SEND and EHCPs: What practitioners need to know

What is SEND?

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) refers to children who have a learning difficulty or disability that requires additional or different support to that normally available to their peers. Their needs may relate to communication, learning, social and emotional wellbeing, or sensory/physical development.



Supporting children and families

Listen to children and families, avoid assumptions that behaviour is a choice or attributed to poor parenting, and work with partners to provide the right support at the right time.

Further Information:

- Warwickshire SEND Local Offer
- Warwickshire's SEND Inclusion Guidance
- The Graduated Approach

SEND support and EHCPs: What is the difference?

SEND/SEN support is help arranged by the education setting, such as adapted teaching, targeted interventions or additional classroom support. It can usually be put in place quickly and reviewed regularly. An EHCP is a legal plan issued by the local authority, following an EHC needs assessment, for children and young people who need more support than SEN support alone. The process should usually be completed within 20 weeks.

How to refer or request support

Practitioners show follow Warwickshire's SEND & Inclusion Guidance, use the Graduated Approach and liaise with WCC Educational Psychology Service and Specialist Teaching Service to identify needs and provide support. Where evidence shows a child or young person needs support beyond that ordinarily available, an EHC needs assessment may be considered.

Why does it matter?

Early support helps children access education, communicate their needs, feel understood and stay safe. Education is a protective factor; absence, exclusion or unsuitable provision can increase vulnerability.

When to act

Act when a child's needs are unclear, support is not working, attendance is poor, provision is unsuitable, or risks are increasing. Do not wait for a diagnosis before offering help or sharing concerns. Use WSCP's Practitioner Escalation Policy and refer to WM Regional Child Protection Procedures for the appropriate pathways to support and safeguarding.

Risks of delay or drift

Unmet need may present as distress, withdrawal, dysregulation or behaviour that is misunderstood. Children may miss education, experience poorer educational outcomes, families may feel blamed or unsupported, and safeguarding risks such as neglect, exploitation or isolation may be missed.

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