Improvements to Support for Children and Young People with SEND in Kent

Kent County Council is making changes to improve support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). By working closely with families and schools, KCC aims to make sure every child gets the right help at the right time, so they can learn, feel included, and thrive.

Why are the changes happening?

- **Fairer access to support:** Children will get the right support based on their individual needs, helping schools respond more effectively.
- **Simpler system:** It will be quicker and simpler for schools to get help for children.
- **Better outcomes for children:** All children will have a chance to learn, feel included, and do well, no matter where they live.
- **Following national plans:** These changes are part of bigger plans across the country to help children sooner using local resources.

Why now?

More children need extra help in school than before. The old system needs to change to meet this demand. Kent schools have received training and investment from KCC so they are ready to use the new system as part of wider improvements.

What changes are being made and how will they help my child?

Schools will now work in groups called **Communities of Schools (CoS)**. These groups will share ideas and support each other so children can get better help and access to local resources.

How will the Communities of Schools approach aim to benefit my child?

- **Schools learning from and supporting each other**: Schools will work together by sharing ideas, tools, and ways to help children learn and grow.
- **Less red tape, so schools can focus on pupils:** With less paperwork, teachers will have more time to support and teach the children in their class.
- **Quicker, more direct access to support services**: Children will get the help they need more quickly, from the right people, at the right time.
- **Protected SEND Funding for 2025/26:** Some funding in schools has been protected to support SEND provision based on the needs of the school.
- **Stronger partnerships with parents and carers**: KCC and schools will work closely with families to make sure children feel happy, do well in school, and have support when moving to secondary school.

All schools in Kent have access to helpful tools and resources to support your child. They also receive expert advice from Educational Psychologists, SEND Inclusion Advisers, and Specialist Teaching and Learning Services (STLS), so they can offer the right support at the right time for your child.

For further information, please read the Frequently Asked Questions document.

FAQs

1. What is High Needs Funding (HNF)?
In Kent, all schools receive core funding to help them meet the needs of children with SEND. In most cases, schools do **not** need to apply for HNF. HNF is extra money used to support children who need more help than the school's usual resources can provide.

2. What are the Mainstream Core Standards?
The Kent Mainstream Core Standards document explains what all schools must do to support children and young people with SEND. A Parents' Guide is also available.

3. How can I find out what support my child's school provides?
All schools will have an SEND Information Report available on their website. This explains what support is available. You can also speak to the school's SENDCo for more information.

4. Will my child lose support?
No. Your child will still get the help they need, but it might look a little different. If your child has a special plan called an EHCP, they will still receive the support set out in Section F. The school will talk to you if anything changes.

5. Does my child need an EHCP to access resources or support?
Absolutely not. There is no need for a child to have an ECHP to access additional resources or support.

6. Does my child need 1:1 support?
Each school decides how to use their support staff to help all the children. One-to-one support is only used in the most exceptional cases. Most children learn best from being supported in class by teachers and teaching assistants. This helps them learn alongside their peers and grow in confidence and independence. Further information can be found here: Education Endowment Foundation.

7. When might a child need an EHCP?
An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is for a small number of children who need a very high level of support over a long time. Most children with SEND are well supported through their school. If a child is still struggling despite extra help, an EHCP may be needed to bring in additional services.

8. How will schools access support and funding? Will I notice any difference?
Schools will now work together in Communities of Schools to understand what help children need and to request resources or support. This support may benefit more than one child with similar needs. You may not notice major changes in your child's daily experience, but the new system is designed to help schools respond more quickly and fairly.

9. What role do parents and carers play in this new system?
A vital one. Schools will always speak with you if any changes are planned. They are committed to working in partnership with families to support each child's progress and wellbeing.

10. When do the changes start?
The new funding system is being introduced in phases from September 2025, with full implementation expected by September 2027.

11. Who can I speak to if I still have questions?
If you have questions about the changes, speak to Contact the SEND Enquiries Hub - Kent County Council, or contact the Information, Advice and Support Kent for independent guidance. If you have questions about how support is being provided in your child's school setting, talk to your child's school SENDCo.