

Stoke on Trent Choice Advisory Service



STOKE-ON-TRENT
CHOICE ADVISER

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Information for Parents & Carers on Choosing a New School





Changing Schools?

This is a time when any parent/carer starts to worry about what will be best for their child and how he or she will cope with the change.

When a child has additional learning needs/difficulties, those concerns can be much greater and it may take longer to find a new school that suits your child.

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and you want information on Stoke on Trent's specialist provision, you can ring the following:

- Stoke on Trent Parent Partnership - 01782 234701
- Assessment & Monitoring Team - 01782 235369

You can ask any school for a copy of their Prospectus. Try and arrange to visit as many schools as you can; staff are more than happy to show parents/carers around.



How do I appeal for a place?

The Admissions Team have a leaflet. Also the Advisory Centre for Education have a detailed and useful leaflet about preparing your case. The Choice Advisory Service can also offer support with the appeal process.

Special Educational Needs

If your child has Special Educational Needs and you want to discuss any concerns you have about your child's education, including transport, choosing a school or applying for a place you can contact Parent Partnership on 01782 234701. They can support you with appeals for transport or admission to a school.

How do I ask for a place?

If your child is transferring at the end of a Key Stage, the LA's Admissions Team should send you the information pack about how to apply for a place.

If your child is just starting school you can make sure your child's name is on the list to receive a pack at the appropriate time, by phoning the Admissions Team (01782 235369).

If your child is moving school at another time, you should ensure you ask the school if they have a place. If it doesn't (and your child doesn't have a Statement of SEN) and you want to appeal, put your request in writing to the school. You should have a written refusal to appeal against.

If your child does have a Statement of SEN and you want him or her to change schools, ring the Assessment & Monitoring Team.

If your child is transferring at the end of a Key Stage, the LA's Admissions Team should send you the information pack about how to apply for a place.

Visiting Schools - how can I prepare?

Firstly, think about your child's needs and your own.

Ask your child what he or she thinks and take it into account. Try and keep it as low key as possible as this can be a very anxious time for children.

Make a list of questions you want to ask about how the school will cater for your child's needs.

2 important things to remember:

- Children are individuals and what may suit one child will not necessarily be good for another
- If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) take the relevant paperwork with you



Arranging the visit - who will go?

Is it just you going, or will your child go with you on the first visit?

Think about if you would like a partner, relative, friend or support from either Parent Partnership or the Choice Advisory Service to go with you. It is a good idea to tell the school who will be going.

Think of the time of day that you want to visit. It should be in school hours but if you are worried about lunch or break time provision, then ask for an appointment near to that time.



You may want a tour of the whole school, or just the special needs provision. Let them know who you would like to meet, such as the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or Head of Year.

Also let them know if you would like to see samples such as timetables or Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Other information you might want

You may also want to see the following:

- Last School's Governors Report on Special Needs
- Behaviour policy
- Special Needs policy
- Bullying policy
- OFSTED report

Our website (www.choice-adviser-stoke.co.uk) has many useful links and all links for OFSTED reports for Secondary Schools.

What should I do when I get home?

Make a note of what you have seen and heard and the feel you have for the school. If you are seeing more than one school it can be very easy to get confused.

