

Additional Support for Learning Information for Parents

What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet is for parents of all children and young people in South Ayrshire schools. 'Parents' means anyone who has responsibility for a child or young person. 'Young people' means pupils over 16 who are still at school.

This leaflet tells you about important changes in the law that will affect children's and young people's education. These changes have been made to help children and young people who need additional support in school.

The new law is called the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. The Act became law on the 14th of November 2005.

What are additional support needs?

Some children and young people need extra help in school to make progress. It is the duty of the education authority to give some extra help in schools to all children and young people with additional support needs. Children and young people may need this help with their reading or writing, to make sure they can get into and around the school or to support their learning through difficult family circumstances. Additional support needs can last for only a short time or could last for much longer. For instance, additional support may be needed for a child or young person who:

- is being bullied
- has behavioural or learning difficulties
- is deaf or blind
- is gifted
- is bereaved
- is not attending school regularly

These are just some examples.

How do we make sure we can meet the additional support needs of pupils in South Ayrshire?

All children and young people may need additional support at some point to help them make the most of school education. The main support is the class teacher who is able to meet the needs of most pupils without extra help. With good teaching and learning, and the right materials, most children and young people won't need anything more than this.

If a pupil needs more help than the class teacher can give in school, then a process of providing the right support begins. We call this staged intervention. Staged intervention is our way of recognising additional support needs and then giving extra help for a child or young person. This can be broken down into three main stages in school:

Stage 1 - In class support

At this stage the teacher notices children or young people who need more help than other children or young people in the class. For most pupils the help they need can be given by the class teacher without anyone else being involved. The teacher may change the way she teaches, change the materials the pupil is using or reorganise her classroom. Even after this, some children still need help and the class teacher will talk to the pupil support co-ordinator or principal teacher in the school for advice and help.

Stage 2 - In school support

If the child or young person is still having problems and not making good progress, the teacher will get help from other people in the school, such as pupil support staff. At Stage 2, this help will come from the school. The school should talk to parents as soon as possible in order to make sure they know all about the help being given to their child.

Stage 3 - Interagency support

Sometimes the help at stage 2 is not enough and the school will arrange a meeting so that everyone who might be able to help the child to learn will be able to talk things over and agree a plan to support the child or young person. This might be social workers, health workers or voluntary workers who might be asked for information, advice or help. It will involve the educational psychologist. The teacher and the school gather this information, advice and services. This is then used to help the child or young person make the most of school.

Before the plan can be drawn up everyone will have to share information about the child or young person's additional support needs. Then everyone should agree what they can do to support the child or young person. They will all have to agree some targets and when to meet again to make sure the targets are being met.

For most pupils this will be written down in an Individualised Educational Programme (IEP). For a small number this might mean a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) has to be prepared. An IEP sets short and long term targets for the child or young person. A CSP also sets targets for the child or young person. However, in a CSP the child or young person needs the support of people outside education, such as health workers, in order to help them learn to their full potential. Pupils at stage 3 should also have a meeting to discuss their plan at least once a year.

How can parents help to support children and young people with additional support needs?

Parents should know about and be involved in the plans to support their children right from the start. Parents can bring supporters or advocates to any meeting at school to discuss their child's additional support needs. Further information on this is available at the end of this leaflet.

They should understand the way schools work and know all about the support available from the school, the education authority and from other professionals. This leaflet gives some information on the staged intervention process which is the way schools will make sure that children get the help they need if they have additional support needs. The school or education authority can give you more information if you want it.

If a CSP is being prepared for a child or young person, the Authority must take account of the views of parents. This should be when deciding to prepare a CSP and when reviewing the CSP. In addition the views of parents on any aspects of the CSP should be written into the plan.

What role do children and young people play?

All children and young people will have the opportunity to make their views known about decisions that affect them. They will be encouraged to take part in any meeting where people are discussing their additional support needs. They will help to set their own targets and to review these. They will also help with the plans to move to another school or to life after school when the time is right.

If a CSP is being prepared or the authority is trying to establish if one is needed, children and young people will have opportunities to let people know what their views are. They will also be asked for their views when a CSP is being reviewed. These views will be written down in the plan.

How can parents make requests for assessment?

Assessment means gathering and making sense of information about a child or young person and his or her particular circumstances. Its purpose is to identify children and young people who have additional support needs and to make sure they get the support they need. It takes account of their strengths as well as identifying their needs. Assessment is something that happens all the time and a great deal of information will be available in schools. This means that specific, individual assessments might not be necessary. However, the Act makes sure that parents or young people can ask an education authority to arrange for an assessment or examination to take place. The request can be for an educational, psychological or medical assessment or examination or any other assessment or examination that is requested, including more than one of these.

Requests for assessment must be in writing or some other permanent form which can be referred to in the future. The request should contain the reasons for the request and the education authority must meet this request unless it is unreasonable.

The authority may decide a request is unreasonable if:

- it is not in the best interests of the child or young person;
- it is not relevant given the child's or young person's circumstances;
- it is unnecessary given no significant change since an earlier assessment;
- it falls within a short time of a previous request;
- it repeats assessment already carried out.

Parents can expect a response to such requests within four weeks and will be notified of the person in the authority who is dealing with the request.

These requests should be sent to the education authority. More information about who to send these to is at the back of this leaflet.

What can parents do if they don't agree with the authority?

A separate leaflet has been published giving details of the process involved in resolving differences which might arise between the authority and a parent. This might involve discussing things with your child's head teacher or with an officer from the authority or it might involve voluntary mediation, which a parent can ask for and can be requested at any time. It might mean the formal process of dispute resolution and appeals tribunals. This leaflet will be available in schools and also from the education authority.

Where can parents get support and information relating to additional support needs?

The first point of contact for more information should be the school your child attends. For more information you can contact the following officers:

The Principal Psychologist

County Buildings
Wellington Square
AYR
KA7 1DR
Tel: 01292 612253
e-mail: ASNenquiries@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Quality Improvement Officer (ASfL)

County Buildings
Wellington Square
AYR
KA7 1DR
Tel: 01292 612253

- **Social Work:** (Ayr) 01292 267675
..... (Girvan) 01465 712299
- **Children and Families Disability Team:** 01292 886569
- **Disability Resource Centre:** 01292 616261

Health: The normal route to health services, for example Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), is by referral from your General Practitioner.

- **Speech and Language Therapy:** 01292 571236
- **Princess Royal Trust Carers Centre:** 01292 263000
- **Barnardo's Children's Rights and Advocacy Worker:** ... 01292 294309
- **Children 1st:** 01292 288373

Children 1st Directions Project works with children aged 5-12 and their families to address difficulties including challenging behaviour, and possible or actual offending behaviour.

Children 1st Family Group Conference Service brings families together where there are concerns about a child to help them find their own solutions to difficulties.

In addition to the above numbers, parents can also contact the Enquire helpline: 0845 123 2303

Textphone: 0131 22 22 439

email: info@enquire.org.uk

Enquire, the Scottish advice service for Additional Support for Learning provides free, independent and impartial advice through its helpline.

This publication can be made available in Braille and audio CD. It can also be made available in different languages. To order an alternative format please telephone 01292 612253 or e-mail: ASNenquiries@south-ayrshire.gov.uk