

RIASS

Redbridge Information, Advice & Support Service
for Special Educational Needs & Disability



Visiting a school

Deciding which school is best for your child can be a very difficult decision but visiting a school and talking to staff is usually the best way to decide if that school is right for you and your child.

No one can recommend a school for your child. It may be suggested if a special school or a mainstream would be best to meet the learning needs of your child.

The code of practice states:

6.1 All children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential. This should enable them to:

- ***achieve their best***
- ***become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and***
- ***make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training***

We have created a list of questions for you to think about, and to use, to help you decide which school is right for you and your child.

You may want to discuss your decision with any professionals involved with your child or the current education setting.

Talking to other parents as well can help you decide, but do keep in mind that every child has different support needs to others and experience school in different ways.

You can discuss the school choice with **RIASS**. We do not recommend schools but can listen to your concerns and inform you of what schools need to put in place within the law to best support students.

You may want to look on the school's website for their Ofsted report and look at the SEN support section within this.

Visit as many open evenings as you can.

If your child has an EHCP you will be asked to start considering schools a year early then other peers.

Even without having an EHCP you may want to start visiting the open evenings a year early so you can see what each school can offer your child. You may want to attend the open evenings on your own and then return with you child at another time.

You should be able to find a list of open evenings on the school's website

You can request a sperate visit to a school of your choosing. The school has no legal obligation to arrange this but many schools do welcome extra visits. This gives you a chance to see the school operating during the day time when all students are present.

Even if you are considering a special school for your child we would also recommend a visit to the local mainstream school to see if you feel they can met the needs of your child.

Parental preference will always be considered when the local authority names a school for your child.

There are times when you may disagree with the local authority on the school being named. If you do, then please contact **RIASS** who can inform you of the next steps you can take to address this.

It will be beneficial to have at least 3 schools in mind for your child in case your first options are not given.

Think about your child

1. What is my child good at?
2. What does my child like to do?
3. What health problems does my child have?
4. Do they have any social difficulties e.g. shyness, victim of bullying?
5. Are there any problems at home?
6. Does my child suffer from any emotional difficulties e.g. tantrums, anxiety?
7. Is my child affected by change?

Questions to ask all schools

1. Do staff have the appropriate skills or access to training to help my child?
2. What experience do they have of children with similar disabilities or needs?
3. Are there specialist resources?
4. Is the building accessible?
5. How big are the classes?
6. Will my child's support be from the same people?
7. How will staff be informed about my child's needs?
8. What is the best way for me to communicate with school?

9. What arrangements are there if my child's teachers/support assistants are off sick?
10. Will my child have access to appropriate therapy?
11. What arrangements are there for giving medication?
12. What support is there for homework?
13. What additional systems are in place for the transition of Year 7 students?
14. Does the school run a social skills programme/group?
15. Would your child have a student mentor/buddy?
16. How would the school support your child's organisational skills?
17. How are sensory needs addressed?
18. Does the school provide a quiet area for calming pupils?
19. How does pastoral care operate?

Questions to ask mainstream schools

1. Will my child be fully included in all school activities, including those taking place outside school?
2. How does the school try to prevent bullying of children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)?
3. Do the behaviour policies recognise that some children with SEND may need extra support to follow rules?
4. How would the peer group be supported to understand your child's difficulties?

Questions to ask special schools

1. What range of disability does the school cater for?
2. What subjects will my child be able to study?
3. What opportunities are there for my secondary age child to study for qualifications?
4. Will there be any opportunities for my child to spend any time in a mainstream school?
5. Does the school aim to move children into mainstream education if this is appropriate?
6. How many children have done this in the last two or three years?
7. Do they have an appropriate peer group – i.e. children of the same gender, similar age, with similar needs?

If you would like help and support with a school visit, please discuss with the **RIASS** on **020 8708 8922** or email **rias@redbridge.gov.uk**.

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