

# **Additional Support for Learning**

## **A brief guide for parents and carers**

### **The law**

The Scottish Government wants to make sure that all children and young people with additional support needs get the education and support they need to do as well as possible at school.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 which was amended and strengthened in 2009, supports this aim. This law applies only in Scotland. The law in the rest of the UK is different and does not apply in Scotland. Children and young people from outwith Scotland who have special educational needs would be considered to have additional support needs in Scotland.

The Act says that local authorities must meet the additional support needs for all children and young people for whose school education they are responsible. This means that local authorities must give children and young people the support they need to do their best. The Act recommends how professionals should work together to help children and young people and sets out parents' rights within the education system.

### **Additional support needs**

Any child or young person who needs extra or a different sort of support with their learning to that which is usually provided in school has additional support needs.

There are lots of reasons why they might need extra help. Some examples are:

- a physical or sensory difficulty
- social or emotional reasons
- problems at home
- being a young carer
- moving house frequently
- being bullied
- being bereaved
- the way the child is taught
- what is being taught.

Every child or young person is different and may have different additional support needs for different reasons and at different times in their school education.

A child or young person's additional support needs might last for a short time and need the sort of support a school can easily arrange. For some children and young people, their additional support needs might be complicated, long lasting and need help from a number of professionals all working together. The support will come from education but might also come from health care professionals, social work or some voluntary groups.

All education authorities by law must have ways of finding out which children and young people have additional support needs. Your local school can give you more information. All schools have a member of staff who has particular responsibility for children and young people with additional support needs.

If you already know that your child has additional support needs, then it is useful to let the school know as soon as you can so the school can plan how to support your child. Schools find it helpful if you can give them copies of reports or letters from other schools or services who have worked with your child.

## **Planning**

It is important to have a clear plan of how to help children and young people with additional support needs in their education. Many of these plans are written plans and parents or carers can be part of the plan. There are different sorts of plans depending on a child or young person's needs. In Scotland, children and young people can get the support they need before a written plan is completely finished.

Most children and young people's additional support needs are supported by a Personal Learning Plan (PLP). A PLP will set out goals for your child and how to work towards them. If more detailed planning is needed then your child may have an Individualised Educational Programme (IEP). An IEP will say what the additional support needs are; what goals it is hoped your child can reach and by when; who will help them; and how they will help them. The school will check your child's progress and set new goals for them to work towards.

Some children and young people with additional support needs have a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP). A CSP is only for children and young people who have complex or multiple needs that will last at least a year and need significant support from education and other professionals all working together.

These plans will be regularly reviewed.

The difference in education law means that children and young people in Scotland do not have Statements of Special Educational Needs.

## **Mainstream or special classes or schools**

The Scottish Government supports inclusion for all children and young people. This means that most children and young people go to their local school along with all the other local children. There are positive experiences for all children when there are children with additional support needs in school. Good inclusion has good planning and support in schools that are positive about all the pupils. However, the needs of some children and young people may be best met through specialist classes or schools. The most important thing is to meet the needs of the individual child or young person whichever school they attend.

The wishes of the child or young person and parents and carers are important and must be taken into account. The Act says that every local authority in Scotland must have a 'named person' who can tell parents and carers about all the schools and support in the area for children and young people with additional support needs. The 'named person' can tell you about what to do if you are not happy about the support your child is getting or the school they go to. You can ask for a different school by making a 'placing request'. If you cannot come to an agreement with the local authority then, in certain circumstances, you can ask to go to the Tribunal. Tribunals collect all the information and listen to what you and the local authority says. The Tribunal will then say what it thinks should happen.

There is much more information about children and young people with additional support needs in Scotland. The information from Enquire is particularly useful for parents.

## **Enquire**

Enquire is a national advice and information service which provides independent advice and information to families of children who require extra help at school. Enquire has a helpline which you can phone to discuss your concerns in more detail. Enquire's telephone number is 0845 123 2303. Enquire also publish a guide for parents' on additional support for learning which you can view at:

<http://www.enquire.org.uk/enquire/pdf/parents-guide-to-asl-2006-01.pdf>.

## **National Advocacy Service: 'Take Note'**

The Scottish Government has a legal duty to provide to provide free lay and legal advice to families and young people who appeal to the Tribunal against an education authority's decisions regarding the provision of educational support. The advocacy service, 'Take Note' can be contacted on 0131 667 6333. Their website address is: <http://www.sclc.org.uk>

## **The code of practice**

The *supporting children's learning code of practice (Revised edition) 2010* explains the duties on education authorities and other agencies to support children's and young people's learning. It provides guidance on the ASL Act's provisions as well as on the supporting framework of secondary legislation.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/04/04090720/0>

## ***Guidance on partnership working between allied health professions and education***

You can find more information about partnership working in *Guidance on partnership working between allied health professions and education* which can be accessed at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/05/27095736/0>.

## **Education Scotland**

Education Scotland is a national body which is responsible for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching from early years to adult and community learning. Education Scotland's website, which provides information about education in Scotland, including Supporting Learners, can be accessed at: <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk>.