include things like knowing your strengths and weaknesses for different tasks.

Explicit instruction

Explicit instruction simply means being very clear about the learning intention. Telling and showing students what to do and clearly explaining how they will be assessed.

Technology

Technology usually refers to equipment such as interactive white boards, computers, laptops and ipads. Teachers should know how and when to use these appropriately.



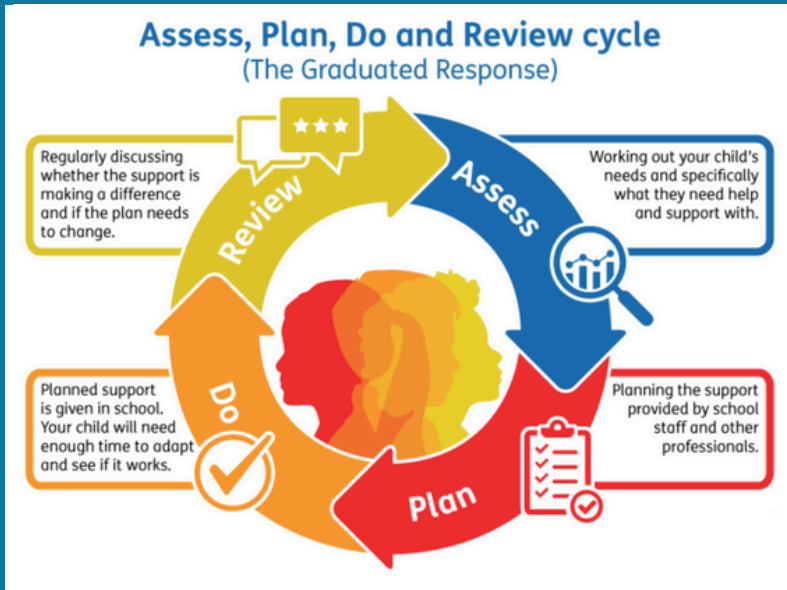
Standard

3

Building an ongoing and holistic understanding of need

Having a diagnosis is not on its own a criteria for identifying as SEN within an educational setting. When a child or young person's level of need begins to impact their progress and development, schools must then take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This is known as the graduated approach.

Use the graduated approach of 'assess, plan, do, review' to understand pupil's learning needs



Standard

3

Building an ongoing and holistic understanding of need.

Assess regularly and purposefully, involving parents/carers, pupils and other professionals

Schools and settings should create shared ways of working with children and young people and their families.

- Educational Psychology Service
- ASD Team (Autistic spectrum disorder)
- CAHMS (Child and Adolescent mental health services)
- Cherry Garden Outreach
- SaLT (Speech and Language therapy)
- Occupational Health.

External professionals who could be involved in assessing a child or young person:



Empower and trust teachers to make decisions on next steps for teaching a child

The majority of children and young people with SEND will have their needs met in local mainstream schools

Teachers and practitioners should be empowered to plan for all children, including those with SEND.



The purpose of an EHC Plan is to secure the best outcomes across education, health and social care in preparation for adulthood

Most children and young people with SEND will be supported in mainstream schools through SEND support, this does not require an EHCP.

When applying for an EHC needs assessment, schools must show evidence of the different forms of SEN support that have been provided.

Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) application process

If a child or young person needs more help in school than what is normally provided through SEN support, parents or the educational setting may consider applying for an EHC needs assessment.

To increase the chance of being successful, requests made by parents should include evidence from school. For more support for parents requesting an EHCP contact [SIAS](#).

Requests made by schools usually include the six stages outline below.

Stage 1 - Initial discussion

- SENCO holds meetings with parents and other school staff to discuss the needs of the pupil.
- SENCO does classroom observation and looks at the pupils data.
- SENCO shares information and consent forms with parents.

Stage 2 - Information gathering

- SENCO gathers reports from professionals who have worked with the pupil in the last 2 years.
- SENCO gets evidence of interventions over the last 2 years.
- SENCO gets parents view on their child.
- SENCO checks all documents and begins request form.

Stage 3 - Send request to Southwark

- SENCO sends EHCP request form to Southwark.
- SENCO sends a copy of EHCP request form to parents.
- SENCO arranges meeting with parents to discuss next stages.

Stage 4 - Awaiting request outcome

- SENCO and parents meet to discuss outcome of EHCP request from Southwark.

Stage 5 - Responding to outcome

Not to proceed

- SENCO and parents discuss next steps:
- Appeal, or
- resubmit at a later date.

Assessment agreed

- Southwark carry out assessments.
- Co-production meeting.
- Southwark issues draft EHCP.
- After reviews final EHCP is issued.

Stage 6 - EHCP issued

- SENCO shares EHCP with teachers and support staff.
- Funding is issued and school allocates appropriate support for pupil.
- SENCO arranges annual review for around a year after the EHCP issue date.

Standard 4

Use targeted support and interventions to supplement high quality teaching

High-quality teaching (HQT) describes the inclusive provision and support that is available for all children and young people regardless of their needs. It can be adjusted to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

High quality teaching reduces the need for extra support

High quality teaching reduces the need for extra support for all pupils. Nevertheless, some pupils will require additional support in the form of high quality, structured interventions to make progress.

Some pupils will require high quality, targeted and structured interventions to make progress

An intervention is a short-term, focused teaching programme with specific intended outcomes aimed at individuals or small groups of pupils with particular needs.

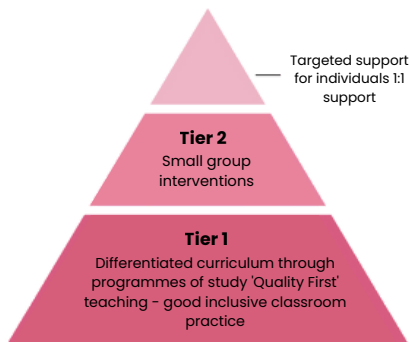


Figure 1: the 3-tier model of inclusion provision and interventions

Ensure support staff can regularly access high quality training appropriate to the pupil's needs

Increase the intensity of the intervention with need.

Targeted interventions within tier 2 support are usually delivered in small groups of pupils identified with similar barriers to learning. Tier 3 support could include individual speech and language therapy. This is in addition to high quality teaching.

Understand the effective deployment of support staff is critical to meeting needs and securing outcomes

Ensure school leaders regularly monitor the impact of support staff on pupils with SEND

Students with SEND may get targeted intervention, work in small groups and may have 1-1 support at times, although there is no evidence to suggest that 1-1 support improves outcomes. Read the [Making Best use of Teaching Assistants](#) guidance report, for more on how TAs can support high quality teaching.

Standard

5

Ensuring all schools know and follow the statutory requirements

Statutory requirements are processes and policies that all schools and educational settings must follow by law.

Know and follow all relevant legislation

The statutory requirements are the things that all educational settings **must do** for children and young people with SEND.

All local authorities must publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available for children and young people with SEND.

Schools and settings must have four key documents in place and update them annually:

- **The SEN information report**
- **SEN policy**
- **Accessibility plan**
- **Policy on meeting the needs of children and young people with medical conditions in educational settings**

Have up to date knowledge of all access arrangements

Children and young people with SEND should be included in all regular assessments and exams where possible. Schools must consider whether any of their pupils will need access arrangements before they administer the tests.

Review and update all statutory documentation

You can find Southwark's Local Offer

[HERE](#)

Types of support available include:

- **Additional time**
- **Adaptations of test papers**
- **Use of scribes**
- **Word processors**
- **Readers**
- **Prompts and rest breaks**
- **Highlighter pens**

The full list of access arrangements can be found on the [JCQ website](#).

Standard 5

Ensuring all schools know and follow the statutory requirements

Follow statutory requirements in respect of admissions, toileting, medical needs and safeguarding

Admissions

Most children with special educational needs (SEN) do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and will go to a mainstream school. School admissions are covered by the Equality Act, meaning a school **cannot** refuse to take a child because they have a disability or SEN. A school also cannot refuse to admit a child on the grounds that the child may need an EHCP but hasn't yet got one.

Toileting

It is the school's duty to support children and young people with medical conditions, including bladder and bowel problems. If a child or young person has an identified continence issue which won't be resolved before they start school, the school cannot refuse entry. Parents should not be expected to attend school to support with toileting.



Find out more:

[ERIC National bowel and bladder charity](#)

Safeguarding

All schools and settings have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who should be trained in recognising the additional risks that children with SEND face online and in real life.

Find out more:

[Southwark safeguarding children's partnership](#)

Standard

5

Ensuring all schools know and follow the statutory requirements

Ensure their setting enables the majority of needs to be met without an EHC Plan, including those with complex needs

All Southwark schools receive funding to make SEN provision, this funding is intended to allow schools to make effective early intervention and SEN provision for groups and individual children. All children and young people within a setting can access support including those who do not have a formal diagnosis or EHCP.

Follow all processes, as set out by Southwark LA, in applying for an EHC needs assessment

When a school or setting believe that a child or young person's needs cannot be met through graduated SEN support, it may be time to consider applying for an EHC needs assessment. When applying for a needs assessment, schools must provide Southwark with evidence that the child or young person has significant special educational needs, which require long-term, highly individualised interventions.

Ensure effective EHCP provision

The provision being made for a child or young person with an EHC plan should directly address the stated outcomes, be evidence based and regularly reviewed.

Follow all statutory requirements for reviewing an EHC plan








Settings should review EHC plans termly and have an official review meeting every year.

Schools should invite parents and any other relevant professionals to annual reviews two weeks prior to the meeting date.

After the review, schools must send annual review reports to Southwark LA within 10 working days of the meeting.



Useful links

-  [Southwark LA Local Offer](#)
-  [Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
-  [Southwark information advice and support \(SIAS\)](#)
-  [Southwark autism support team](#)
-  [More on Education Health and Care plans \(EHCP\)](#)
-  [Transport - For children and young people with disabilities and/ or special educational needs](#)
-  [Southwark SEND education provision and strategy 2022 - 2025](#)

For more help and support contact the inclusion and SEND team part of Southwark Education Learning and Achievement
selainclusionandsend@southwark.gov.uk