



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Schools

Parent Handbook



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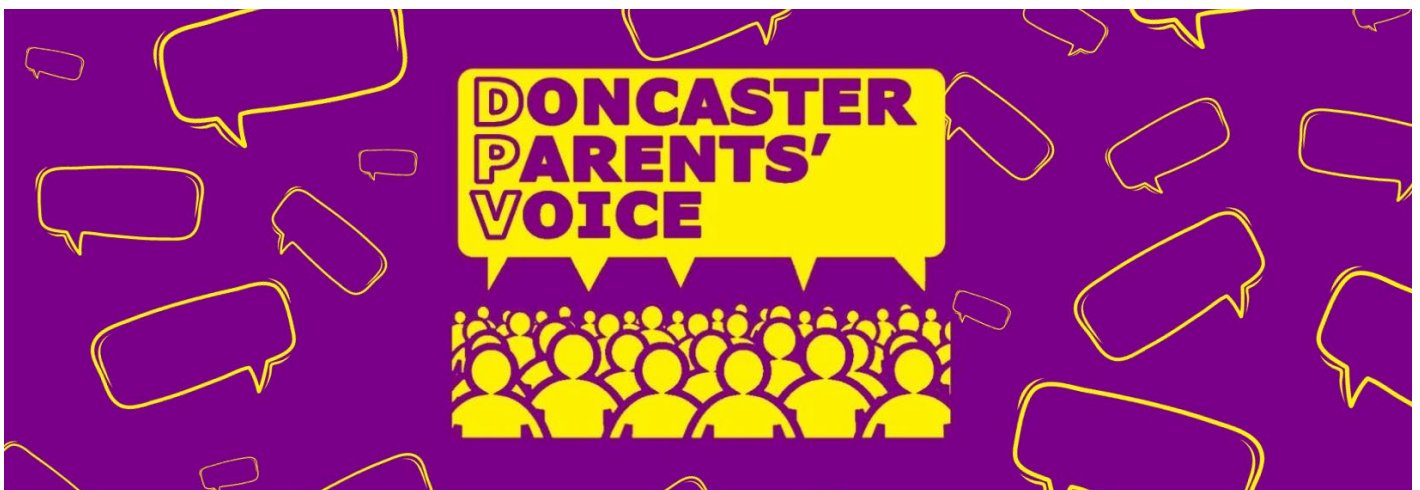
1. Introduction from Doncaster Parents' Voice

We are proud to be part of the development of this handbook for parents or carers of children or young people who may have special needs or disabilities. Often parent/carers do not know where to start when it comes to getting the right support and care for their child. We frequently hear from parent/carers that they can feel like everyone is working against them and this can lead to frustration and feelings of helplessness.

This handbook has been developed to help parents navigate the local SEND system, to empower them, and be aware of who is responsible for what and when. This handbook will give parent/carers a summary of the SEND system in Doncaster and the journey your children will take to get the support they need to reach their full potential throughout their school life and into their adult life.

All children and young people are entitled to a good education. They should all be supported to reach their full potential. The information in this handbook has been designed to help parents and carers understand how children and young people, with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Doncaster schools can be supported so that they are prepared for their adult life and to be able to go on to have successful futures.

This handbook is to be used alongside [The Local Offer website^{\[1\]}](#) which is Doncaster Local Authority's online source of information for families about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.



2. Introduction to SEND Provision in Doncaster

What are Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)?

Children and young people with SEND have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn compared to most children or young people of the same age. This might mean that they need support or interventions which are 'additional to' or 'different from' their peers. This is often called 'special educational provision'. This support will usually be provided in the child or young person's mainstream setting.

How are Special Educational Needs and Disabilities identified and who identifies them?

Initially, it may be a class teacher who identifies an additional need by observing a child or young person and using reports from their previous school/nursery, or data from any previous assessments.

Parents and carers also play a very important role in the early identification of special educational needs and you should share any key information to ensure that your child's school is fully aware of their needs.

In Doncaster we have a set of guidelines to help school staff and parents identify SEND: Doncaster's Need Descriptors.^[2]

The image displays several overlapping charts from 'Doncaster's Need Descriptors'. The charts are organized into columns representing different levels of support: Universal, Universal +, Targeted, and Specialist. The rows represent different categories of needs: Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health, and Curriculum Access. Each chart contains specific descriptors for each level, detailing the challenges faced by children and the support they may require. For example, in the 'Communication and Interaction' chart, the 'Universal' level describes children who may have a speech and language disorder, while the 'Specialist' level describes children with severe communication difficulties. The 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health' chart includes descriptors for children who may experience difficulties with social interaction or mental health issues. The 'Curriculum Access' chart focuses on children who may have difficulties accessing the curriculum due to physical or cognitive barriers. A colorful geometric logo is visible in the top right corner of the charts.

Broad Areas of Need

Children and young people can often have multiple types of SEND, however one area may need more support than another. There are four broad areas of need which you can see in the table below.

Cognition and Learning	Communication and Interaction
Children and young people with cognition and learning needs may have difficulties with learning and executive functioning skills - including thinking, memory, attention and problem solving. This includes: • Moderate learning difficulties (MLD) • Severe learning difficulties (SLD) • Profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) • Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) e.g., maths/dyscalculia, literacy/dyslexia, movement and coordination/dyspraxia (aka developmental coordination disorder)	Children and young people with communication and interaction needs have difficulties communicating with others. This may be difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them, understanding or using social rules of communication or a combination of the three. This area includes: • Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) • Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
Physical and Sensory	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
Children and young people with a physical or sensory impairment will usually have a diagnosis and access support from a specific local team, which may be a combination of education and health services. These children do not necessarily have difficulties with their cognitive functioning. This area includes: • Visual impairment (VI) • Hearing impairment (HI) • Multi-sensory impairment (MSI) • Physical disability (PD)	Social, emotional and mental health difficulties can impact a child or young person's learning and social inclusion, as these difficulties manifest themselves in many ways. This area includes: • Mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, eating disorders) • Attachment difficulties • Trauma • ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) Dysregulated behaviours do not necessarily mean that a learner has SEND but is often an indication of unmet needs.



What is a SEND Support Plan?

A SEND support plan is a document created by a school to support children and young people to make progress in relation to their education, wider development or social needs. The aim of a SEND support plan is to improve outcomes by removing barriers to learning and putting effective educational provision in place.

What is in a SEND Support Plan?

SEND Support Plans include:

- The child or young person's strengths and interests
- Their identified Special Educational Needs
- The agreed outcomes (sometimes known as targets)
- The actions required by school to help achieve the set outcomes

The plan should reflect the four-stage cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR cycle) and should be reviewed each term with the class teacher and/or SENDCO. You can read more about APDR in section four of this handbook.

Here is an example of a [SEND Support Plan](#)^[3] that we ask all schools to use in Doncaster.

What is the school SEND Register?

The SEND Register is the list of children in a school who have SEND. Children can be added to or removed from at any time. The Register helps schools to organise their resources and monitor and plan to meet learners' needs. Parents/carers should be notified when a child or young person is going to be added to the SEND Register by the school.



My SEND Support Plan (2)
(Please delete irrelevant sections and update school data base)
Name: Sammy
Year: Foundation 2

Child or young person's views
(Gathered via observation)
Sammy loves the sensory room, especially the lights, he will squeal with delight, Sammy loves his feet being put into different textures such as sand and bubbly water. Sammy's favourite lesson is music. His least favourite lesson is when he has to sit at a desk.

Family views
Jill had a traumatic and early birth with Sammy and was not aware that he had a SEND until he was 3 years old. Jill has some support with her own mental health and finds it very challenging to manage Sammy's care herself. She cannot access typical play groups with Sammy and the family can be very supportive. Jill is very keen on Sammy having as much support as possible to become more communicative and she would like him to attend a specialist school where his holistic needs can be met. At home Sammy loves videos on the iPad, music and different sensory materials, tassels, and he very rarely gets upset because Jill is so attuned to Sammy's needs.

SEND Plan Review 1
Attendees: Jill (Mum), Class Teacher, SENDCO, Physio, Sammy
Date: 06/12/24
(Please see review guidance documentation)
CYP attended: Y

Review of Needs, Provision and Outcomes

Please attach a detailed provision map.

Area of need (Please delete irrelevant boxes)	Needs	Long term outcome	SMART Outcome (12 weeks)	Met, Not Met, or going	Plan	Provision level
Cognition and Learning	See above	To be able to learn by retaining information and expressing his knowledge.	By the end of Autumn term, Sammy will be able to eye-gaze at a number when it is said (of 2) and a visual is presented. By the end of Autumn term, Sammy will be able to eye-gaze at a letter when it is said (of 2) and a visual is presented. By the end of Spring Term, Sammy will be able to identify a picture from 3 options (E.g. Sammy which is the square? Which picture is red?) by eye gaze reaching and grabbing.	Met	Continue with concrete objects linked with learning e.g. shapes. Present 3. Check twice to confirmed.	Specialist
Communication and Interaction	Sammy can now	To be able to successfully communicate with	By the end of Autumn term, Sammy will be able to make a	Met	Provide a choosing tray	Specialist

Version 3 SEND Support Plan November 2024

3. What are Schools' Responsibilities for Children with SEND?

All schools must follow the [SEND Code of Practice](#)^[4]. The SEND Code of Practice outlines legal requirements and statutory guidelines regarding practice and support that must be delivered to children and young people with identified special educational needs and disabilities from 0-25 years old.

The SEND Code of Practice states: "Class and subject teachers, supported by the senior leadership team, should make regular assessments of progress for all pupils. They should identify when children and young people are struggling to keep up with their peers and their learning is slowing down."

What all schools should provide as standard

High-quality teaching is the key to ensuring all children receive a good standard of education. It enables them to make progress and meet their learning objectives. This means lessons are delivered in a way that is accessible to all learners, because staff plan their teaching around the individual needs of those in their class.

A crucial part of high-quality teaching is the use of Ordinarily Available Provision in both primary and secondary schools. The term 'Ordinarily Available Provision' refers to the range of strategies used and experiences offered as good practice for children with SEND.

Doncaster's [Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance](#)^[5] sets out the standards that are expected from mainstream settings – both primary and secondary. The guidance helps to ensure that all learners are receiving an equal and consistent standard of 'Ordinarily Available Provision'. Ordinarily Available Provision is funded by the school's normal budget.

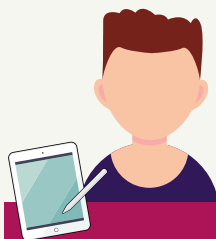
What are Reasonable Adjustments?

Reasonable adjustments are the changes that are made for a child or young person, so that they're not at a disadvantage compared to others. The term reasonable adjustment is often used in a general way to apply to all children with SEND although in law, it's specifically about the changes made to support a disabled child.

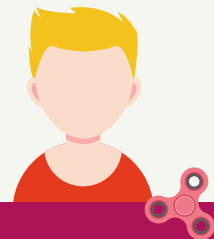
Read more about [reasonable adjustments](#)^[6].



Imran wears ear defenders when the noise in the classroom is raised.



Ben has a tablet to help him write.



Kieron uses a fidget toy to aid his concentration.



Alisha has a visual timetable to help her manage the school day.



Jas has a school uniform adaptation because she is unable to wear a synthetic material.



Sinead is allowed extra time for thinking and responding to tasks set by the teacher.

Who are the key people supporting my child in school?

A team of people in an educational setting will work together to make sure that children and young people have their needs met appropriately.

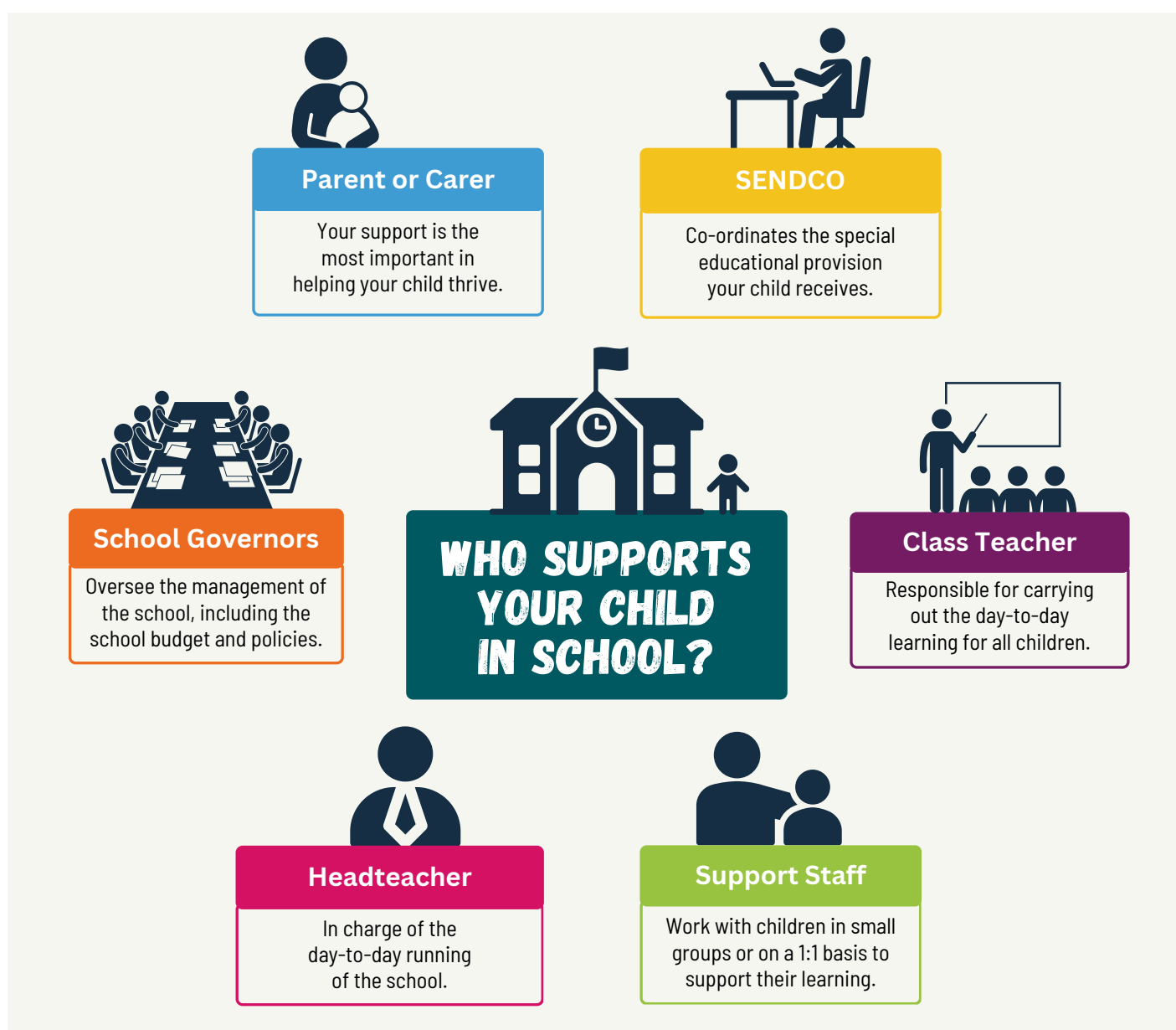
Headteachers and school leaders make sure that the school runs smoothly and is following the law in relation to SEND. They also ensure that all school staff are aware of the importance of identifying and providing support for pupils who have SEND.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO) is the manager of SEND and they oversee the day-to-day operation of the school's SEND policy and they co-ordinate provision for children with SEND.

Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the learners in their classes and they are responsible for the classroom planning.

Support staff in school, such as classroom/teaching assistants (TAs), and lunchtime supervisors also have a big role to play in making sure that children are included in school life and that their needs are met in line with their personal plans.

More information on roles and responsibilities for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can be found on [The SEND Toolkit^{\[7\]}](#) for professionals.



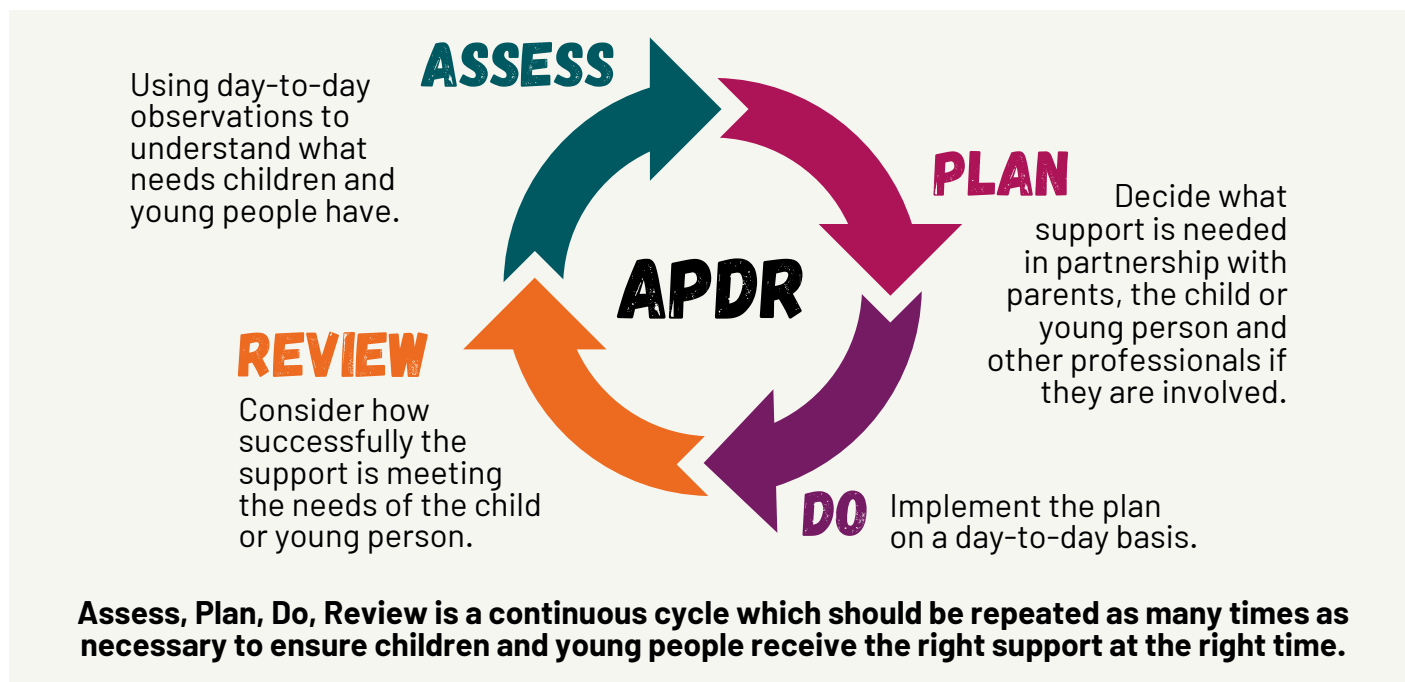
4. Assessment and Planning in School

Schools in Doncaster use a structured four stage planning and assessment process for all children and young people. This process is usually referred to as the cycle of **Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR)**.

Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Schools should continuously use APDR to monitor the progress of all children, including those with SEND.

The APDR cycle continues throughout a child's education. Schools should use this APDR cycle to quickly identify children who are making less than expected progress. They should put provision and strategies in place to support their needs. An APDR cycle takes one term (approximately 12 weeks) to complete.



What is Person Centred Planning?

Person centred planning aims to put children and young people with SEND at the centre of planning and decisions that affect them. It should be used at all stages of the identification and assessment of SEND and in the graduated approach's 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle (see section 5. [Doncaster Graduated Approach](#)^[8] – Help At Every Level).

Plans should be based on what is important to your child and you. The classroom teacher, or sometimes the SENDCO, should plan in partnership with you, rather than this being 'done to you'.

What is a One Page Profile?

One Page Profiles are used as an effective person-centred way to summarise information about your child. This can include what's important to a child as well as how best to support a child while they are in school. One Page Profiles are managed by the school SENDCO and they are very useful in helping schools to fulfil their legal duty to make sure that all staff are aware of children's needs and how to meet these needs.

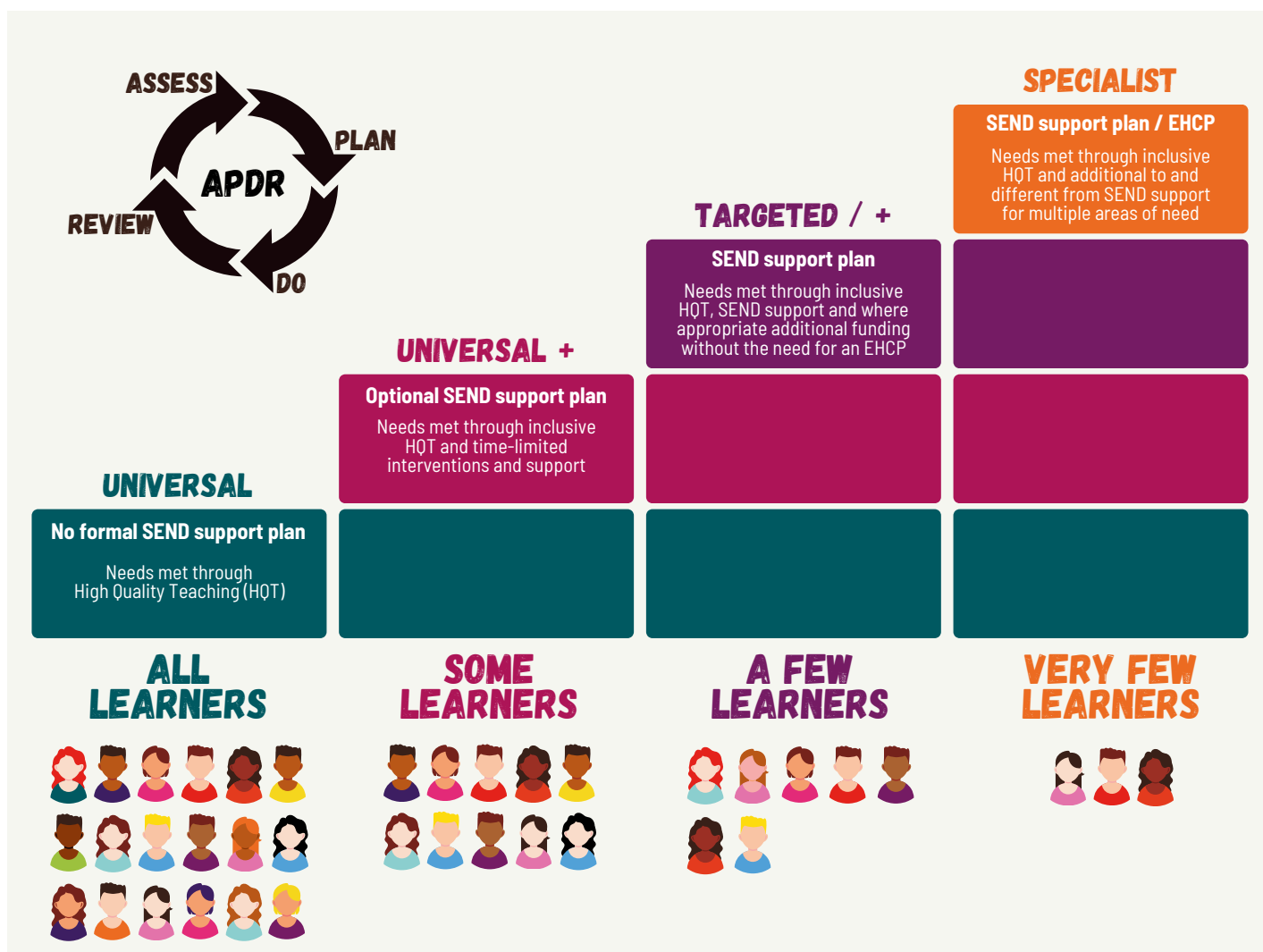
What is a Provision Map?

A provision map is a document that outlines the provision of support and interventions a school or educational organisation will provide for students who require additional support. It helps to identify the specific needs of each student and ensures that appropriate support is put in place.

5. Doncaster Graduated Approach – Help at Every Level

The graduated approach is the system of SEND support within mainstream settings in Doncaster. It is intended to make sure that children and young people in Doncaster with SEND get the right support at the right time.

There are different levels of support offered and while some learners may move up and down the scale during their learning journey, most learners will thrive accessing what we call 'Universal Level' support. Our diagram below shows the different levels of intervention and support available in Doncaster to help our learners achieve academic success:



One or two cycles of APDR with additional support is sometimes enough and children start to make progress. If children start to make accelerated progress or the gaps in learning close, they can then return to the previous lower level of the graduated approach.

If a child or young person is not making expected progress after two cycles (2 terms) of APDR, a setting may consider if they need to move on to the next higher level of the graduated approach, meaning further support may be needed. After several cycles of APDR, Special Educational Needs may be identified.

If a child or young person's needs are identified to be at targeted level or above, they will be added to The SEND Register. The child or young person must also have a SEND Support Plan put in place. This should be co-produced with the child or young person and their parents/carers. Cycles of Assess, Plan, Do, Review will continue and the SEND Support Plan should then be reviewed (at least three times per year). When children require increasing levels of support, schools should engage with specialist services to ensure all efforts are made to meet their needs. Sometimes progress is so good that the plan is no longer necessary, and needs can then be met just through high-quality teaching (HQT) again.

It is crucial to be patient when a setting is monitoring a child or young person and using The Graduated Approach. This is because time is required to see whether the planned interventions and support are working and helping to close any gaps in learning and progress.

Children and young people must go through all these steps in order for the graduated approach to be successful. Examples of the graduated approach at every level:

Universal Level (Step 1)

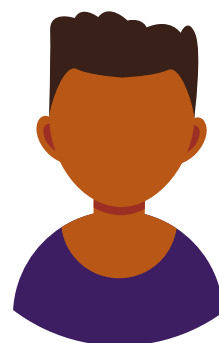
Universal level describes the provision available to all Doncaster children and young people. Needs are met through inclusive high-quality teaching, ordinarily available provision and making reasonable adjustments for children and young people.

At this stage children and young people do not have a SEND support plan but they are being monitored. Staff are aware of their needs and, where necessary, make reasonable adjustments.

Here is an example:

Raj's needs are met through ordinary classroom planning (high-quality teaching) such as making sure he knows what is happening next, can see the class timetable, has breaks and has resources on his table such as blocks for counting in Maths.

He sometimes needs to use his ear defenders, which are on his desk because the noise can be a little bit distracting for him. This is a reasonable adjustment and means that Raj can learn as well as his peers.

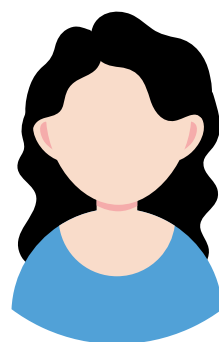


Universal + Level (Step 2)

In addition to high-quality teaching at universal level, some children and young people may require time-limited intervention programmes and additional support so they can learn best and increase their rate of progress.

For example:

Lacey's needs are met through ordinary classroom planning (high-quality teaching). She is given a personalised 'visual timetable', to help her understand the routine of the day and a timer on her desk, so she knows when to start and stop tasks. As well as this, Lacey also takes part in some small group work outside of the classroom to help her become more confident and to make friends. This is a time limited intervention and is part of what the school can offer to anyone who needs it.



Targeted and/or Targeted + Level (Step 3)

Some of our learners may require more individualised intervention programmes. This might mean that other professionals, such as the Educational Psychology Service, or Speech and Language Therapists are consulted or involved.

If required, schools can apply for additional funding at targeted + level for some children and young people who have had a minimum of two cycles at targeted level.

For example:

Petra's needs are met through ordinary classroom planning (high-quality teaching). She is given adapted work for her learning level and lots of resources to use for writing and reading. She goes to the school's reading intervention group weekly.

Petra also works with a teaching assistant for short periods each day to support her understanding of both the verbal and written instructions given by her teacher. She needs some intervention each morning to learn spellings and practice her handwriting. This is something not everyone in the class needs.

Petra's parents, the class teacher and the school SENDCO have had a meeting and decided that they need extra advice and help to support Petra so would benefit from speaking to the Educational Psychologist. Together they have produced a SEND support plan that identifies the extra support she needs and the targets or outcomes she is working towards.

The SENDCO monitors Petra's progress at least once a term with all relevant staff and her parents/carers. Petra should also take part in this review in a way that is accessible for her such as showing her work or drawing. With the right support in place (and maybe some additional funding to support her needs) everyone thinks that Petra can thrive and fulfil her potential in a mainstream school.



[Find out more about SEND Support^{\[9\]}](#)

Specialist Level (Step 4)

In addition to the above provision, a small number of children and young people may require significant amounts of 'additional to and different from provision' across multiple areas of need to secure effective learning and increase their rate of progress.

At this stage a child will have a SEND support plan in place, and they will have received support at Universal +, Targeted and Targeted + Level. There will have been numerous cycles of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review process and it will be clear that a specialist level of support is required for them to achieve their full potential.

It is important to note that the specialist level of the graduated approach does not mean that all children with needs identified at this level will require an Education Health and Care Plan^[10] (EHCP) or require a placement in a special school. Specialist levels of funding can be accessed without an EHCP.

A very small number of learners may have long term and complex needs across multiple areas of need and have several professionals involved in their care and education. These learners may require an EHCP to ensure effective multi-agency working to meet their needs. This is determined by the local authority through an Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessment^[11].

The EHC Needs Assessment requires evidence from all people involved in a child's education and care, including professionals, the child's educational setting, and their family. This gives the local authority a clear picture of the child's needs in order to make an informed decision.

On occasion, where a child or young person's needs are very complex, a specialist placement outside mainstream settings may be required.

Learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

If a child or young person has an Education, Health and Care Plan, it is because the evidence shows us that their needs are complex and long-term. Therefore, they require more intensive individualised support. All the educational provision will be organised around the planned outcomes detailed in their plan.

For example:

Mae has been issued with a EHCP because she has long term needs across most areas of her learning and development. This means that she needs her teaching and learning to be delivered very differently to her peers. She needs a higher level of support to cope at school academically and emotionally.

All staff working with Mae have read and understood the EHCP. Mae knows that she has a plan and why.

There is a clear range of strategies and approaches to support differentiated day-to-day teaching based on specialist advice in her plan.

Teaching and provision that addresses Mae's needs is planned and has agreed outcomes and review points. Everyone at school makes sure Mae is still included and part of the class.

Teachers monitor Mae's progress towards meeting agreed outcomes regularly, adjusting planning where needed. They still complete Assess Plan Do Review cycles because Mae may make progress or need changes to her support before the EHCP review is due.



6. How are Schools Expected to Work with Parents/Carers?

The SEND Code of Practice sets out how schools should best work with parents/carers of children and young people with SEND.

Schools must:

- Do everything they can to support your child's special educational needs and disabilities. This is called using their "best endeavours"
- Make any needed reasonable adjustments so that a child can learn successfully
- Discuss any SEND concerns they have with the child's parents/carers, if they plan to add the child to the SEND Register
- Put in relevant staff training to help staff understand special educational needs and disabilities and support
- Discuss the SEND support being given with parent
- Send home yearly school end of year progress report
- Have a SENDCO who is the school's named person in charge of SEND in the school

Schools should:

- Be clear about how they identify and support SEND
- Publish their SEND arrangements on their webpage (or by request)
- Offer regularly reviewed quality teaching and learning
- Offer parents/carers a termly SEND support or EHCP support review and invite relevant professionals
- Ensure good staff knowledge of the needs of pupils they teach and how best to support them
- Consider the views of children
- Keep a record of the SEN support or EHCP support
- Have a one page profile for a child or young person on the SEND Register

Additional Specialist Support in school

In Doncaster we have several experienced and professional specialist support teams who can support children as they move through the Graduated Approach.

The SENDCO can refer to these services, however there can be a long wait for some specialist SEND services. The SENDCO may need to provide evidence to show what has already been put in place to support children's learning before the specialist support team become involved. This is why there is an expectation that there has been monitoring through APDR for a minimum of two terms before there is any movement through the Graduated Approach.

Examples of Specialist Support:

**Speech and
Language
Therapy
(SALT)**



**Behaviour
Outreach
Support Service
(BOSS)**



**Early Years
Inclusion
Team
(EYIT)**



**Service for
Children with a
Visual Impairment
(SCVI)**

**WHAT
SERVICES
MAY SUPPORT
MY CHILD?**



**Educational
Psychologist
(EP)**



**Service for
Children with a
Hearing Impairment
(SCHI)**



*This list is **not** exhaustive.
Visit the **SEND Local Offer**
to find out more.*

You can find out more about support service by accessing the Local Offer [education support services^{\[12\]}](#) and [health services^{\[13\]}](#).



7. Needs Led Neurodevelopmental Pathways*

The Needs Led Neurodevelopmental Pathway, previously the General Development Assessment (GDA) pathway, is Doncaster's diagnostic pathway to refer children and young people for clinical screening when they may have an underlying neurodevelopmental need. This may be autism, ADHD or a developmental delay.

Referring to a specialist assessment pathway should not be the first step for your child or young person. Observations, information gathering and support should be put in place and reviewed regularly in line with the Graduated Approach. If your child or young person continues to demonstrate persistent and complex needs despite all support, it should be considered whether there is a need for a neurodevelopmental assessment. If you are concerned, you should firstly have a conversation with the education provider. If a child or young person is not in education, you should discuss your concerns with the School Nursing or Health Visiting Team (depending on age). Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) can also refer if they have completed significant work with your child/young person. Referrals from GP's are no longer accepted.

There is a referral pack which needs completing. This is now split into 3 sections:

1. The school/setting to complete
2. The parent/carer to complete
3. The young person to complete if they're over 11.

All supporting information needs sending with any referral. This could be from school and home. Your input, as a parent/carer, is crucial to helping the pathway team understand your child and their needs. You will be asked to provide information about your child on the referral form.

Once the referral form has been submitted to the pathway, this (and all supporting information) is reviewed by the Pathway Coordinator to ensure the referral has been fully completed and check there is no information missing. If there is any information missing, the referral will be sent back to the referrer.

Once the Pathway Coordinator is satisfied the referral has been fully completed and enough information has been provided, the referral will be sent to the Triage Panel to review.

All referrals to the pathway are now discussed at a multi-disciplinary triage panel which is held on a weekly basis. The panel is chaired by Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals (DBTH) and panel members include representation from some or all of the following services:

- Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Trust
- Doncaster School Nursing
- Doncaster Health Visiting
- Early Intervention and Localities Service
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Autism and Social Communication Education and Training Service (ASCETS)
- Early Help Coordinators
- Intellectual Disability Team - Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH)
- Doncaster Parents' Voice (DPV)
- Open Minds Counselling Service
- Clinical Psychologist



The panel will discuss the referral form and the information contained within it. Specialists will look at the support that can be offered to you and your child and whether further assessment onto a pathway will be suitable for your child at this time.

The panel will discuss the referral and decide on what will happen next. This could include:

- **Returning the referral** back to the referrer because further information or additional support at home and/or school is required. If this happens, the referral will go back to the Triage Panel to be discussed again once the extra information is supplied. Please note your child/young person's place will be held while this information is gathered.
- **Declining the referral** because your child's needs have been identified but further diagnostic testing is not appropriate. If this happens, recommendations on next steps will be given.
- **Referral for clinical screening for autism pathway or ADHD pathway** because there is enough supporting information to demonstrate these types of needs. Please note if accepted your child will not be seen in the GDA clinic and will be placed directly on either the autism or ADHD pathway (or both) waiting list. At clinical screening the team may feel that a GDA is needed first. Children aged under, and over, 5 years can be referred to the autism pathway. Children aged 7 and over can be referred to the ADHD pathway, this is undertaken by CAMHS.
- **General Development Assessment Pathway (GDA)*** because it's unclear if your child requires an autism or ADHD assessment, there is a possible clinical need and their case is complex, for example they may have developmental delay, cerebral palsy or dyspraxia. This is an appointment with a consultant community paediatrician. Some children who receive a GDA appointment will be further referred to the autism or ADHD pathway if it is felt necessary.

Each child's journey is different and one route for one child may be very different for another. The team has worked with professionals to ensure that relevant support is put in place prior to a referral and that this is evidenced in a referral. We want your child to be supported whilst they wait for assessment. When provided with enough evidence, we can streamline the referral process to ensure your child/young person is placed on the correct pathway in a timely manner.

***Please note, this pathway is correct as of February 2025, but will be changing in April 2025 and will be updated at that point. Please check back for more information.**

Useful contact numbers

GDA Pathway coordinator	01302 642302
Over 5 ASD coordinator	01302 642303
Under 5 ASD coordinator	01302 642304
ADHD pathway (CAMHS)	01302 796191



8. What is the role of the Local Authority?

The City of Doncaster Council hold responsibilities for children and young people with SEND. These include:

- Ensuring that there is sufficient SEND provision and school places based on children's needs
- Providing an [Information, Advice and Support Service \(SENDIAS\)](#)^[14]
- Developing and publishing a [Local Offer](#)^[15] setting out the support they expect to be available for local children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Ensuring that there is adequate support to ensure that an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) can be delivered.

Working with parent/carers, children, young people and education providers, City of Doncaster Council have agreed to allocate funding in the fairest and most equitable way by ensuring that the greater level of resources are given to those with the highest level of need. In order to acquire funding, schools have to demonstrate that a learner has a comparable level of need to those in other schools.

In Doncaster, we use a common set of [Needs Descriptors](#)^[16] which means all schools are working within the same guidance when applying for additional funding.

Schools working in partnership with the local authority use the needs descriptors to decide what level of support and funding a child or young person requires. This ensures the decisions are made fairly and all learners can receive the correct level of support for their individual needs. All funding decisions will be made in the same way, regardless of whether learners have an EHCP or not.

Schools are encouraged to use resources efficiently to have maximum impact. The school have freedom and flexibility in how they use all SEND funding for their children and young people. Where needs cannot be met from the budget, they can apply to the Pyramid Panel (previously known as the funding panel) for further funding. This is decided based on need. Often the most effective support for a learner will involve group interventions, rather than always supplying 1:1 support. This can often be uncomfortable for children and young people and can also limit impact on outcomes.



9. Resolving Disagreements

Most disagreements can usually be resolved with all parties working together with the child's best interests at heart. In the first instance, you should raise any concerns with your child's class teacher, Head of Year or SENDCO.

If you feel that your concern has not been addressed adequately you may wish to follow the school's complaints procedure to make a formal complaint. The school's complaints procedure will be available on the school website.

If you've complained through this process and the problem has not been resolved, you can complain to the [Department for Education](#)^[17] (DfE).

You also have the right to raise a concern with [OFSTED](#)^[18] who will record your complaint and may use the information to help them decide what areas to focus their next inspection on.

You can find out more about how schools operate within their national guidance by reading their individual policies and procedures, which also link to national guidance.

For example:

- Special educational needs and disability – [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)^[19]
- Support for pupils with medical conditions – [supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)^[20]
- Admissions arrangements – [school admissions code](#)^[21]
- School attendance – [working together to improve school attendance](#)^[22]
- School exclusions – [school suspensions and permanent exclusions](#)^[23]
- Behaviour – [keeping children safe in education](#)^[24] and [behaviour and discipline in schools: guide for governing bodies](#)^[25]

If you still have concerns and would like to talk to someone who is impartial you can contact Doncaster SENDIAS who are the council's impartial and confidential information, advice and support service.

- **Telephone:** 01302 736920
- **Email:** sendias@doncaster.gov.uk
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/DoncasterSENDIAS

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How does a school identify that a child or young person needs support?

Schools regularly observe and assess children and this enables them to identify if any additional support is necessary. Schools use cycles of Assess, Plan, Do, Review to meet the needs of all learners. If a school feels a child has additional needs, they can use the Doncaster Need Descriptors to support their judgement.

How long does it take for my child's school to put support in place?

Schools continually monitor children and will increase levels of support in line with the Assess, Plan, Do, Review process. Support should be put in place as soon as a need is identified. This must follow the Graduated Approach. Please be mindful that any additional support put in place needs time to be carried out to assess its impact and your child's school will be monitoring your child's progress closely.

I don't think my child's school are putting the right levels of support in place for my child – what can I do?

If you are concerned your child's school are not putting in the right level of support for your child, you should first speak with your child's class teacher and/or SENDCO. You can also access the [Local Offer website](#)^[26] where you will find lots of additional information about the Graduated Approach and what schools should be doing to meet the needs of their learners. If you are still worried you should request a meeting with school to discuss your concerns.

Will my child get an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

Most children do not need a EHCP to thrive in school. Through repeated cycles of Assess, Plan, Do, Review and efficient use of the Graduated Approach and high-quality teaching, most children and young people will have their needs met. Where additional funding is required to meet a child's needs, this can be accessed without an EHCP. For children with long term and complex needs an EHCP may be required and this will be determined by the local authority through an [Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment](#)^[27]. The EHC Needs Assessment requires evidence from all people involved in a child's education and care, including professionals, the child's educational setting, and their family. This gives the Local Authority a clear picture of the child's needs in order to make an informed decision.

My child has an EHCP, will this be taken away?

No. Current EHCPs will remain in place. Where an increase in funds are requested through the annual review process this will trigger a request to the Pyramid Panel. From January 2025 additional funding for all learners with SEND will be considered by Pyramid Panels. Our objective is to ensure that children's needs are identified and met as soon as possible.

What is a Pyramid Panel?

From January 2025, where a mainstream school requires top up funding to support a child the overall amount will be agreed by the school with other schools within the same pyramid (secondary schools and the primary feeder schools) and local professionals who have worked with the child or young person.

Does my child need to have a diagnosis to get support?

No, support is needs led, not diagnosis led. Many parents find receiving a diagnosis of children's SEND helpful; however, a diagnosis is not necessary for children to receive support and can sometimes take a long time. When schools identify a need, support must be put in place straight away. Referring to a specialist assessment pathway should not be the first step in supporting a child or young person. An initial period of observations, information gathering, and support should be put in place and reviewed regularly, in line with the Graduated Approach. If the child or young person continues to demonstrate persistent and complex needs, it should be considered whether there is a need for a neurodevelopmental assessment through Doncaster's diagnostic pathways. You can read more about this on the neurodiversity section of the [Local Offer website](#)^[28].

There is a wide range of specialist and outreach support available in Doncaster which can be accessed, if required, to meet a child's needs.

If my child receives a diagnosis will they get an EHCP?

No. The majority of children with SEND make progress with high-quality teaching, reasonable adjustments and targeted interventions. If you feel that your child needs more personalised resources and interventions, that can't be provided using additional funding and support that is already available from your child's school, then you can talk to the school SENDCO about requesting an EHC (Education, Health and Care) Needs Assessment. You can also contact Doncaster SENDIAS who offer confidential and impartial information, advice and support.

My child has an EHCP, will they automatically go to special school?

Most children and young people can have their needs met in a mainstream school. Doncaster is an inclusive authority and believes that children have the right to thrive in their local community with their peers. This means that we work hard to ensure the majority of children and young people with an EHCP are able to access their education in their local mainstream school.

My child's school have refused to send a referral to the Needs Led Neurodevelopmental Pathway (previously known as GDA pathway) for a diagnosis to be looked at - what can I do?

Speak to your child's SENDCO about their reason for not sending a referral. They may need more evidence of your child's needs before the referral can be accepted, or the school may not be seeing the same difficulties you are at home. It would be helpful if you kept a record of the issues that are concerning you and this can be used to form the evidence to support a GDA referral.

You should ensure that your child is being monitored through the Graduated Approach and Assess, Plan, Do, Review process – this provides evidence for a future assessment and it also ensures your child's needs are being monitored and supportive action is being taken. It is important that the school has a clear plan for meeting your child's day to day needs. A diagnosis shouldn't affect this. Whilst you may feel frustrated that your child doesn't have a formal diagnosis, it's important to remember that the school should be putting effective support in place for any identified needs.

If you would like further support to pursue a referral to the Needs Led Neurodevelopmental Pathway, you can speak to the [school nurse](#)^[29] or [health visitor](#)^[30]. You may also wish to self-refer to [Early Help](#)^[31] to gain further support.

I'm worried about the transition to secondary school – will my child still receive support?

Yes. Transition to a new school can raise a variety of questions and worries for both children and parents/carers, especially if children have SEND. There is an expectation placed on the primary and secondary schools to ensure they jointly plan a strong package of support for children, such as introduction to key staff and visits to the new school.

To support the transition, copies of specialist reports and the SEND planning should be shared by the current school with the new school. The new school will also continue the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle and make changes to your child's SEND Support Plan as required.

My child is starting primary school and I have been told that they can only attend for one hour each day?

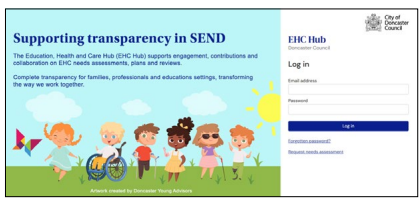
All children have a right to a full-time education and school must work towards providing this. For some children with complex needs, and with parental consent, the transition may be carefully planned and a time-limited reduced/part-time timetable agreed. This should be frequently reviewed and needs led. If you are unhappy with the arrangement speak to the school SENDCO or Headteacher. You may also want some support from [Doncaster SENDIAS](#)^[32].

My child's school have said they can't meet my child's needs and they cannot attend full-time, is this right?

Statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#)^[33] (August 2024) makes clear that, schools can't put children of compulsory school age on a part-time timetable. Part-time timetables are only used on very rare occasions and for short periods, with parental agreement. If you are worried about the use of a part-time timetable you can talk to the school SENDCO and headteacher. Any use of part-time timetables have to be reported, by schools, to the local authority. Parents can also contact the Engagement and Behaviour Service for help and advice by emailing bits@doncaster.gov.uk or calling 01302 734210.

Useful Contacts and Further Help

	The Local Offer is Doncaster's online source of information about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for children and young people, aged 0-25 years. The website aims to make it easier for you to find out about services and support available in Doncaster from the Local Authority, the local NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH) and other partners such as education and social care. Web: www.doncaster.gov.uk/LocalOffer Facebook: www.facebook.com/DoncasterLocalOffer Email: LocalOffer@doncaster.gov.uk
	Doncaster SENDIAS provides information, advice and support to parents, carers, children and young people (0-25) in regards to Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support. This includes: advice on SEN provision in settings, the statutory assessment process and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). The service can also help with issues including: school exclusions, transition, transport, dispute resolution and appeals to the Special Educational Needs Disability Tribunal. Web: www.doncastersendias.co.uk Email: sendias@doncaster.gov.uk Tel: 01302 736920
	Doncaster Parents' Voice (DPV) is the local parent carer forum for SEND families. In addition to organising activities for families, they provide emotional support, peer support groups and workshops for parents to increase knowledge and understand of SEND issues. DPV also work with local commissioners of services to make sure that parents views are represented and work with local services to ensure services meet need. Web: www.doncasterparentsvoice.co.uk Email: dpvoice@doncastercarers.org.uk Tel: 01302 637566
	Doncaster Families Information Service provides information, advice and guidance for parents, carers, practitioners, children and young people on a wide range of services and activities/events available in Doncaster and beyond. The service can support families find childcare, schools and help with understanding what help is available with childcare costs. Web: www.doncaster.gov.uk/FIS Email: fis@doncaster.gov.uk
	Doncaster Autism Service provides support to autistic children, young people and adults as well as their families. They run workshops, 1:1 sessions, support groups, provide counselling and therapy sessions which all the family can access. Email: das@doncastercarers.org.uk Tel: 07536 455292 or 01302 637566
	Professionals in Doncaster have access to detailed information, guidance and resources to support children and young people with SEND on The SEND Toolkit. Web: www.doncaster.gov.uk/send-toolkit

	The Doncaster EHC Hub is an innovative digital platform supporting engagement, contributions, and collaboration on EHC assessments, plans and reviews. All information and paperwork linked to EHCPs will be visible through the Hub for all who are involved in the individual EHCP. Web: ehchub.doncaster.gov.uk
	Doncaster Family Hubs provide support and advice both in-person and virtually. Family Hub staff have a wealth of knowledge about the support and services that are available for you and your family. They will be able to signpost you onto the right service to ensure you receive the support that you need. To find your local Family Hub visit: Web: www.doncaster.gov.uk/familyhubs
	Kids Mediation is Doncaster's commissioned – independent Mediation and Dispute Resolution service. The service is free of charge for families and is for children and young people aged 0 – 25 with SEND or who may have SEND. Web: www.kids.org.uk/mediation-home Email: senmediation@kids.org.uk Tel: 03330 062 835

Linked References:

- [1] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-send
- [2] www.doncaster.gov.uk/send-toolkit/funding-and-needs-descriptors#NDs
- [3] www.doncaster.gov.uk/send-toolkit/funding-and-needs-descriptors#Examples
- [4] assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf
- [5] www.doncaster.gov.uk/send-toolkit/whole-setting-approach-to-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities#OAP
- [6] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-support-for-learning#reasonable%20adjustments
- [7] www.doncaster.gov.uk/send-toolkit/roles-and-responsibilities
- [8] www.doncaster.gov.uk/send-toolkit/graduated-approach
- [9] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-sen-support
- [10] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-ehcp
- [11] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-ehcp
- [12] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-specialist-education-support-services
- [13] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-general-health
- [14] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/sendias
- [15] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-send
- [16] www.doncaster.gov.uk/send-toolkit/funding-and-needs-descriptors#NDs
- [17] www.gov.uk/complain-about-school
- [18] complain.ofsted.gov.uk
- [19] www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25
- [20] www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions-3
- [21] www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code-2
- [22] www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance
- [23] www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion
- [24] www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2
- [25] www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools-guidance-for-governing-bodies
- [26] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-send
- [27] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-ehcp
- [28] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/local-offer-needs-led-neurodevelopmental-pathway
- [29] zone5-19.rdash.nhs.uk/contact-us
- [30] healthvisitors.rdash.nhs.uk/contact-us
- [31] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/early-help-what-is-it-in-doncaster
- [32] www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/sendias
- [33] assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Parent/Carer Check Sheet

A 'check sheet' to help parents/carers prepare for any meetings with school.

Child's name: _____

Child's needs identified by parent/carers: _____

Needs identified by other professionals/settings: _____

Do you have any reports or information regarding child's needs: Y / N

If yes - what are they: _____

Name of school: _____

Name of SENDCO: _____

Name of headteacher: _____

Name of governors (SEND speciality): _____

What support has been provided by child's current setting/school: _____

Neurodevelopmental pathway application required: Y / N

What agencies, providers, health care, provision, medical support has your child accessed: _____

What support would I like for my child whilst in school: _____

What would my child like (child's view): _____

Notes: _____
