

Easy read guide for  
children and young people

NEW CODE OF PRACTICE  
ABOUT  
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS



Department of  
**Education**  
[www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)



# Contents

---

Who is this guide for? .. .. . 1

Message from the Minister .. .. . 3

Important words . . . . . 7

What is this Guide about? . . . . . 23

The Code of Practice .. .. . 25

    Section 1    Introduction – Principles  
                    and Procedures .. .. . 28

    Section 2    The Law, Roles, Rights  
                    and Responsibilities .. .. . 30

    Section 3    Identification, Assessment and  
                    Provision by Schools .. .. . 33

    Section 4    Statutory Assessment .. .. . 38

    Section 5    Making and Maintaining a  
                    Statement .. .. . 41

    Section 6    Children Under Compulsory  
                    School Age – Services,  
                    Assessments and Statements .. .. . 44

Section 7	Annual Review of a Statement for Children .. .. .	47
Section 8	Transition Planning for a Child with a Statement .. .. .	51
Section 9	Co-operation between Education and Health .. .. .	55
Section 10	Children in Specific Circumstances. .. .. .	57
Section 11	Advice and Information .. .. .	60
Section 12	Disagreements, Appeals, Mediation and Tribunals .. .. .	63
Section 13	Children over Compulsory School Age . . . . .	67
Section 14	Inclusion of Children with Special Education Needs (SEN) and/or a Disability .. .. .	71



## Who is this guide for?



This guide will be useful if you:

- are a **child** or a **young person**
- have **special educational needs**



If you do not have **special educational needs** this guide can still help you to understand what the **Code of Practice** is and what it will be used for.

**This guide sets out the new code of practice for those with special educational needs. Sometimes it is not easy to say in a few lines so we have made it easier to understand in this guide.**



## Message from the Minister



My name is **Peter Weir** and I am the Minister of Education in Northern Ireland.



I work for the **government** in Northern Ireland. The government helps to run the country.



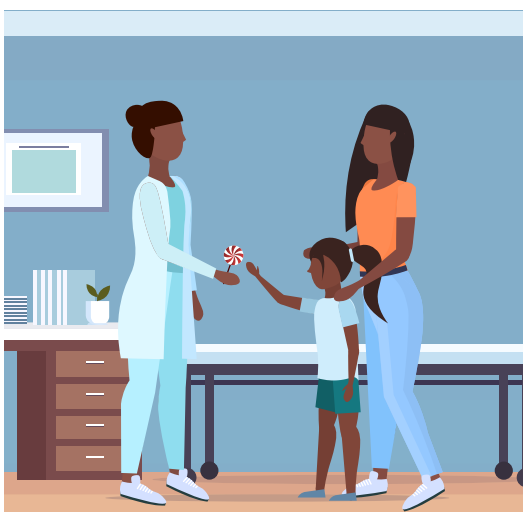
My job is to think about how to give better support to **children** and **young people** and their families.



The **government** wants to make some changes to how **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs** are supported.

They want to bring in new **law** to make these changes.

To help people understand the new law they also want to bring in a new **Code of Practice** – or **the Code** – **all schools must use the Code.**



These changes mean that **children** and **young people** and their families will:

- get the support they need earlier to help them learn
- be more involved in making decisions about their lives
- be able to find information easier
- get help to prepare for their future



It is important that everyone who takes care of **children** and **young people** understands the changes and what they mean.

This document is an easy read guide about the new **Code of Practice**. If you are a **child** or a **young person** with **special educational needs**, this guide will help you understand them.



It is important to provide information in easy read for **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs**.

Easy read information explains things using simple words and pictures so it will be useful for everyone.



## Important Words



This is a list of important words and what they mean in this document that you may want to know more about.

The words will be in **bold** when they are used in this guide.

### Important Words in This Guide



**Advice** is given to help people make the right decisions about the support they need.



An **advocate** is someone that can help children, young people and parents say what they want if they feel they find it hard to do themselves.

A

A



An **appeal** is what someone does if they are not happy about a decision made about their support and they want to try and change it.



An **assessment** is a way to find out what type of support is required for a child or young person with special educational needs.



To have an **assessment** you must:

- Be under 19 years of age.
- Have **special educational needs**.
- Need more support than your **school** can usually provide.





**Boards of Governors**

are a group of people who look after the running of a school.

B



**Children (or a child)**

are those aged between 0 and 19.

C



**Children who are over compulsory school age**

(aged between 16 and 19 years old) are called **young people**.



**Code of Practice** (or the **Code**) is a document that all schools must use.

**The Code** sets out how the new law will work for people day to day.

C



**Consent** is when a parent or young person allows someone to do something.

D



**Decisions** are choices people make about what happens in their life.

Sometimes children, young people and parents need help to make decisions.



**Dispute avoidance and resolution arrangements** to help sort out problems where people do not agree about something.



**Duties** are things that people have to do as part of their job.



**Educational Advice** is information given to the Education Authority by a school principal or a teacher about the support a child or young person needs.

The **Education Authority** can help children and young people with special educational needs.



If someone thinks that a child or young person may have special educational needs, the Education Authority may do an assessment to find out what type of support is required.



An **Educational Psychologist** looks at how a child or young person can be supported to learn.

## E



The **Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations** is the name of the new law that the government wants to put in place.

The new law will mean changes to how support is given to children and young people with special educational needs.

## H



**Health and Social Care Trusts** look after the medical needs of people including children and young people with special educational needs.



**Lacking capacity** is when a young person is not able to make a decision for themselves.

Just because a person finds it difficult to make one decision, it does not mean they are not able to make other decisions.



If a young person finds it difficult to make a decision, a parent or another person can help them make a decision about the support they need for their special educational needs.



The **Law** is a set of rules made by the government to guide people.

L



A **Learning Support Co-ordinator** is a teacher at a school who helps other teachers and children and young people who have special educational needs get the support they need. This is the new name for the SENCO.

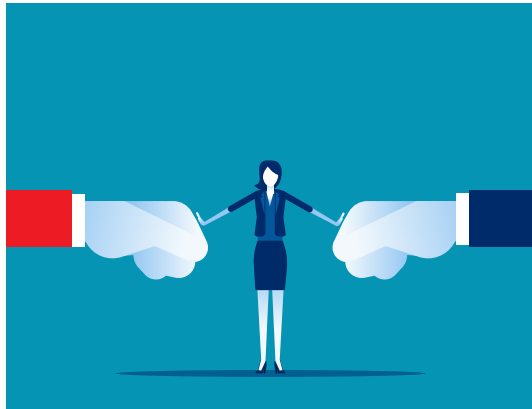
The new law says that every school must have a learning support co-ordinator.

M



**Mediation** is a meeting to help people who disagree about something, like the support a child or young person gets.

They meet and talk about the problem to see if there is a way they can fix it.



There will be someone there to help them do this. This person is called a **mediator**.



A **mediation adviser** is a person that you can talk to if you want to find out information about mediation.



A **mediation certificate** is needed if a person wants to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.

It is given out by the mediation adviser when a person gets in touch with them about mediation.

## O



An **Order** is a decision by a court or Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.

## P



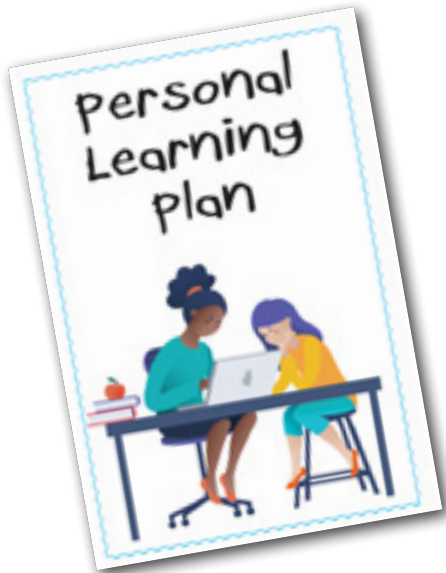
**Parents** are people who look after children and young people.

Often that is a mum or dad. But sometimes children and young people are cared for by other people who act as parents. This could be:



- A grandparent
- A brother or sister
- An aunt or uncle
- A carer





**Personal Learning Plan** (or **PLP** for short) is a school record of what special educational provision has been put in place to help a child or young person with special educational needs make progress. It is a place where the views of a child or young person can be recorded to help schools understand their wishes and feelings.



A **plan of arrangements** sets out the support the **Education Authority** will give to children and young people with special educational needs.



CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST

**Psychologist Advice** is advice given by an Educational Psychologist.

R



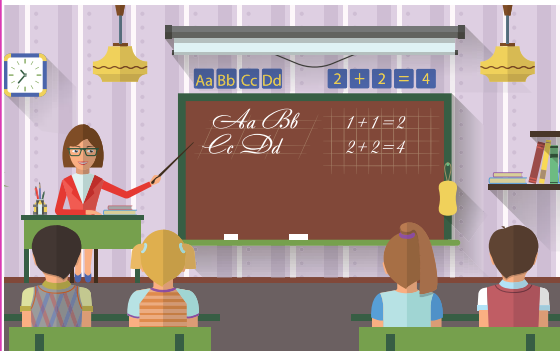
**Regulations** are law made by a government to make sure that something is done correctly.



A **review** means looking at things again to make sure they are right.



**Rights** help make sure that everyone is treated the same way.



A **school** is where children and young people go to learn skills that they may need when they are older.

A child aged between 2 and 5 years old can go to a nursery school.

A child aged between 5 and 16 years old must go to a school.



A **social worker** is someone who works with families to help make sure they get the support they need.

S



A child or young person who has **special educational needs** may:

- Find it harder to learn than other people of their age.
- Face challenges that make it hard to go to school.
- Need extra or different support to learn.



**Special educational needs register.** This is a list of the names of children or young people in a school who have special educational needs and what their difficulty is.



**Special education provision** is extra support to help children with special educational needs learn.



The **Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (The Tribunal)** is a court that listens to appeals and decides if a decision should be changed.



A **Statement of special educational needs** (a **Statement** for short) is a document given to some children and young people with special educational needs.

It sets out what support is needed to help them learn.

T



The **transition plan** is completed when a child turns 14 years of age.

It is to help the child make decisions about their future.

V



**Views** are what children and young people think about the support they need.

People who work with, or look after, children and young people with special educational needs should also be asked what support they think is needed.

Y



A **Young Person** (or **Young People**) is a child who is over compulsory school age (aged 16-19).

## What Is This Guide About?

---

### Important words in this part

---



- Advocate
- Alternative person
- Children
- Code of Practice
- Duties
- Government
- Law
- Parent
- Special educational needs
- Young people

### What is this guide about?

---

This guide is about a new **Code of Practice (the Code)**.

The **Code** is a document that helps explain how the new **law** that the **Government** wants to bring in, will work for people day to day.

It will help people who work with or look after **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs** understand what their **duties** are.

This means that **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs** will get the right support they need, when they need it.



This guide is to help **children** and **young people** who have **special educational needs** understand the new **Code** and what it means for them.



If you have **special educational needs**, you may want to read this guide to find out more about the new **law** and changes and what it means for you.



Sometimes things can be hard to understand.

If you get stuck you can ask a **parent** or a friend to help you.



## THE CODE OF PRACTICE

---

### Important words in this part

---



- **Authority**
- **Boards of Governors**
- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Education Authority**
- **Government**
- **Health and Social Care Trusts**
- **Law**
- **Parent**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Young People**

## What is the Code?

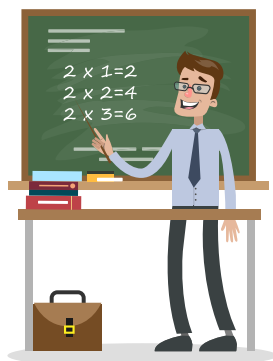


The **Code** is a document that explains how the new **law** that the **government** wants to put in place, will work day to day.

It will help people who work with or look after **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs** such as:



- Education Authority



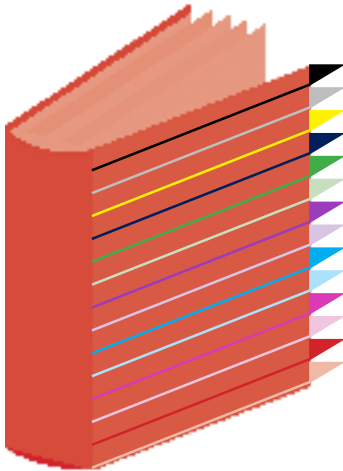
- Teachers



- Boards of Governors



- Health and Social Care Trusts



The **Code** is divided into 14 sections.

This document will explain what each section is about.




Some things may be hard to understand. If you need help you can ask your **parent** or a friend to help you.

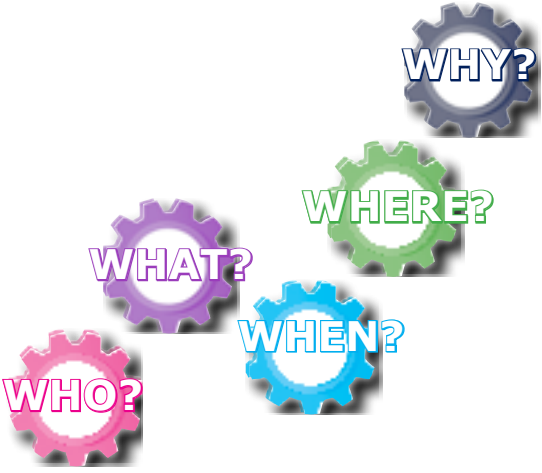
- Section 1 -  
INTRODUCTION  
PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

---

Important words in Section 1




- **Code**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Special educational provision**



Section 1 of the **Code** explains

- **Who** it is to be used by
- **What** it is to be used for
- **When** it should be used
- **Where** you can get it
- **Why** a new **Code** is needed



It talks about **special educational needs** and **special educational provision** and explains what these mean.

Also see the '**Important words**' section of this guide.

## - Section 2 - THE LAW, ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

---

### Important words in Section 2

---



- **Boards of Governors**
- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Duties**
- **Education Authority**
- **Health & Social Care Trusts**
- **Law**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Young people**



This section of the **Code** is about the **law** to be put in place to help make sure that **children** and **young people** get the support they need.



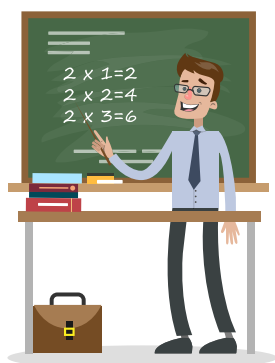
The **law** means that those people who work with or look after **children** and **young people** have certain **duties** to do.



Those people may be:

- Boards of Governors
- Education Authority





- Teachers



- Health & Social Care Trusts



**This section sets out a list of the main duties for those people.**

**This is to make sure that **children and young people with special educational needs** get the support they need when they need it.**



## Section 3

# IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND PROVISION BY SCHOOLS

---

### Important words in Section 3

---



- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Consent**
- **Education Authority**
- **Learning support co-ordinator**
- **Parents**
- **Personal Learning Plan**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Special educational needs register**
- **Special educational provision**
- **Views**
- **Young people**



Section 3 gives guidance on what teachers and schools can do if they think that **children** or **young people** need help to learn.



If the school thinks that a **child** or **young person** has **special educational needs** they record this on a **special educational needs register**.



The school will find out what support the **child** or **young person** needs.

The teacher or **learning support co-ordinator** can help with this.



The teacher will listen to the **views** of **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs** and their **parents** about the type of support they need and what they want to achieve.



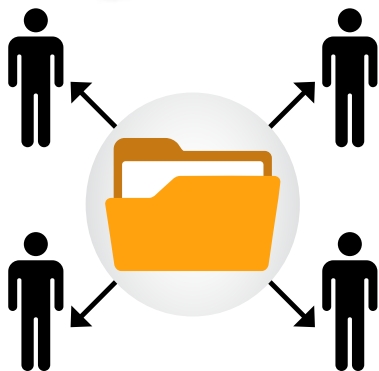
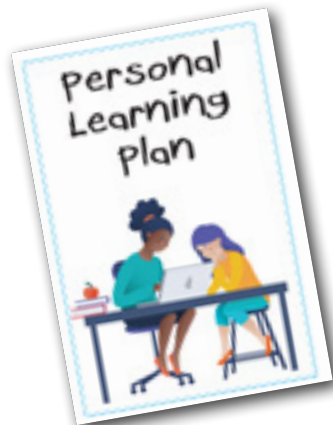
The teacher or **learning support co-ordinator** will complete a **Personal Learning Plan** (or **PLP** for short).

The **PLP** sets out:

- What a child or young person's **special educational needs** are
- What support is already in place or needs to be put in place
- What learning goals the **child** or **young person** expects to achieve



The school must review the **PLP** regularly to make sure that the **child** or **young person** is getting the right support and making progress.

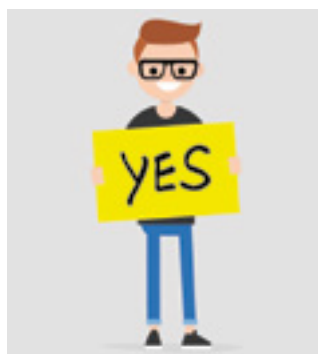
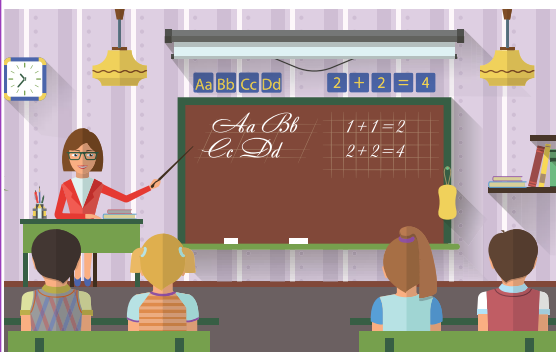


Every child or young person whose name is on the **special educational needs register** must have a **PLP**.

Sometimes the **PLP** has to be shared with other people.

This could happen when:

- A **child** moves from primary school to secondary school or
- When a **child** or **young person** moves to a different school.

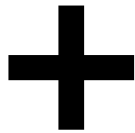


The school must get permission from the **parent** or **young person** before it shares the **PLP**.

This is called **consent**.



Some **children** and **young people** will need more support than the school alone can give.



If this is the case, the school can ask the **Education Authority** to help them give the **child** or **young person** more support.



Section 3 of the **Code** gives guidance on what help should be considered to help **children** and **young people**.

## Section 4

# STATUTORY ASSESSMENT

---

### Important words in Section 4

---



- **Assessment**
- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Education Authority**
- **Law**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Views**
- **Young people**



Sometimes even with support from a school or a school and the **Education Authority**, some **children** and **young people** still find it hard to learn.

If this is the case they may need an **assessment** of their **special educational needs**.



An **assessment** is a way to find out what type of support is required for a **child** or **young person** with **special educational needs**.

Section 4 of the **Code** sets out the 3 steps in the Statutory **Assessment** process.



## Assessment

It explains:

- Who can ask for an **assessment**?
- What happens when someone asks for an **assessment**?
- What **views** the **Education Authority** should listen to?
- What happens if an **assessment** is needed?



If an **assessment** is needed it must be done within a certain number of weeks.

Section 4 of the **Code** explains the new time limits that the **Education Authority** must complete the **assessment** by **law**.



## Section 5

# STATEMENTS

---

### Important words in Section 5

---



- **Assessment**
- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Decision**
- **Education Authority**
- **Law**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Statement**
- **Young people**



**Statement**



Sometimes when an **assessment** has been completed, the **Education Authority** makes a **decision** to make a **Statement** of **special educational needs**.



Section 5 of the **Code** explains the 4 steps in making a **Statement**.

A **Statement** is a document made for **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs**.

It sets out the support needed to help them learn.



### Finding the Right Schools



This section also looks at how the right school is picked for **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs**.

This is to make sure they get the support they need to be the best that they can be.



Like with an **assessment**, the **Education Authority** must decide if it is going to make a **Statement** within a certain number of weeks.

This section gives the time limits that the new **law** says they have to this.

## Section 6

# CHILDREN UNDER COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE ASSESSMENTS AND STATEMENTS

---

### Important words in Section 6

---



- **Advice**
- **Appeal**
- **Assessment**
- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Decision**
- **Duty**
- **Education Authority**
- **Parents**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Tribunal**



Section 6 of the **Code** is about **children** who are not old enough to go to school yet but may have **special educational needs**.



The **Education Authority** still has a **duty** to find out:

- What the **child's** special needs are
- Consider if an **assessment** is needed
- If so, make sure that support is in place when the **child** starts school.



The **Education Authority** must make sure that **parents** have all the **advice** and information they need to make the right choices.



This includes information about a new right of **appeal** to the **Tribunal** if they are not happy about a **decision**.

## Section 7

# ANNUAL REVIEW OF A STATEMENT

---

### Important words in Section 7

---



- **Appeal**
- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Decision**
- **Duty**
- **Education Authority**
- **Law**
- **Parents**
- **Review**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Statement**
- **Tribunal**
- **Views**
- **Young people**

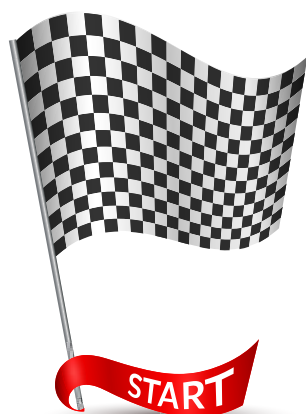


If a **child** or **young person** has a **Statement** the **law** says it must be reviewed every year.

This is to make sure that the right support is in place for **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs**.



Section 7 of the **Code** explains the three steps in the **review** process.



It explains that the **Education Authority** have a **duty** to start the process.





The school has a **duty** to ask for and listen to the **views** of:

- the **child** or **young person**
- their **parents** or carers
- other teachers
- anyone else that the school thinks can help



The school will write a report saying if they think the **child** or **young person** is getting the right type of support.



### Is the Statement right?

When they have looked at everyone's **views** the Education Authority must make a **decision** on whether the support in the **Statement**

- stays the same
- changes or
- stops



If a **parent** or **young person** (if they are aged between 16 and 19 years), is not happy with the **Education Authority's decision** they can **appeal** to the **Tribunal**.


## Section 8

# TRANSITION PLANNING FOR A CHILD WITH A STATEMENT

---

### Important words in Section 8

---



- **Child**
- **Code**
- **Decisions**
- **Duty**
- **Education Authority**
- **Parents**
- **Review**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Transition plan**
- **Views**
- **Young person**



When a **child** reaches 14 years of age it is important to think about the future.

They will need help to make **decisions** as they move from childhood to adulthood.



Section 8 of the **Code** is about the **transition plan**.

Every **child** or **young person** with **special educational needs** should have a **transition plan**.



The **transition plan** is a document that sets out the **child** or **young person's**

- Skills and talents
- Abilities
- **Views**

It is to help **children** make **decisions** about **their** future.



The **Education Authority** has a duty to approve the transition plan prepared by your school.



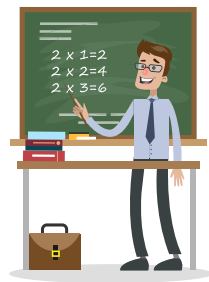
They will listen to the views of **children** and **young people**. They will also listen to the views of those people who work with or look after children and young people with **special educational needs** such as:



- **Children** and **young people**



- **Parents**



- Teachers



- Health workers



- Careers advisers



The **transition plan** must be **reviewed** each year to make sure it is up to date in helping the **child** or **young person** prepare for when they leave school.

## Section 9

# CO-OPERATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND HEALTH

---

### Important words in Section 9

---



- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Duties**
- **Law**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Young people**



It is important that people who work in education and health work together so that **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs** get the right support they need.



Section 9 of the **Code** explains **duties** for people who work in education and health.

The **law** says they must write a joint plan to show how they are working together to help **children** and **young people** learn in school.



## Section 10

# CHILDREN IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

---

### Important words in Section 10

---

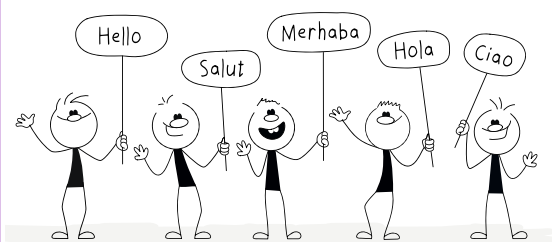


- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Parents**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Young people**



Some **children** and **young people** have other problems that make it difficult for them to learn.

They may also have **special educational needs**.



Section 10 of the **Code** gives examples of some of the problems **children** and **young people** may have such as:

- English is not the language they speak at home.
- They miss a lot of school because they are sick.
- There are problems at home.



These things can make it difficult for a **child** or **young person** to learn in school.

*We can help!*



This section of the **Code** also gives information on where **parents, children** and **young people** can get help.

## Section 11

# ADVICE AND INFORMATION

---

### Important words in Section 11

---



- **Advice**
- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Education Authority**
- **Learning Support Co-ordinators**
- **Parents**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Young people**



Section 11 of the **Code** is about the **advice** and information the **Education Authority** should provide to anyone who works with or looks after **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs**.

make it  
**CLEAR**

**Advice** and information should be

- Easy to find
- Easy to understand
- Easy to read or listen to



Information should be available to

- **Children** and **young people**
- **Parents** and carers



- Teachers



- **Learning support co-ordinators**



- Health workers



If someone needs **advice** and information the **Education Authority** should give the name of the person who will help.

## Section 12

# DISAGREEMENTS, APPEALS, MEDIATION AND TRIBUNALS

---

### Important words in Section 12

---



- **Appeal**
- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Dispute avoidance and resolution arrangements**
- **Duty**
- **Education Authority**
- **Mediation**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal**
- **Young people**



There will be times when **decisions** are made about the support a **child** or **young person** with **special educational needs** should get and everyone will not agree.



Section 12 of the **Code** explains what people can do if they are not happy with a **decision**.

The **Education Authority** has a **duty** give people this information.



People can go to **dispute avoidance and resolution**. This can help sort out problems where people do not agree about something.





Or sometimes people can go to **mediation**.

**Mediation** is a meeting to help people who disagree about something. They can discuss the problem and try to find a way to fix it.



There is usually someone there to help them do this. This person is called a **mediator**.



Sometimes people do not want to go to **dispute avoidance and resolution** or **mediation**.

Or sometimes people still cannot agree even if they have tried **dispute avoidance and resolution** or **mediation**.

If this happens, in some cases, people can bring an **appeal** to the **Special Educational Needs and Disability tribunal**.



Section 12 of the **Code** explains the differences between **dispute avoidance and resolution, Mediation** and **Appeals**.

It explains time limits and when each can be used.

But remember you always have a choice.

## Section 13

# CHILDREN OVER COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE

---

### Important words in Section 13

---



- **Advice**
- **Children**
- **Children over compulsory school**
- **Code**
- **Decisions**
- **Duty**
- **Education Authority**
- **Government**
- **Lacking Capacity**
- **Law**
- **Parent**
- **Rights**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Views**
- **Young people**



When a **child** turns 16 they are now over compulsory school age.

**Children over compulsory school age** are aged between 16 and 19 years old.

They are called **young people**.



The **government** wants to bring in new **law** so that **young people** with **special educational needs** have new **rights**.

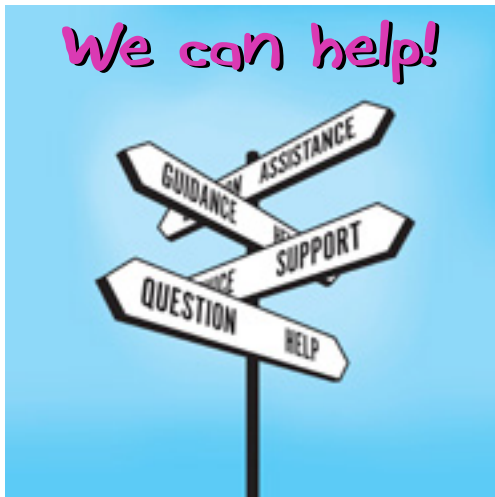


**Young people** with **special educational needs** will be able to give their **views** and make **decisions** about the support they need.

Or, they can ask someone to speak for them like a **parent** or a friend.



The **Education Authority** has a duty to give **young people** and/or their representatives advice and support if they wish to use their **rights**.



Section 13 of the **Code** explains:

- What support is out there for **young people**.
- Who can help them make **decisions** about their support.
- Where they can get **advice**.
- What information should be sent to them if they want it.
- What they can do if they are not happy about a **decision** made about their support.



Some **young people** will not be able to make **decisions** themselves. This is known as **lacking capacity**.

Section 13 explains how the **Education Authority** has a **duty** to find out if a **young person** lacks capacity.



Other people can help to make **decisions** if a **young person** is not able to do it themselves.

## Section 14

# INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR A DISABILITY

---

### Important words in Section 14

---



- **Advice**
- **Children**
- **Code**
- **Duty**
- **Education Authority**
- **Law**
- **Rights**
- **Special educational needs**
- **Young people**

All Children Can Learn



All **children** and **young people** have a **right** to learn.

This includes **children** and **young people** who have **special educational needs** or a disability.



The **Law** says that the **Education Authority** and schools have a **duty** to make sure that **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs** get the support they need in school.



Section 14 of the **Code** is about what the **Education Authority** and schools can do to make sure that **all children** can join in.





They should look at ways to make things better such as:

- Write a plan on how to include everyone.
- Let people know what the plan is.
- Make changes so that a **children** and **young people** with **special educational needs** or a disability can take part.
- Remove barriers to learning.
- Give **advice** and information.



**RESPECT**

It is important to include and respect everyone at all times.



# Easy read guide for children and young people



**NEW CODE OF PRACTICE**  
**ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**



Department of  
**Education**  
[www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)