

A guide to
**Ordinarily Available Provision
for parent carers**

 **Bristol's SEND
Local Offer**



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | 3 |
| The four different types of SEND..... | 3 |
| Approaches that should be in place for all CYP with SEND..... | 4 |
| Assessment..... | 4 |
| Partnerships with learners and parent carers..... | 5 |
| Pastoral care..... | 5 |
| The learning environment..... | 5 |
| Teaching and learning strategies..... | 6 |
| Resources..... | 6 |
| Staff skills and training | 6 |
| Transition and transfer | 7 |
| Approaches that should be in place for some children with SEND..... | 8 |
| Cognition and learning..... | 8 |
| Communication and interaction..... | 9 |
| Social emotional and mental health | 11 |
| Sensory and/or physical needs | 14 |
| Documents available in other formats | 16 |

Introduction

'Ordinarily Available Provision' (OAP) is the provision that is expected to be made for children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Bristol schools and educational settings. OAP should be made for children who receive SEND support. The majority of CYP receiving SEND support attend mainstream schools and Early Years (EY) settings.

This guide sets out the approaches that should be in place for all CYP with SEND in mainstream schools and EY settings. It also describes the provision that should be in place for CYP with different types of SEND.

The four different types of SEND are:

- **Cognition and learning:** Some CYP learn at a slower pace than others their age, have difficulties with organisation and memory skills, or have a specific difficulty affecting one part of their learning such as literacy or numeracy
- **Communication and interaction:** Some CYP have speech, language and communication difficulties which make it difficult for them to understand language and to communicate effectively with others
- **Social, emotional mental health:** Some CYP have difficulties managing relationships with other people, are withdrawn, or behave in ways that may disrupt their own and others' learning
- **Sensory and Physical needs:** Some CYP have visual and/or hearing impairments, or a physical need that means they must have additional ongoing support and equipment

You may find it helpful to talk about OAP with your child's school or setting when you meet to discuss the support they need. It is important to understand that not every approach will be in place in every school or setting. Some schools may use different but useful alternatives. If you are worried about the provision in your child's school or setting, then speak to your child's SENDCo or visit the local offer website: www.bristol.gov.uk/web/bristol-local-offer.

Approaches that should be in place for all CYP with SEND

Assessment

The school or setting should use an approach called “Assess, Plan, Do, Review” to make sure the right support is in place to meet your child’s SEND. The Assess, Plan, Do, Review approach is a cycle which may need to happen a number of times before the right support is found which helps your child make progress. Support can include teaching your child new skills, teaching in a different way and changing their physical environment or timetable to make it easier for them to be happy and successful in their school or setting. It may also mean that an additional adult works with them for part of their day.

Assess

Your child’s school or setting should gather information to make sure they understand your child’s strengths and difficulties and what will help them make progress. They might gather information from observations or ask your child to do a test or carry out a task. They should also ask you how they are at home and for your thoughts on how they are getting on in school. They should also find out what your child thinks. If they are very young or have difficulties communicating this may be as simple as watching what they like and don’t like in their setting and what kind of support is helpful to them.

Plan

Once the school or setting has assessed your child’s needs, they should make a plan for how they will support your child. This plan should be made in conversation with you. Different schools and settings often take slightly different approaches to supporting CYP. The plan that is agreed will depend on the expertise of staff working in the school or setting and the approaches that they have found useful with other children.

Do

When the plan has been agreed, the support should be put into place. It is important to understand how often the support will happen and who will be providing it. It is also important to understand how you will know if your child is making progress.

Review

Your child’s school or setting should talk to you at least once a term about the support for your child and how they are getting on. If possible, your child should also be involved in these discussions so they can share their views about what is going well and what they find difficult. It is important to remember that sometimes it takes time for support to make a difference. If the support has worked well, it might not need to continue. If this happens, your child will still receive the support available to all children in the school or setting. If your child isn’t making good progress, the support they receive might need to change. This could mean trying different approaches, increasing the amount of support provided or involving specialist teams to help your child’s school or setting better understand your child and what might work for them. There are many different specialist teams who support children with SEND. Some of these teams may work with you as a family outside of your child’s education and some need to be contacted directly by schools and settings when advice is needed.

Partnerships with learners and parent carers

As a parent carer, you know your child well. It is therefore important that schools and parent carers work in partnership to ensure every child has their needs met. There should be regular contact between home and school, including regular reviews of provision. Some of the ways schools communicate with families are:

- Home/school diaries or planners
- Book bags
- Contacting you directly by telephone, email or text message
- Bristol support plans

There should also be other opportunities throughout the school year to meet with your child's school such as parents' evenings or coffee mornings.

Parents can also get support from SEND and You which is a free service offering information, advice and support.

Pastoral care

Every child should feel safe, valued and have a sense of belonging in their school or setting. Pastoral care is the support schools provide for children's social and emotional wellbeing. Pastoral care can look differently in different settings. This could be:

- A key person (such as a head of year)
- A pastoral lead
- A family liaison officer

Your child's school or setting can tell you about how they support children's social and emotional wellbeing. This will include information about how they deliver personal, social and health education (PSHE) to all children.

The learning environment

Some children have challenges accessing the physical learning environment. This might be because they have a physical disability or a hearing or visual impairment. Other children (including those with autism) may have under or over developed senses which make the physical environment difficult for them to manage.

Schools and settings should plan how to make activities accessible for all children by making changes to the ways they normally do things. This should be set out in a document known as an 'accessibility plan'.

Schools and settings should also make sure that all children can participate in activities outside of the main learning spaces. This includes playtimes, trips and after-school activities.

Teaching and learning strategies

CYP with SEND need high quality teaching to make good progress. This teaching might need to be different to other children in the school or setting. They can use a range of teaching and learning strategies to support this:

- Visual strategies such as a personalised visual timetable, a task board or now and next cards
- Auditory strategies such as music to indicate the end of a task or activity
- Breaking activities down by giving instructions one step at a time and dividing tasks into small steps and providing support at each stage
- Technology such as voice recognition software or reading pens

Resources

Your child may need access to equipment to support their learning and to help them to be as independent as possible. Some examples include:

- Writing slopes
- Fidget toys
- Ear defenders
- Maths equipment such as counters or number lines

Staff skills and training

Every setting must have a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo). It is the SENDCo's role to organise the provision in a school or setting and check that it is helping children make progress. However, all staff should be aware of the needs of the children in their setting or school.

There may also be additional adults known as teaching assistants (TAs). Some TAs have done additional training and will take on additional responsibilities. They are called higher level TAs (HLTAs). TAs and HLTAs may work with your child in the classroom or help them with learn new skills.

Settings and schools are expected to make sure that staff receive the training and have the skills they need to meet the needs of children with SEND. There are lots of support services in Bristol who work with schools and settings to help them with this. There are also national organisations who have websites with lots of information about different types of SEND.

Transition and transfer

Children experience lots of transitions during their school life. Parent carers and children can sometime be worried about these, especially when a move of school is involved. Some transitions can involve changes of environment and teaching approaches but some also involve changes in friendship groups. Some transitions are smaller, such as moving from one activity to the next.

Your child may need extra support with transitions. This could include:

- Visits to their new setting or school
- A clear drop off and pick up routine to help make them feel secure
- Objects which are given to your child to help them understand that they are starting a new activity

Other transitions which might be difficult for your child could include:

- Returning to school or their setting after being away for some time
- A change of teacher or routine
- Moving around the setting or school
- Moving between social time and learning time during the day
- Changes at home such as the birth of a sibling, change in parenting arrangements or a bereavement

Approaches that should be in place for some children with SEND

Schools and settings need to follow the approaches above for all of their children with SEND. They will also need to use additional approaches with children to meet their individual needs. The type of support needed for each child will depend on whether they have difficulties with:

- **Cognition and learning**
- **Communication and interaction**
- **Social emotional and mental health**
- **Physical and/or sensory needs**

This part of the guide to OAP sets out the approaches schools and settings should use for different types of SEND.

Not every approach that might be helpful is included in this guide, and schools and settings may not use every approach listed. Many children have will also have needs across more than one area. You can talk to your child's school or setting to agree what will work for them. The support your child receive should depend on their individual needs and should not be dependent on whether they have a diagnosis of any kind.

Cognition and learning

For all children with cognition and learning difficulties, schools and settings may:

- Change the way they teach literacy and numeracy
- Provide support with language and communication skills
- Help your child manage any negative feelings they have about their learning and make friends with other children
- Use IT to help your child learn more easily
- Make sure staff are trained and skills in working with children with learning difficulties and know how to help them make progress

If your child has difficulties with learning across some or most of their lessons and is making slow progress, schools and settings may:

- Give clear and simple instructions and give them time to respond
- Support your child's learning with visual clues and information
- Go through some of the content (such as key vocabulary) with them before the lesson so they feel prepared
- Teach them different content from other children of the same age so that they learn the skills and knowledge they need
- Use a different approach to teaching which gets them involved and uses all their senses
- Help them to become independent learners
- Make sure they experience successes and feel good about themselves

If your child has difficulties with learning in a specific area schools and settings may:

- Give them extra help with specific skills which will help such as phonics or motor skills
- Support the child to understand how they learn and how they learn best
- Recognise and celebrate successes in other areas of their life and learning
- Change the way they present information, for example using a different kind of font or coloured paper
- Making sure that staff receive training in your child's area of need for example dyslexia or dyscalculia

Communication and interaction

For all children with communication and interaction difficulties, schools and settings may:

- Make sure that all staff (including lunch time supervisors and reception staff) understand communication and interaction needs
- Use visual teaching aids support CYP's learning and social activities
- Adapt tasks so that they are set at the right level, expect children to achieve at their own level, are delivered at the right pace (with clear beginnings and endings) and are sometimes delivered to a smaller group so that children get the help they need
- Use an approach known as 'Structured Teaching' where teachers pay attention to the physical environment, timetabling, how they teach children and how they give instructions

If your child has difficulties with saying what they want to say or difficulties understanding language, schools and settings may:

- Make sure that staff understand what children can typically say and understand at different ages
- Support your child with their language skills in a small group or by themselves
- Encourage your child to communicate and give them time to respond to instructions and in conversations
- Use rhymes and songs to introduce new language
- Teach your child another way of communicating (for example using signs, symbols or technology)
- Make sure that the physical environment in school supports good communication. This might include thinking about where your child sits and reducing distractions in the classroom.
- Adapt their own communication such as keeping instructions simple, avoiding using 'figures of speech' and using your child's name to get their attention
- Check that your child's hearing has been tested
- Teach your child new vocabulary before a lesson or when starting a new topic
- Use 'now and next' boards which help your child to understand what they will be doing during the day
- Provide support from a member of staff during assessments who can simplify language to make sure your child understands what questions mean
- Use an approach known as 'intensive interaction' to help your child learn how to communicate with and enjoy being with other people

If your child has difficulties with understanding the 'rules' of communicating with other people or has difficulties making relationships, schools and settings may:

- Make sure staff receive training in how to help children with communication and social skills, including those who have autism
- Write your child special stories known as a 'social stories' which help them understand social situations and what is expected of them
- Work with a group of children to support your child in their setting or school
- Use role play with your child to help them practice the skills they need in social situations
- Provide your child with support to help them make friends, and settle things when they 'fall out'.

If your child finds it difficult to use their imagination, schools and settings may:

- Use role play and drama or use props such as puppets.
- Tell them stories using photos, videos and sounds to help them imagine what is happening

If your child finds gets anxious in busy environments, schools and settings may:

- Make sure they are able to learn in a calm environment
- Provide your child with a key worker or mentor, or give them a 'buddy' who looks out for them
- Give them lots of praise to help improve their feelings about themselves
- Adapt your child's timetable to help them cope
- Help them prepare for changes in activity or routine

If your child is over or under sensitive to sensory triggers (such as noises, smells and touch), schools and settings may:

- Let them take a break such as taking a walk around the classroom or doing an activity which helps them calm down
- Be flexible with the school uniform policy
- Make changes to the physical environment for example, noise and room temperature
- Be flexible about how and when they expect your child to come into, go home from and move around their school or setting
- Make a safe place available to them
- Use a sequence of activities to help your child get ready for their next activity called a 'sensory circuit'
- Set up a separate space where you child can work successfully
- Help them to learn to cope with situations they find difficult by using timers

If your child finds it difficult to pay attention compared to other children their age, schools and settings may:

- Provide them with regular, short breaks
- Break down tasks and deliver them in short 'chunks' and use a timer so your child knows how long they need to focus
- Give your child a personalised visual timetable or 'task board' so they know what is happening during the day
- Use the 'I do it, we do it, you do it' approach to encourage your child to work independently
- Make sure that your child has listened to and understood instructions
- Give your child regular clear feedback on their progress

Social emotional and mental health

For all children with social emotional and mental health difficulties, schools and settings may:

- Do some assessments to make sure that your child's difficulties are not caused by learning or communication difficulties
- Have a whole school approach and behaviour policy which is based on a good understanding of the effect of children's experiences on their behaviour and feelings
- Identify a key adult who your child can build a positive trusting relationship with
- Provide training to staff to make sure they understand why some children find it difficult to form relationships and how they can help
- Help children to understand how their behaviour makes others feel and help them to make things right when they make mistakes
- Make sure children understand their approach to preventing and managing bullying
- Train some staff to work with children with social emotional and mental health difficulties in a small group or one to one
- Use techniques which help your child make good behaviour choices when they are upset or angry
- Teach social and emotional skills to all children in the school or setting
- Check out how children are feeling on a regular basis, even when they appear to be okay

If your child has difficulties attending regularly, schools and settings may:

- Try to understand what is causing the non-attendance and put support in place where needed
- Work with you as a family to agree a consistent approach to attendance between home and school
- Talk to your child about why they are finding it hard to come to school and what would help

If your child is withdrawn or unwilling or unable to join in with activities, schools and settings may:

- Work with your child in a small group to help them develop friendships and social skills
- Bring your child in at the end of an activity (such as assembly) and then build up slowly to them attending the whole thing
- Provide opportunities for your child to learn through play
- Reward your child for joining by letting them choose an activity that they enjoy
- Give them a 'buddy' or a 'peer mentor' (another pupil, usually older, who has had special training on how to help)
- Give your child responsibility for looking after someone or something else.
- Try to make the start of each lesson a 'fresh start' by welcoming them and helping them feel calm and motivated

If your child has difficulties controlling their emotions and their behaviour is challenging (for example refusing to follow instructions or hurting other children) , schools and settings may:

- Give your child consistent messages such as 'I want you to be in class learning' and be flexible about how they achieve this
- Make sure that all staff know what works for your child and are consistent in the way they help them with their feelings and behaviour
- Try to understand what your child is communicating with their behaviour and what has led to the situation
- Teach your child positive behaviours and different ways of managing their feelings
- Give your child some choices during their day in school or their setting
- Change their routine or timetable to help them with their feelings and behaviour
- Identify any risks from your child's behaviour and make a plan to manage these
- Work with you as a family to understand your child's life at home and agree how to support your child
- Help your child to understand they are still valued and important even when they make mistakes
- Build a good relationship with you and your child and try to understand how things in their life make them feel and behave
- Keep records of your child's behaviour to understand where and when things go wrong to try and reduce the chance of this happening again
- Help your child to calm down when they are becoming angry or upset
- Make a plan for your child to help them return to school successfully if they have been suspended
- Agree with you how staff will physically hold your child if they are in danger of hurting themselves or someone else

If your child is showing behaviours which may suggest they are experiencing anxiety or depression, are self harming, mis-using drugs or alcohol or have an eating disorder, schools and settings may:

- Take a multi-professional approach to understand what is happening for the child and make referrals to support services
- Work closely with you as a family on a regular basis to agree a plan and keep review how things are going
- Talk with your child about their feelings and behaviour and ask them what they think would help

If your child has physical symptoms for instance regular stomach aches which are not explained by medical reasons, schools and settings may:

- Identify activities with you and your child which reduce their feelings of stress for example playing games, dancing, or spending time with an animal and include them in their daily routine
- Keep a diary of your child's physical symptoms and work out if there are any patterns
- Speak with the school nurse or health visitor and talk to safeguarding professionals as needed

If your child has difficulties paying attention or concentrating, schools and settings may:

- Look at when your child is finding it more difficult to concentrate, such as just before lunch, and make changes to help them at these times.
- Allow plenty of time for movement between frequent short periods when your child is expected to focus.
- Have a clear structure to the day and consistent expectations about their behaviour
- Teach your child some techniques to help them manage their feelings
- Think about adapting the school behaviour policy for your child if they have a diagnosis and are disadvantaged by the approach taken for typically developing children

If your child has difficulties with relationships (including as a result of challenging life experiences in their life, schools and settings may:

- Whole setting awareness training on ACEs and building positive attachments such as Solihull Approach. Staff to all be trained and aware of any child with attachment difficulties and how to respond to them.
- Set up opportunities for them to make friends, for example having a buddy system at break times or identifying a group of children who can support them
- Help them to identify how their behaviours affect others and support them to put things right when things go wrong
- Suggest your child attends a small 'nurture group' for part of their day
- Talk to your child's previous setting to understand what helped them and plan carefully for any transitions or changes to their routine
- Provide a key worker with whom your child can form a trusting relationship and find solutions to challenging situations
- Work with or get advice from the Hope Virtual School if your child is in care or has previously been looked after
- Consider your child's life experiences and the situation at home when arranging any support

If your child disrupts the learning of others (for example calling out or seeking a lot of attention), schools and settings may:

- Encourage positive behaviour by using their voice, gesture and body language in a way which supports your child
- Note anything that makes your child anxious and try to reduce this so that your child is more likely to be able to focus on their learning
- Be flexible and creative with their use of praise and rewards
- Give lots of spoken and visual reminders to your child about how they are expected to behave
- Provide your child with some 'time out' or allow them to spend some time in a quiet area in their classroom or setting
- Keep a record of your child's behaviour to understand when they are doing well and when they are finding things more difficult, so that changes can be made which help them

If your child has difficulties following and accepting adult direction, schools and settings may:

- Help them to calm down and to make a positive choice, for example using a sand timer for 'thinking time'
- Give your child limited choices
- Reward them when they follow directions and look for times when they are behaving well
- Redirect your child's attention and use other children as role models
- Use a timer to encourage them to share for a short period

If your child appears to be particularly unhappy or stressed, schools and settings may:

- Work with your child to identify how they like to learn, what subjects they enjoy and their interests and then provide opportunities for these things during the day
- Provide a safe place and or quiet area for them to calm down and relax
- Talk to you as a family and make a plan together about how to improve things for your child

Sensory and/or physical needs

For all children with sensory and/or physical needs, schools and settings may:

- Make sure that all staff are aware of their sensory and/or physical needs and what they need to be successful in the school or setting
- Think about their seating arrangements and movements around the school or setting
- Understand that sensory and/or physical needs may effect your child's language and relationships
- Encourage your child to wear any sensory equipment they have been given and use physical aids
- Be aware of and take quick action to prevent unkindness related to your child's needs

If your child has a hearing impairment, schools and settings may:

- Work with a teacher of the deaf to understand how best to support your child in the school or setting
- Sit your child near the front with clear view and away from any source of noise such as windows or doors
- Make sure instructions are delivered clearly and at an appropriate volume
- Ensure your child has heard and understood what has been said, particularly new information, instructions and new vocabulary
- Repeat comments made by other children
- Ensure staff are face on when giving instructions and avoid moving around the room whilst talking if your child lip reads
- Use pictures and handouts to support your child's learning
- Be aware that during physical activity it will be more difficult for your child to hear
- Support your child when watching or listening to a recording by repeating what has been said and using subtitles
- Use carpeting, soft furnishing, rubber feet on chairs to reduce background noise

- Encourage good listening behaviours such as sitting still, looking and listening
- Encourage your child to ask when they are not sure what to do
- Deliver some lessons in a separate quiet working environment
- Provide additional time to complete some tasks and assignments
- Apply for extra time for exams if needed

If your child has a visual impairment, schools and settings may:

- Work with a qualified teacher for the visually impaired to understand how best to support your child in the school or setting
- Develop your child's typing skills to support their written work
- Use magnification equipment and technology such as visualisers, low vision aids and tablets
- Provide additional time to complete tasks
- Adapt PE activities to make them accessible for your child
- Make changes to the school or setting environment to make it easier for your child to move around safely
- Use of real objects to support your child's understanding of new ideas

If your child has a physical disability, schools and settings may:

- Work with other professionals to include approaches that help your child into their day for example including appropriate exercises during a warmup session for PE
- Provide staff with moving and manual handling training and personal care training
- Use specialist equipment which helps your child take part in all activities during the school or setting day
- Change the physical environment so it is accessible for your child
- Make sure there are suitable toilets and showers in the setting to meet your child's needs
- Use adapted equipment such as cutlery, crockery and scissors.

If your child has severe and complex medical needs including a life-threatening diagnosis or condition, schools and settings may:

- Ensure any medication and equipment is kept safely in lockable medicine cabinets, first aid bags and fridges
- Ensure staff have the training they need to meet your child's medical needs, for example giving them their medication and providing them with care when they are unwell or as part of their daily routine
- Seek regular advice from medical professionals who know your child well
- Work closely with you as a family and stay in contact if your child is not able to attend for a while to help them continue to feel part of things

Documents available in other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, Braille, audio tape, large print, easy English, BSL video or CD rom or plain text please contact:
tradingwithschools@bristol.gov.uk - Tel: 0117 922 2444

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