



PARENT/CARER GUIDANCE

Support offered in Schools

March 2026

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Forward

The Parent/Carer Guidance: Support offered in Schools has been created to support parents and carers understanding of what schools' inclusive practice could look like for their children. Schools use the Inclusive Practice Guidance (IPG) as a toolkit of tried-and-tested strategies that can be used in settings, making adjustments to reflect that, every child and young person is unique. What works well for one child or young person might not work for another, and sometimes fresh ideas are needed.

The IPG for schools and education settings has been developed by talking to local families, teachers, and professionals about what really works when supporting children and young people with SEND. Swindon SEND Families Voice have been involved in the creation of the IPG for schools and have helped to create this parent/carers guidance, with parent representatives sharing suggestions and advice drawn from local family experiences to help share what schools are doing to support inclusion in school.

Swindon SEND Families voice have shared their experiences below:

“When my child started to struggle at school, the teachers worked hard to put things in place to make the experience less challenging for them. And yet, my child continued to struggle. The usual strategies were not helping and my child needed something a bit more, but we didn't really know what to try. The one thing we really needed was a 'menu' of suggestions for how to support them. Things other teachers or families had tried and that made a difference in a child's experience. The IPG provides that. I really wish this had been available when we began our journey.”

Our aim is that this guidance helps families to understanding the things that settings could do to meet needs of all learners, ensuring children and young people are able to learn, grow, and thrive through the IPG.



Introduction

Making Learning Work for Every Child

In Swindon schools, we want every child to feel welcome, supported, and able to learn. Some children need extra help because they have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We call this inclusive practice—it means making sure all children can join in, learn well, and feel part of the school.

To do this, schools:

Adapt teaching in ways to support every child.

Make small changes to help children learn better (like using quiet spaces or visual aids which are reasonable adjustments).

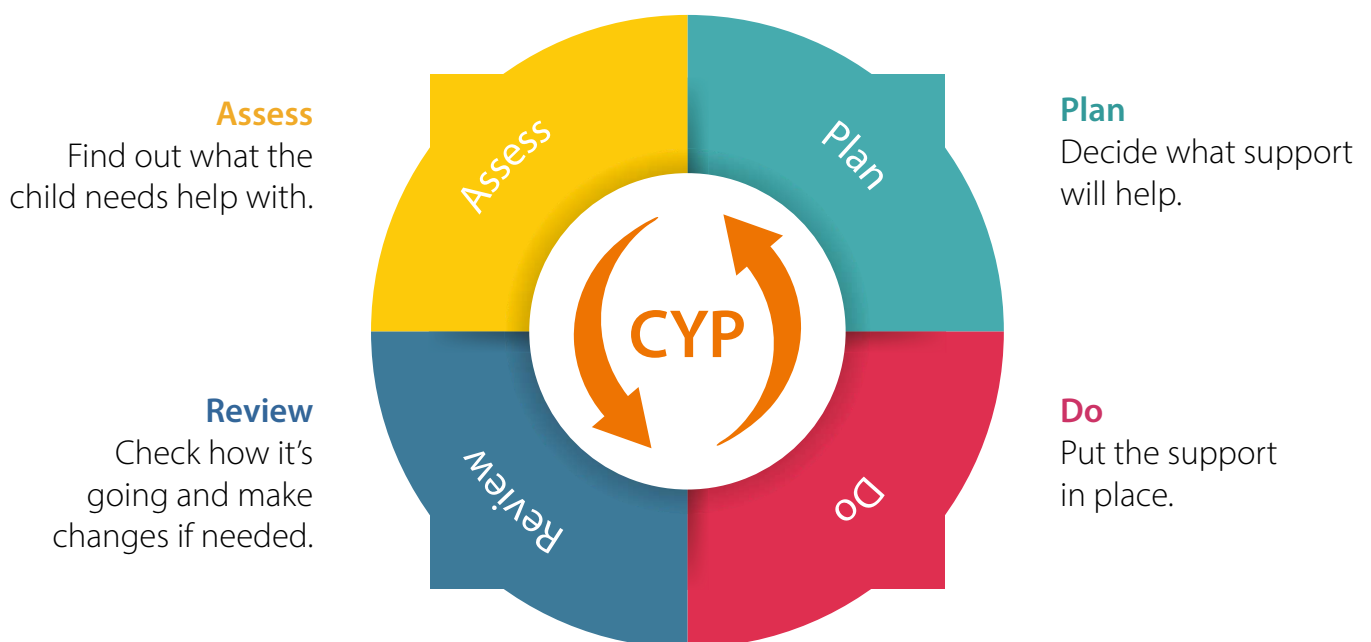
Have staff who know how to support children with different needs.

Give extra help when needed.

Work with specialists (like speech therapists or educational psychologists) early on.

Step-by-Step Support: The Graduated Approach

Schools use a simple cycle to help children with SEND. It's called Assess, Plan, Do, Review:



Families are part of this process every step of the way. Schools and parents work together to make sure children get the right help at the right time.

What's Inside the Guide?

Section One: Everyday support that all schools should offer to every child.

Section Two: Extra ideas for children with specific needs, based on the four main areas in the SEND Code of Practice.

Why It Matters

This guide helps:

Support children to do their best.

Help children become confident and independent wherever possible.

Prepare children for life after school—whether that's college, work, or training.

It also helps schools:

Use the right support at the right time.

Teach in ways that work for different children.

Check how children are doing and adjust support when needed.

Descriptions of the 4 areas of need

Children may need extra support in different ways. These are the four main areas schools look at:

Communication and Interaction

Some children find it hard to talk, understand language, or join in conversations. They may need help with speech or social skills.

Cognition and Learning

Some children learn more slowly than others. They might need extra time, different ways of learning, or help with reading, writing, or maths.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Some children struggle with emotions, friendships, or behaviour. They may feel anxious, sad, or find it hard to cope in school.

Sensory and/or Physical

Some children have physical disabilities or sensory differences (like hearing or vision problems) that make learning harder. They may need special equipment or changes to the classroom.



Spotting When a Child Needs Help

It's important to notice early when a child is struggling. Schools do this by:

- Using the same clear process for all children.
- Making sure assessments are done early and accurately.
- Giving the right support at the right time.
- Working closely with families.

Early help can make a big difference in how well a child does in school and beyond.

What Is SEND Support?

SEND Support means extra help for children who need it to learn, join in, and succeed at school. This support can include:

- **Universal support** – what all children get (like clear routines and visual aids).
- **Targeted support** – extra help for children who need it (like small group work or catch-up sessions).
- **Specialist support** – help from experts (like speech therapists or educational psychologists).

This support is usually provided by the school and doesn't require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Section 1

This section is about inclusive whole school changes schools can make to support children and young people.



How schools support Inclusion

Working Together to Support Your Child

below are some of the things schools might do:

Listening to the Child's Voice

- Children's achievements are celebrated across the school.
- Children help set their own goals and learn to understand their needs.
- Staff use tools like pictures or supported conversations to make sure every child's voice is heard.
- Children are taught about their differences and how to use tools and support to thrive.

Working with Families

- Schools share useful information about support services like SIAS and SEND Families Voice, so families know where to get help.
- Communication is clear and easy to understand. Schools use different formats (like translated documents or simple versions) to suit each family.
- Schools publish a SEND Information Report that explains how they support children with SEND.
- Families are shown where to find the Local Offer—a list of services and support available in Swindon.
- Schools regularly check and update their plans to make sure they meet children's changing needs.
- Policies are written in ways that everyone can understand and follow the law (like the Equality Act 2010).

Working Together as a Team

- Families are kept informed about their child's needs and progress.
- Parents and carers help set goals and plan support for their child.
- Staff take time to understand each child's strengths and challenges.
- Families have a named contact at school for SEND questions.
- Parents are invited to join in SEND events like:
 - Drop-in chats
 - Workshops
 - Online resources
 - Parent groups



How Schools Check Progress and Give Support

How Schools Check What Help Is Needed

- Schools use a simple cycle called Assess–Plan–Do–Review to help children who aren't making expected progress.
- They look at how your child is doing through different types of assessments.
- They also look at school-wide data to see what changes might help all children.

Planning Support

- Schools plan early to help your child.
- If needed, they work with you and your child to set goals and decide what support is best.

Putting Support in Place

- Teachers and staff give the support and check how it's working.
- If your child still needs help, the school will look at more ideas from other parts of the inclusive Practice Guidance.

Reviewing Progress

- Schools keep records to see what's working.
- They regularly meet with families and children to review and improve the support.

Getting Help from Experts

- Schools may ask for advice from professionals like speech therapists or educational psychologists.

Making Assessments Fair

Children may get extra help during tests, like:

- A reader or scribe
- Visual tools or overlays
- Extra time or rest breaks
- Technology like voice-to-text software



How schools create an Inclusive Environment

School Culture

- Schools aim to be welcoming and supportive for all children.
- They use clear behaviour rules and help children learn how to manage emotions.
- Staff build strong relationships with children and families.
- Teachers are trained to understand trauma and make changes to help children feel safe and supported.
- All teachers are teachers of SEND

Physical Environment

- Toilets are private and safe.
- Accessibility plans are in place and updated.
- Furniture and equipment meet children's physical needs.
- There are quiet spaces and flexible areas for different learning styles.
- Classrooms are ready for specialist tools and support staff.

Learning Environment

- Teachers make a range of adjustments such as:
 - Seating and lighting to support children's needs.
 - Provide support for noise levels to reduce stress e.g.. using ear defenders.
 - Displays and resources to make learning clear and accessible.
 - Children can choose how they work—alone, in groups, sitting, standing, or with adult help.
 - Visual tools like timetables and picture boards help children understand routines and tasks.

Emotional Support

- Staff are trained to support children's emotional wellbeing.
- They focus on:
 - Building trust
 - Helping children understand and manage feelings
 - Making changes to help children feel safe and included
 - Families are involved in planning and reviewing emotional support.



Helping Children Feel Safe, Supported and Ready to Learn

Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

Safe, Calm Spaces

- Schools create quiet areas where children can take a break to feel calm. These might be tents, quiet corners, or special rooms.
- All children know where these spaces are and how to use them.

Listening to Children's Voices

- Children are encouraged to share how they feel and what they need.
- They can do this through school councils, peer groups, or trusted adults.

Building Confidence

- Children who feel unsure or have low self-esteem get extra support.
- Trained staff like counsellors and Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) are available to help.

Whole-School Support

- All staff work together to create a kind and inclusive school.
- Children learn to understand and celebrate differences.

Understanding Trauma

- Staff are trained to support children who've experienced difficult situations.
- Schools use gentle approaches to help children feel safe and build trust.

Working Together with Families

- Schools talk regularly with families to make sure support is joined-up and consistent.
- Adjustments are made to help children feel secure and succeed.



Teaching and Learning That Works for Everyone

How learning is supported in the classroom

- Teachers change how they teach to suit different needs. This is called adaptive teaching.
- Schools focus on Quality First Teaching which is good teaching for all children.
- Children get help in different ways, like:
 - Sentence starters or guided questions
 - Diagrams and visual aids
 - Writing frames or vocabulary banks
 - Children can show what they know in different ways:
 - Speaking, drawing, typing, or creating videos
 - Group work helps children learn from each other and build social skills.
- Schools make changes to homework, uniform, and classroom tools to support children's needs.
- Tools like laptops, coloured overlays, and fidget items are available.
- Extra time or breaks during tasks and tests are normal and encouraged.

Staff Training and Skills

- Teachers and staff get regular training to stay up to date with best practices.
- Schools check what training is needed and include it in their improvement plans.
- New staff get a strong introduction to inclusive teaching.

Leadership and School Policies

- School policies are reviewed often to make sure they support children with SEND.
- Behaviour and admissions policies include clear support for children with extra needs.
- Uniform and homework policies are flexible to meet individual needs.
- Inclusion is a key part of the school's improvement plan.

Supporting Children Through Changes

Planning Ahead

- Schools prepare children for changes like:
 - Moving to a new year group
 - Changing teachers
 - Starting or ending terms
 - Moving house or school

Understanding What Makes Transitions Hard

- Some children may find changes harder, especially if they:
 - Are in care or have experienced trauma
 - Have medical needs or neurodiversity
 - Are dealing with anxiety or loss

Making Transitions Easier

- Schools work with families to plan support.
- They use tools like social stories, buddy systems, and extra visits to help children feel ready.
- Supportive friends, buddies or peers.
- Access to supportive adults at playtimes and lunchtime.
- lots of visits to the new setting or classroom.
- a chance to explore the new environment by being given photos, welcome videos, links to websites, maps and time tables.
- Invitations to meetings.

Section 2

Extra Support for Different Needs

This section adds to the general that schools can use by offering more ideas to support children with different types of needs. These are grouped into four main areas, based on national SEND guidance:

- **Communication and Interaction** – support with talking, understanding, and social communication.
- **Cognition and Learning** – help with thinking, memory, and learning new things.
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health** – support with feelings, behaviour, and relationships.
- **Sensory and/or Physical Needs** – help for children with physical challenges or sensitivity to things like sound or light.

Children may have needs in more than one area, and these can change over time. The strategies here are designed to be flexible and adaptable, so schools can respond to what each child needs, when they need it

Communication and Interaction

Supporting Your Child's Speech and Language:

Here are some simple, practical ways schools can all help children and young people with their speech, language, and communication:

Creating a Supportive Environment

- Use visuals like pictures, symbols, and signs to help children understand routines and tasks.
- Label things clearly around the home or classroom to build vocabulary.
- Keep routines predictable with visual timetables or “now and next” boards.

Adapting Tasks and Homework

- Break tasks into smaller steps and give extra time to process instructions.
- Use simple language and repeat instructions when needed.
- Offer visual reminders like checklists or timers.

Personalised Support

- Some children may benefit from their own workspace or a small pack of helpful tools (like picture cards or fidget toys).
- Make sure support is available both in and out of the classroom.

Helping with Transitions

- Prepare children for changes, like moving to a new class or school, with clear explanations and visual supports.
- Talk through what to expect and visit new places ahead of time if possible.

Reducing Distractions

- Keep the environment calm and comfortable—think about noise, lighting, and smells.
- Create quiet spaces for focus and communication.

Encouraging Communication

- Give children time to think and respond.
- Use gestures, pictures, or signs alongside spoken words.
- Model clear speech and encourage children to talk with a partner before answering.

Teaching Key Skills

- Help children learn how to listen, take turns, and join in conversations.
- Praise efforts to communicate, however they choose to do it.

Supporting Social Skills, Communication, and Understanding

Schools may use some of the strategies below to support:

Social Development, Interaction & Play

- Offer quiet or supported spaces at break times.
- Use buddy systems to help children make friends.
- Praise positive behaviour clearly and meaningfully.
- Use visuals (like pictures and labels) to help children understand routines.
- Plan group work carefully so everyone can join in.
- Help children recognise tricky situations and learn ways to cope.
- Use emotional language to help children talk about feelings.
- Always value any way a child tries to communicate.

Attention and Listening

- Say the child's name to get their attention.
- Use visual cues (like checklists or timers) to show what's expected.
- Keep spaces calm and reduce background noise.
- Praise good listening in a way that suits the child.
- Give time for children to process and respond.
- Use partner talk and small groups to keep children engaged.

Understanding Language (Receptive Language)

- Use visual schedules and step-by-step checklists.
- Check understanding by asking children to show or explain.
- Avoid confusing language like idioms or sarcasm.
- Give extra time to think and respond.
- Use pictures, gestures, and simple language to support understanding.
- Repeat and explain new words clearly.

Expressing Thoughts (Spoken Language)

- Model correct language gently when replying.
- Praise effort and clear speech.
- Give time for children to speak and take turns.
- Use books and stories to build vocabulary.
- Support all attempts to communicate, even if not perfect.
- Keep communication consistent between home and school.

Speech Clarity (Intelligibility)

- Repeat words back clearly to model correct sounds.
- Work with parents to understand any speech difficulties.
- Praise effort and use of clear speech.
- Offer other ways to show learning (e.g., drawing or pointing).

Stammering

- Be patient—give time to speak without rushing.
- Use kind, respectful language about stammering.
- Celebrate the child's strengths in communication.
- Offer choices in speaking tasks (e.g., reading aloud).
- Make sure the child feels safe and supported.
- Raise awareness so others know how to be good listeners.
- Get specialist help if stammering affects learning or wellbeing

Supporting Flexible Thinking

Flexibility of Thought

Some children find it hard to cope with changes or open-ended tasks. You can help by:

- Giving advance notice before changes in routine (e.g., "In 5 minutes, we'll tidy up").
- Keeping routines clear and consistent, using visual timetables or picture cues.
- Offering limited choices instead of open-ended ones (e.g., "Would you like to use pencils or crayons?").
- Understanding that sudden changes can be upsetting—give time and support to adjust.

Learning Support (Cognition and Learning)

Some children may need extra help if they learn more slowly than others, even with support in place.

Schools can help by:

- Breaking tasks into small steps
- Using visuals and hands-on activities
- Giving extra time and lots of encouragement

These small changes can make a big difference in helping children feel confident and succeed.

Supporting Thinking and Learning

- Adapting tasks and homework to their level.
- Using multisensory learning (e.g. saying and writing at the same time).
- Celebrating effort and progress, not just results.
- Working in flexible groups and encouraging teamwork.
- Helping them become more independent with tools like checklists or visuals.
- Using assistive tech (e.g. speech-to-text, typing).
- Revisiting tricky topics regularly in short bursts.
- Linking learning to real life and their interests.
- Breaking tasks into small steps and using clear examples.
- Offering different ways to record work (e.g. mind maps, comic strips).

Supporting Reading and Literacy

Some children may struggle with reading for many reasons, such as memory, phonics, or understanding. You might notice:

- Slow reading, skipping words, or guessing
- Difficulty remembering sounds or understanding what they read
- Low confidence or avoiding reading aloud

You can help by:

- Checking vision and hearing (e.g. can they see the board or hear clearly?)
- Making sure they have the right books—ones they can read and enjoy
- Adapting reading materials to match their level
- Practising regularly with a clear focus (e.g. sounding out, understanding)
- Using tools like reading rulers or finger tracking
- Reading together using methods like echo reading or choral reading
- Talking about books to build understanding and vocabulary

Supporting Early Reading Skills

Phonological Awareness

This is about hearing and playing with sounds in spoken words—an important first step before reading and writing.

What you might notice:

- Struggles to hear or break apart sounds in words
- Mixing up sounds or mispronouncing words
- Trouble with rhyming or blending sounds together

How to help:

- Play with sounds through rhyme, alliteration, and syllables
- Practice blending and segmenting sounds (e.g. “c-a-t = cat”)
- Use fun, sound-based games and songs

Phonics

Phonics helps children match sounds to letters so they can read and spell.

What you might notice:

- Forgetting sounds or letters
- Difficulty blending sounds to read words
- Needing lots of repetition

How to help:

- Use a structured phonics programme
- Practice regularly in short sessions
- Use decodable books, sound buttons, or letter tiles
- Try multisensory activities like writing in sand or using wooden letters

Reading Comprehension

This is about understanding what’s been read—not just saying the words.

What you might notice:

- Can read but doesn’t understand the meaning
- Struggles to answer questions or retell stories
- Avoids talking about books

How to help:

- Talk about the book before, during, and after reading
- Use audiobooks or buddy reading
- Teach reading strategies like summarising, predicting, and questioning
- Offer a mix of fiction and non-fiction texts

Reading Fluency

Fluency means reading smoothly, with expression and understanding.

What you might notice:

- Reading is slow or choppy
- Struggles with expression or punctuation
- Gets frustrated or loses meaning while reading

How to help:

- Read aloud regularly at home and school
- Use paired or echo reading (you read, they repeat)
- Model fluent reading
- Encourage reading performances (e.g. plays, poems)
- Use tools like finger tracking or rulers
- Focus on reading for meaning, not just speed

Understanding Vocabulary

Vocabulary helps children understand what they read and express themselves clearly.

What you might notice:

- Uses vague or incorrect words
- Struggles to follow instructions
- Limited word choice in writing or speech

How to help:

- Teach key words before and after lessons
- Use visuals, gestures, and real-life examples
- Practice new words in sentences and conversations
- Use word maps or graphic organisers
- Link new words to what they already know



Writing Support

Writing involves many skills—from planning ideas to forming letters.

What you might notice:

- Trouble getting started or organising ideas
- Struggles with punctuation, spelling, or handwriting
- Writing is slow or lacks detail

How to help:

- Break writing into small steps
- Use checklists and planning tools (e.g. mind maps, comic strips)
- Offer alternatives like typing or speech-to-text
- Model writing and give clear examples
- Give time to plan and rehearse ideas out loud
- Support sentence building with prompts and visuals

Spelling

What you might notice:

- Spells words incorrectly or inconsistently
- Doesn't apply phonics or spelling rules
- Struggles to break words into sounds or syllables

How to help:

- Teach key spellings clearly and regularly
- Use sound mats and highlight tricky parts
- Try different strategies like phonics, word parts (prefixes/suffixes), and word origins
- Focus on what's right, not just what's wrong

Handwriting & Fine Motor Skills

What you might notice:

- Messy or slow writing
- Poor grip or pressure
- Letters not spaced or formed properly

How to help:

- Use pencil grips or different paper types
- Practice handwriting regularly
- Try fine motor activities (e.g. threading, playdough)
- Check seating and posture

Maths Difficulties

Writing involves many skills—from planning ideas to forming letters.

What you might notice:	What it might mean:	How to help:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struggles with number facts or counting• Doesn't understand maths language or symbols• Worries about maths or avoids it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Break writing into small steps• Use checklists and planning tools (e.g. mind maps, comic strips)• Offer alternatives like typing or speech-to-text• Model writing and give clear examples• Give time to plan and rehearse ideas out loud• Support sentence building with prompts and visuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use hands-on tools (e.g. counters, number lines)• Break learning into small steps• Practice key facts like 2, 5, and 10 times tables• Use visuals and real-life examples• Give extra time and reduce the amount of work• Encourage group work and regular practice• Pre-teach key ideas and vocabulary

Understanding Information & Getting Started

What you might notice:	How to help:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Struggles to start tasks or share ideas• Works slowly or echoes others• Avoids speaking in class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use mind maps, comic strips, or Post-it notes• Try speech-to-text or typing tools• Give extra time to think and plan• Pre-teach key concepts and show examples• Use visuals and break tasks into steps

Supporting Attention, Focus & Organisation

What you might notice:

- Easily distracted or daydreams
- Struggles to follow instructions or finish tasks
- Forgets things or loses items
- Talks a lot or interrupts
- Finds it hard to stay seated or focus for long
- Gets overwhelmed by multi-step tasks

Attention & Listening

- Use their name and visual cues to get attention
- Keep instructions short and clear
- Give time to think and respond
- Use praise that matches their style (e.g. verbal, visual)
- Allow movement or sensory breaks
- Reduce background noise and distractions

Organisation & Environment

- Use visual timetables, checklists, and "Now and Next" boards
- Keep workspaces tidy and calm
- Provide quiet areas or tools like ear defenders or wobble cushions
- Use timers or countdowns to manage time

Task Management

- Break tasks into small steps
- Show examples and model how to do things
- Use tools like mind maps, comic strips, or speech-to-text
- Pre-teach key ideas and vocabulary

Planning & Memory

- Use planners, reminders, and alarms
- Teach how to plan and prioritise tasks
- Encourage reflection on what strategies work
- Support with visuals, worked examples, and step-by-step guides

How to help:

- Create a calm, supportive environment
- Build trusting relationships
- Help children name and talk about their feelings
- Use routines and clear expectations to help them feel safe
- Celebrate small successes and positive choices

Supporting Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH)

Some children may struggle with emotions, relationships, or behaviour. Schools can support them in many ways. These challenges can affect how they learn and interact with others.

Some children may find it hard to manage their emotions, build friendships, or feel confident in school. They might:

- Become quiet or withdrawn
- Struggle with big feelings like anger, worry, or sadness
- Find it hard to join in or cope with changes

Whole-School Support

- Clear behaviour policies that are fair, flexible, and based on strong relationships
- Understanding that behaviour is communication—not just “naughty”
- Mental health awareness through assemblies, activities, and access to support
- Create a calm, supportive environment
- Build trusting relationships
- Help children name and talk about their feelings
- Use routines and clear expectations to help them feel safe
- Celebrate small successes and positive choices

Clear Expectations

- Use visuals, routines, and simple language to explain rules
- Help children understand feelings and build resilience

Emotional Support in the Curriculum

- Teach emotional skills through PSHE lessons
- Use tools like social stories, the 5-point scale, and emotion coaching
- Support children to manage feelings with restorative approaches

Unstructured Times (e.g. break/lunch)

- Provide extra support for routines, transitions, and relationships
- Use peer mentors or adult support to help children feel safe and included

Regulation & Safe Spaces

- Create calm areas with sensory tools (e.g. stress balls, glitter jars)
- Use emotion check-ins (e.g. emoji charts or feelings thermometers)
- Help children learn how to calm down and feel in control

Restorative & Peer Support

- After a disagreement, use restorative conversations to repair relationships
- Run social skills groups to build confidence and teach turn-taking, sharing, and problem-solving

Supporting Self-Regulation, Resilience & Empathy

Self-Regulation

Helping children understand and manage their emotions.

What helps:

- Use tools like the Zones of Regulation or 5-Point Scale to talk about feelings
- Teach calming strategies like breathing, mindfulness, movement breaks, or using sensory tools
- Create calm spaces in school (e.g. a quiet corner or tent)
- Use emotion check-ins (e.g. emoji charts)
- Give clear choices and extra time to process emotions
- Involve children in identifying what helps them feel calm

Building Resilience

Helping children bounce back from challenges.

What helps:

- Show that mistakes are part of learning
- Celebrate effort and “best mistakes”
- Share stories of people who overcame difficulties
- Use scaffolded tasks so children can experience success
- Model how to handle setbacks positively

Encouraging Empathy

Helping children understand how others feel.

What helps:

- Use restorative conversations after conflicts (e.g. “How were you feeling?” “What can we do to fix it?”)
- Include empathy activities in class (e.g. stories, role-play, comic strips)
- Use tools like feelings fans or emotion wheels
- Talk about emotions regularly and model caring behaviour

Supporting Relationships, Teamwork & Self-Esteem

Managing Relationships

Some children need help with social skills like sharing, joining in, or resolving conflict.

What helps:

- Adults model positive social behaviour (e.g. turn-taking, kind words)
- Use buddies or peer mentors during playtimes
- Build strong, trusting relationships with key adults
- Use tools like comic strips or role-play to talk through tricky situations
- Offer daily check-ins with a trusted adult

Working with Others

Supporting a child works best when everyone is on the same page.

What helps:

- Listen to the child’s voice and involve them in decisions
- Work closely with parents, staff, and outside services
- Use behaviour plans or risk assessments if needed
- Make sure support is consistent and fair
- Offer help to families when needed

Building Self-Esteem

Some children may lack confidence or be very hard on themselves.

What you might notice:

- Avoids speaking up or trying new things
- Gets upset easily or apologises a lot
- Struggles to accept praise or feedback

What helps:

- Focus on effort and strengths, not just results
- Give quick wins to build confidence
- Use non-verbal praise tools (e.g. emotion charts, traffic lights)
- Let children choose how they share their successes
- Use books and stories that promote self-worth
- Encourage reflection on what they're proud of
- Use rough books or whiteboards to reduce pressure
- Support emotional regulation with tools like Zones of Regulation or Growth Mindset



Supporting Physical and Sensory Needs

Some children may need extra support due to physical or sensory differences, or ongoing medical needs. Schools can help by making thoughtful adjustments to ensure every child is included and supported.

Some children may have a disability or condition that makes it harder for them to access learning in the same way as others. This might include:

- Physical difficulties (e.g. mobility, coordination)
- Sensory differences (e.g. vision, hearing, touch, sound sensitivity)

These children may need extra support or changes to the environment to help them learn and feel included.

How to help:

- Make sure learning spaces are accessible and comfortable
- Use specialist equipment or tools if needed (e.g. sloped desks, large print, hearing aids)
- Reduce sensory overload (e.g. noise, bright lights, busy displays)
- Work closely with families and professionals to understand each child's needs
- Give extra time and flexibility for tasks and transitions

General Support

What helps:

- Focus on what the child can do, and build independence with flexible adult support
- Make sure children are included in all activities—PE, clubs, trips, and residential
- Adapt tasks to reduce fatigue (e.g. rest breaks, flexible seating, larger print, coloured paper)
- Use technology like speech-to-text, laptops, or Clicker to support learning
- Provide alternative tools (e.g. pencil grips, standing desks, beanbags)
- Plan for accessible classrooms and easy-to-reach equipment
- Offer fine and gross motor activities (e.g. 'Dough Disco', movement games)
- Involve children in decisions about what helps them
- Keep staff informed and plan smooth transitions between year groups or schools
- Be flexible with homework and provide support where needed

Medical Needs

What helps:

- Create a Care Plan with input from medical professionals
- Plan for appointments, recovery time, and reduced timetables if needed
- Ensure privacy and dignity during medical routines
- Provide rest breaks and snacks to manage fatigue
- Train staff to carry out medical procedures safely
- Offer pastoral and emotional support
- Keep medication safe, labelled, and accessible
- Support children who are off school with check-ins and catch-up work

Fine Motor & Practical Support

What helps:

- Help with everyday tasks like opening packets, tying laces, or cutting food
- Use specialist tools (e.g. adapted cutlery, pencil grips, writing slopes)
- Offer extra time and alternative ways to record work (e.g. typing, speech-to-text)
- Follow advice from professionals for therapy equipment or routines

Physical Access & Participation

What helps:

- Adapt PE and sports days with rest breaks and suitable equipment
- Include all children in clubs, trips, and events
- Use tools like adjustable tables, alternative seating, or ramps
- Offer support for longer walks or offsite activities
- Allow flexible uniform options (e.g. trainers, joggers)
- Plan classroom layouts to reduce physical strain
- Work with professionals to assess and improve access

Personal Care

What helps:

- Access to disabled toilets or changing areas
- Support with toilet training and personal care routines
- Use of Intimate Care Plans agreed with parents
- Encourage independence with dressing, handwashing, etc.

Accessibility & Safety

What helps:

- Use risk assessments and emergency plans where needed
- Plan timetables and room use with access in mind (e.g. ground floor, lift access)
- Provide quiet spaces for therapy or medical needs
- Use passes for early movement or lift access
- Make sure all trips are inclusive and accessible
- Keep classrooms clutter-free for easy movement
- Store medical equipment safely and accessibly

Hearing Support

What helps:

- Reduce background noise (e.g. carpets, soft furnishings)
- Seat children away from noisy areas and near the teacher
- Use clear speech, natural gestures, and visual aids
- Make sure hearing aids or devices are working daily
- Repeat what others say to help with understanding
- Celebrate Deaf Awareness Week and include deaf role models
- Use books and resources that reflect deaf experiences

Visual Support

What helps:

- Seat children where they can clearly see the board and teacher
- Use large, bold print (size 12 or bigger)
- Avoid glare and keep lighting comfortable
- Keep spaces tidy and well-labelled
- Offer quiet areas for focus and breaks
- Use ICT tools like word processors or audio support
- Allow extra time for tasks and regular check-ins
- Prepare children verbally for changes or transitions

Sensory Differences

Children may react strongly to sounds, lights, textures, or smells. You can support them by:

- Watching for signs of sensory overload (e.g., covering ears, fidgeting) and helping them take a break if needed.
- Working with the child and family to understand what helps or triggers them.
- Making small changes like using ear defenders, adjusting seating, or allowing movement breaks.
- Creating calm spaces with fewer distractions.
- Being flexible with clothing if uniform materials are uncomfortable (e.g., allowing soft fabrics or different shoes).

Key Terms Made Simple

Inclusive practice/inclusion

Making sure every child feels welcome, supported, and able to learn—no matter their needs.

Quality First/High quality teaching

Good teaching that works for all children. If a child isn't making progress, this is the first thing schools check.

Adaptive teaching

Changing how lessons are taught to help each child learn. This might mean using simpler language, giving extra time, or using tools like audio books or speech-to-text software.

Universal Support

Support that every child gets in school—like clear routines, visual aids, and regular feedback.

Targeted and Targeted Plus Support

Extra help for children who need it—like small group work, catch-up sessions, or special resources.

Specialist Support

Help from experts like speech therapists, educational psychologists, or specialist teachers. This is used when children need more than everyday support.







