

Education

Parents' and children's rights at school



A free and confidential service paid for by legal aid
0845 345 4 345 www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

community
legal advice

Most parents are happy with their child's education. But when things go wrong, parents often feel that their child's happiness, wellbeing and life chances are at stake. This leaflet explains what you and your child can expect from a school and from your local authority.

● What choice of school do I have for my child?	3
● When must my child go to school?	6
● May I teach my child at home?	8
● What will my child be taught at school?	8
● What should I be told about my child and their progress?	9
● What do I have to pay for at school?	10
● What can I do if my child is being bullied?	10
● What rights does the school have to discipline my child?	11
● What happens if my child can't go to school?	13
● What say do I have in how the school is run?	14
● What if I am not happy about my child's school or education?	16
● How can I get the right education for my child if they have special needs?	17
● Further help	22

The leaflets in this series give you an outline of your legal rights. They are not a complete guide to the law and are not intended to be a guide to how the law will apply to you or to any specific situation. The leaflets are regularly updated but the law may have changed since this was printed, so information in it may be incorrect or out of date.

If you have a problem, you will need to get more information or personal advice to work out the best way to solve it. See 'Further help' on page 22 for sources of information and advice.

What choice of school do I have for my child?

If you are applying for a place for your child at the normal time that a child starts school, your local authority (LA) may limit the number of schools you can apply to. You apply to most schools through your LA even if the school is in a different local authority area.

If you are applying at a time other than when a child normally starts school (for example, because you have just moved into the area), you can generally apply to as many schools as you like. Ask the LA whether you apply through them or directly to the school. You must apply in writing by filling in an application form.

The law does not guarantee you a place for your child at the school of your choice – it says only that you have the right to express a preference. Your preference must be met if possible.

The official body that decides who gets a place is called the 'admission authority'. For state-maintained (community and voluntary-controlled) schools, the admission authority is the LA. For all other schools, it is the school's governing body.

When can my child be refused a place?

An admission authority can refuse your child a place at school if:

- the school is full;
- in the case of an infant or primary school, giving your child a place would take the school beyond the legal limit for an infant class size (which is 30 pupils to each teacher);
- the school is a 'selective school' and your child does not meet its entry requirements;
- they have already been offered a place under 'co-ordinated admission arrangements' (where places are shared among two or more schools); or
- your child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools, the last time being less than two years ago.

If a school is classified as having serious problems and already has many children with difficult behaviour, it may refuse a child with similar difficulties. But it may do this only if you are applying for a place outside the usual time for joining the school.

If there are more applications than there are places at a school, the school must use its 'oversubscription' criteria (rules) to decide who to offer a place to. These criteria must be objective (based on facts), clear and fair. They often include how far the child lives from the school and whether they have a brother or sister there. The criteria must be set out in a document that you can easily get hold of – usually the LA guide or prospectus.

Between March and September, most schools keep a waiting list for the school's entry-level year (reception for a primary school, and Year 7 for a secondary school). A child's place on the list should not depend on how long they have been waiting. The waiting list should be organised in line with the school's oversubscription criteria.

What can I do if my child has been refused a place?

If your child has been refused a place at a school, you can normally appeal to an independent panel. You cannot appeal if your child:

- is the subject of an 'education supervision order' (see 'Can I be prosecuted if my child does not go to school?' on page 7); or

- was refused a place because they have already been excluded from two or more schools (see 'When can my child be refused a place?' on page 3).

If your child has been refused a place at a school, the admission authority should write to you to:

- explain why they were refused;
- tell you how you can appeal against the decision; and
- tell you how long you have to make your appeal. (The admission authority should not refuse to accept a late appeal, but it might not consider your appeal until after it has considered the appeals that were submitted at the right time.)

To make an appeal, you must write to the admission authority saying why you are appealing. You can also send in other information at any time, including at the appeal hearing itself (though the sooner you can send any information, the better). After sending in your appeal, you will be told when there will be a hearing, where you can put your case. If the date of the hearing doesn't suit you, the admission authority should try to find another date that does.

You can choose to have someone represent you at the hearing, although you cannot get legal aid to cover the cost of this.

If you are applying to an infant or primary school and your child has been turned down because the infant classes have reached the legal limit of 30 children to one teacher, your appeal will succeed only if the appeal panel decides that the admission authority:

- did not follow the rules properly and should have offered your child a place; or
- made an unreasonable decision in the strict legal sense. This means that the decision was not logical. It is very unusual for an appeal panel to make this judgement.

For all other appeals where the school is full, the hearing is in two stages. The first stage is the factual stage, where the appeal panel decides whether:

- the published admission arrangements were correctly applied;
- the school is full; and
- admitting your child would 'prejudice' (harm) the education of other children in the school or overstretch the school's resources.

If the panel decides that it would do so, they move to the second or 'balancing' stage of the appeal. Here they must look at your child's situation and balance this against the difficulties the school would face if they had to take another child.

If you are appealing because your child was turned down for not meeting the selection criteria, the panel will look at your reasons for saying why you think your child should be given a place.

The panel should always give you the reasons for their decision in writing.

What if my child was refused a place at a nursery?

Many children go to nursery before going to a main primary school. If you have a three-year-old, you should be offered a part-time nursery place for them if you want it. You have no legal right to appeal against a particular nursery's decision if it says it won't take your child.

When must my child go to school?

Children must receive education:

- from the start of the term after their fifth birthday; and
- until the last Friday in June in the school year in which they turn 16.

The LA educates some children out of school. You are also allowed to educate your child out of school, but you must give them a 'suitable education' (see 'May I teach my child at home?' on page 8).

If you don't register your child for a school, and you are not giving your child a suitable education out of school, the LA may serve you with a 'school attendance order'. This will name a school that your child must attend. It will also explain your right to apply to another school if you don't want to send your child to the named school. You will be breaking the law if you do not follow a school attendance order, unless you can show that your child is receiving a suitable education somewhere other than at school.

What happens if my child doesn't go to school?

The LA or school may take action against you if your child:

- does not go to school as set out in a school attendance order;
- does not regularly go to the school they are registered at; or
- is often late.

The school or LA may ask you to sign a parenting contract if your child does not attend school regularly over a four-week period or longer. This is a written agreement asking you to take certain steps such as bringing your child to school. It should also include support for you and your child, and you could suggest anything you think might help.

For example, it might include:

- for you, parenting classes or someone to advise you (normally an education welfare officer from the LA); and
- for your child, peer mentoring (support from another pupil), literacy classes or help with transport to and from school.

The contract has no legal force, but if you refuse to sign or do not keep to it, it could be used against you in any court action.

The school or the LA can also issue you with a fixed penalty notice (a fine) of £50 or £100 – the lower amount if you pay within a certain time. You cannot appeal against this fine. If you refuse to pay it, either:

- the penalty notice could be withdrawn; or
- you may be taken to court.

If you pay the fine, you cannot be taken to court for that offence, but you could be prosecuted if your child continues to miss school without the school's agreement.

Can I be prosecuted if my child does not go to school?

The LA may decide to take you to court if your child is not attending school regularly and the absences have not been authorised (allowed) by the school. However, before the LA does this, it should first consider applying to the court for an 'education supervision order' (ESO). This allows the LA to give you help, advice and instructions on your child's education and schooling, which you must follow. It can choose to prosecute you as well as applying for an ESO.

If the LA does decide to prosecute, each of the child's parents can be:

- fined up to £1,000; and
- made to attend counselling or guidance as part of a 'parenting order'.

If the LA can also show that you know your child is not going to school and you are not trying to make them go to school, each parent can be:

- fined up to £2,500;
- put in prison for up to three months; and
- made to attend counselling or guidance as part of a parenting order.

Under a parenting order, you may also have to take more control over your child's behaviour – for example, by personally taking them to school each day. If you don't stick to the terms of a parenting order, you are breaking the law.

You should not be prosecuted if your child misses school:

- because of authorised absence, when the school agrees that your child does not have to be at school;
- because your child is ill or there is some other reason that can't be avoided;
- for religious reasons – for example, a religious holiday or event; or
- because the school is not within walking distance and the LA has not arranged a way for your child to get to school, made boarding arrangements or found them a school nearer to home – see 'Can I get help taking my child to school?' on page 21.

May I teach my child at home?

You do not usually need permission to teach your child at home. However, if your child is of compulsory school age and is registered at a school, you should first write to the school to ask it to remove your child's name from the school roll. The school must then let the LA know of this within two school weeks. You need permission to take your child off the school roll only if they go to a special school arranged by the LA.

You don't need special qualifications to teach your child at home, and you don't have to follow the national curriculum. However, you must make sure that your child is educated suitably for their age and ability and for any special educational needs they may have. If the LA does not think you are doing this, it might send you a school attendance order (see 'When must my child go to school?' on page 6).

What will my child be taught at school?

All state-maintained schools must provide the national curriculum. This sets out what most children should be taught. However, a school can 'disapply' (not teach) some or all of the national curriculum for a short time if it thinks this is best for your child. You have a right to ask the head teacher to remove your child from certain lessons for a strong educational reason.

You can appeal to the school's governing body if:

- you don't agree with the school's decision to disapply; or
- the head teacher won't remove your child when you ask for this.

You have the right to stop your child taking part in:

- all or part of any sex education that is not part of the national curriculum; and
- religious education and worship. (You can also take your child out of classes or out of the school at the start or end of a school morning or afternoon session for religious education or worship.)

You can also complain about the curriculum to the governing body and to the LA.

What should I be told about my child and their progress?

Schools must give you a written report on your child at least once a year. This must include information on their:

- progress in all the national curriculum subjects they have studied;
- progress in other subjects and activities;

- general progress and attendance; and
- results in any national curriculum tests or assessments.

The report should also tell you when you can discuss it with the school.

This discussion usually takes place at a parents evening. The head teacher may have the report translated into another language if English or Welsh is not your first language.

The school must also keep school records for your child. The records must include:

- information on your child's progress; and
- other records the school keeps on your child. (However, certain information cannot be shown or given to you or your child.)

Legally, you and your child have the right to see your child's school records. If you write to the school asking to see the records, the school has 15 days to allow you to see them. If you want a copy of the school records, the school may charge you a reasonable fee for photocopying them.

If you don't agree with something in your child's school records, or you think there is a mistake in them, you can write to ask the school's governing body to change them. If it won't allow you to see your child's records, or change them, you can contact the Information Commissioner, or take legal action.

What do I have to pay for at school?

Education must be free at all state-maintained schools and in other educational organisations that the LA pays for (for example, pupil-referral units and some nursery schools).

Schools and LAs can charge you for some things. But they can't force you to pay, unless these things are in their 'charging policy'. The school or LA should give you a copy of this policy if you ask for it.

Schools may charge you for:

- some teaching of musical instruments, unless your child is taking a national curriculum course in music;
- out-of-school activities that are 'optional extras' and not a part of the national curriculum or religious education; and

- any food and accommodation on school visits where children stay overnight. (If you receive Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you should not have to pay for this.)

A school may ask you to help pay for activities that take place during school hours, but your child cannot be left out if you do not pay.

If you receive Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, your child should receive free school meals. All other children must pay.

Many LAs give small amounts of money to help families pay for a school uniform. However, there is no law to say they must do this.

What can I do if my child is being bullied?

Your child's school must have a policy that states what it does to stop bullying. If your child is bullied, you should tell the school straight away. Legally, the school must do all it reasonably can to protect children from bullying.

The school might be judged legally responsible in serious cases if it has not stopped spoken or physical bullying that:

- has caused a child serious harm; and
- it could have expected to happen.

If your child has suffered in this way and you think you want to take action against the school or the LA, you should get expert legal advice.

What rights does the school have to discipline my child?

All schools must have a governors' statement on how children should behave. The governing body must speak or write to parents, staff and pupils before it changes this. The school's behaviour policy and any school rules must be based on this statement. The head teacher must tell pupils, parents and staff about the policy and rules at least once a year.

Under the Human Rights Act 1998, any punishment or treatment must not be 'inhuman or degrading'. It must be suitable, taking into account what the child has done. For more information, see the Community Legal Advice leaflet 'The Human Rights Act'.

When can my child be given detention?

You must be given 24 hours' notice in writing if the school wants to give your child a detention out of school hours. A detention must be 'reasonable', which means it must be suitable, taking into account what your child has done. A detention should also take into account:

- how old your child is;
- whether they have any special educational needs or disabilities;
- whether they have religious requirements; and
- whether they have special transport arrangements.

Are staff allowed to hit my child?

Physical punishment such as smacking, caning or shaking a child is illegal in all schools. However, school staff may use 'reasonable force' to stop a child:

- committing a crime;
- hurting someone; or
- damaging something.

If you think your child has been seriously harmed or sexually assaulted, you can complain straight away to the police or your local council's children's services department.

When can my child be excluded from school?

Head teachers may exclude (remove) a child:

- for a fixed period of time;
- at lunchtimes; or
- permanently.

Fixed-period exclusions must not total more than 45 school days in any school year.

What happens if my child is excluded?

For the first five days of an exclusion you must make sure that your child is not in a public place during normal school hours, unless there is a good reason. You can be fined if your child is in a public place without a good reason during this time.

During the first five days of an exclusion the school will provide schoolwork for your child to do. After that, the school must provide suitable full time education. If your child has been permanently excluded, the local authority must provide suitable full-time education.

What can I do if I think my child has been wrongly excluded?

If the school excludes your child, you have the right to write to the school's governing body telling it you think your child shouldn't have been excluded.

In some cases, you also have the right to attend a meeting to speak to the governing body. This applies if the head teacher excludes your child:

- for a total of five and a half school days or more in a term;
- permanently; or
- at the time of a public exam.

If the head teacher excludes your child permanently and the governors agree with the decision, you can appeal to an independent appeal panel set up by the LA. The governors and independent appeal panel must decide 'on the balance of probabilities' whether your child did what they are accused of. This means it must be more likely than not that they did it. Your child's actions must have been serious enough to justify being excluded, and the school must have first tried all possible methods to help or discipline your child, unless the exclusion was for a very serious incident.

Head teachers, governing bodies, appeal panels and LAs must follow rules and act within certain time periods if a child is excluded. There are also government and National Assembly for Wales guidelines describing what should happen if the school excludes your child.

You should be given the phone number of a free helpline run by the Advisory Centre for Education to help parents of excluded children. (See 'Further help' on page 22.)

If you are going to an exclusion hearing, you may want to get legal advice before you go. You cannot normally get legal aid to pay for a solicitor to go to a hearing, but you may be able to get free legal help to put together your case if you have a low income (see 'What if I am not happy about my child's school or education?' on page 16).

Under the rules of 'natural justice', you and your child have a right to a fair hearing. You may be able to take the LA or the school to court if a governors hearing or independent appeal hearing is not fair. You would need expert legal advice to do this. There are tight time limits for taking such action.

What else can the local authority (LA) or school do?

If your child has seriously misbehaved the LA or school can:

- ask you to sign a parenting contract (see 'What if my child doesn't go to school?' on page 6); or
- apply to the court for a parenting order.

You can say if you disagree with a parenting order being made and bring witnesses to show why it is unfair.

If the order is made, you will have to attend counselling or guidance classes. The order may also set out other action you must take. If you don't keep to the order, you will be breaking the law.

If you agree to attend counselling or guidance classes, the court may not make a formal parenting order against you.

What happens if my child can't go to school?

Local authorities should provide education for children who cannot go to school. Normally, a child cannot go to school if they are ill or have been injured.

The education could be, for example, at a:

- hospital school;
- pupil-referral unit;
- further education college; or
- work-experience placement.

Some children need teaching at home.

If there is a problem getting this for your child, you should ask your LA for a copy of their rules on who will get home teaching and how many hours you could get it for.

Sick or injured children should receive at least five hours' teaching a week when they are well enough.

What say do I have in how the school is run?

You have the right to vote for parent governors to represent you on the school governing body. You can also stand for election as a parent governor yourself.

Schools must talk with you and other parents about changes to:

- the home-school agreement (see 'What is a home-school agreement?' on page 15);
- the school's behaviour statement (see 'What rights does the school have to discipline my child?' on page 11).

There are also rules on when parents should be consulted about major changes to schools, such as:

- mergers;
- closures; and
- changes to the school starting and finishing times.

In Wales the school's governing body must give you a written report on the school every year, and hold a meeting each year for parents to discuss it. You can suggest topics for discussion and action and vote on them. If other parents agree with you, the governing body must look at the issue and report back to you. For this to happen, the number of parents at the meeting must be at least 20 per cent (a fifth) of the total number of pupils at the school.

If you have a child at a school or you are thinking of sending your child to a school, you have a right to a free copy of the school prospectus, with information about the school and its policies.

In Wales, this must include:

- information about the school's special educational needs policy;
- details of how the school supports disabled pupils;
- information about admission to the school;
- parents' rights to withdraw their child from religious education and collective worship;
- details of absences; and
- information about examination, test and assessment results in that school.

In England, governing bodies have more freedom about what to publish in their prospectuses, but they must include:

- information about the school's special educational needs policy; and
- details of how the school supports disabled pupils.

Governing bodies must also complete a 'school profile' every year. This is a document, available online, that contains information about:

- the school's performance in tests and examinations;

- the most recent Ofsted report; and
- how the school ensures that pupils are healthy, safe and well supported.

You can find school profiles through the website of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (see 'Further help' on page 22).

Schools in England and Wales should also give you information about the curriculum and syllabuses (what your child will be taught and how) if you ask for it.

What is a home-school agreement?

A home-school agreement sets out your responsibilities and those of the school (and sometimes the children) towards each other. It has no legal force. Schools must talk to parents when they draw up a home-school agreement. In most cases, you must be asked to sign the home-school agreement, but you cannot be made to do this. A school cannot refuse your child a place or exclude your child just because you do not sign the home-school agreement.

What if I am not happy about my child's school or education?

All schools must have a complaints procedure. If you want to make a complaint, you should ask your child's school for a copy and follow the procedure in it as a first step.

You should usually complain to a senior teacher or the head teacher first. If they do not solve your problem, you can complain to the governing body of the school. If your complaint is about a member of staff at a community or controlled school, you can also complain to the local authority.

If you don't think your complaint has been dealt with properly and the matter is serious, you may be able to take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (in England) or the National Assembly for Wales (NAW). But you can do this only if you feel that your school's governing body or the LA has acted unlawfully or 'unreasonably' (which in law means in a completely illogical way). The Secretary of State and NAW do not often use these powers, and if you are thinking of complaining in this way, you need to try all the local ways of complaining first.

You can also complain to the Local Government Ombudsman (in England) or Local Ombudsman for Wales about:

- a local authority;
- an admission authority;
- an admissions appeal panel; or
- an exclusions appeal panel.

However, the Local Government Ombudsman and Local Ombudsman for Wales can only look at complaints to do with 'maladministration'. This includes where an organisation:

- does not follow its own procedures; or
- takes too long to do something.

The Ombudsman cannot look at complaints about internal school matters.

See 'Further help' on page 22 for how to contact the Ombudsmen.

Ofsted can investigate complaints about the work of a school as whole, but it cannot investigate matters that relate to an individual child. See 'Further help' on page 22 for how to contact Ofsted.

Finally, if the other ways of dealing with your complaint have failed, you may have a case for judicial review in the High Court. But to do this, one of the organisations involved must have:

- done something unlawful;
- done something unreasonable (completely illogical);
- taken something into account that was not legally relevant to the decision they had to reach;
- not considered your situation on its merits – for example, when deciding whether to give your child a place in a school; or
- not followed proper procedures or the rules of ‘natural justice’ (acting fairly and without favour).

In these cases you will need expert legal advice as soon as possible. You need to act quickly, because you must normally start your case at the latest within three months of the problem you are complaining about. This means you will need to speak to a lawyer well before the end of the three months so there is time to prepare your case.

How can I get the right education for my child if they have special needs?

A child has special needs and should get help at school if they:

- have significantly more difficulty in learning than other children of the same age;
- have a disability which affects how they can use educational facilities that are usually provided for children of the same age in the same area; or
- are under five, and are likely to fall within these categories when they reach compulsory school age.

A learning difficulty can be the result of, for example:

- a disability;
- behaviour problems; or
- problems learning to read.

Your child doesn't have a special need because:

- the language they speak at home is different from the language taught at school; or
- they are gifted, unless they have other difficulties that cause them problems in learning.

In most cases, the school should decide what help children with learning difficulties need. Children with the greatest difficulties will need a 'statutory assessment' from their LA (see 'What is a statutory assessment?' opposite).

If you think your child has learning difficulties, you can ask your authority for an assessment.

What if my child is discriminated against because of their disability?

Local authorities, schools and colleges must not treat children and students with disabilities less well than others for a reason to do with their disability. All schools must have

- an anti-discrimination policy setting out what they do to prevent discrimination;
- an accessibility policy setting out how the school buildings are made accessible to pupils with disabilities; and
- a disability equality scheme setting out how they will promote equal opportunities for disabled people.

If you think your disabled child has suffered unlawful discrimination, you may complain to the Special Educational Needs and Disability

Tribunal (Sendist). This tribunal can order the LA, school or college to stop the discrimination but it cannot order it to pay you compensation. Disability discrimination in admissions and permanent exclusions is considered by the relevant appeal panel, not by the tribunal.

For more information about discrimination against people with disabilities, see the Community Legal Advice leaflet 'Rights for Disabled People'. Also see 'Guide to Disability in Education for Parents' from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and 'Disability Discrimination' from the Advisory Centre for Education. See 'Further help' on page 22 for contact details.

What is a statutory assessment?

You have the right to ask your LA for a statutory assessment of your child's needs. The LA must follow a process set out in legal guidance to decide if your child needs a statutory assessment. If it refuses to assess your child, you can appeal to Sendist (see 'What can I do if I disagree with my child's statement or assessment decision?' on page 20).

If the LA decides that your child needs an assessment, it must ask for reports on your child, including reports from:

- you;
- a doctor;
- an educational psychologist;
- the school; and
- a social worker, if your child is known to social services.

You have the right to be present at any examination of your child. If you won't let your child be examined by a health or education professional during a statutory assessment, the LA might take you to court to make you allow this.

Your own report on your child can include your opinions and experiences, and reports by other professionals who may have seen your child.

The LA must then decide if your child needs the sort of help they can only get through a 'statement of special educational needs'. (Only about 3 per cent of school-age children have a statement.)

This is a complicated area, and every LA must provide a parent partnership service or other independent advisers who can help you understand the process and your rights.

What is a 'statement of special educational needs'?

A statement of special educational needs is a legal document produced by the LA, which sets out:

- your child's learning needs; and
- the help they will receive to meet those needs.

The help must normally be described in as much detail as possible. The statement must also say where your child will be educated (though you may say which school you want your child to go to). For school-age children, the education will normally take place at an ordinary (mainstream) or special school. For younger children, it may be in a nursery or at home. If the statement does not name the school your child should attend, it should state the type of school, for example 'mainstream secondary'.

Most children with statements are taught in ordinary (mainstream) schools and, under recent legislation, parents now have a stronger right to a place in an ordinary school for their child.

An LA can refuse a mainstream place to a child with a statement only if other children's education could suffer and there are no reasonable steps it can take to prevent this.

The stronger right to a mainstream place for a child with a statement does not mean you have a right to a place at a particular school. Whichever school you say you would like (special or mainstream), the LA will consider:

- the cost of your child attending the school;
- whether the school can meet your child's needs; and
- whether the education of other children would be affected.

What can I do if I disagree with my child's statement or assessment decision?

You have the right to appeal to an independent body called the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (Sendist) if you don't agree with what the LA has decided for your child. You can appeal if you disagree with the LA's decision:

- not to give your child a statutory assessment or reassessment when you have asked for one;
- not to give your child a statement after a statutory assessment;
- not to name a school in the statement;
- not to change your child's statement after reassessing them; or
- not to continue your child's statement.

You can also appeal if you disagree with:

- the description of your child's special educational needs or the special educational help they should have; or
- the choice of school named in the statement.

If you want to appeal against the statement, you have two months, starting when you receive the LA's written decision.

Can I get help taking my child to school?

The LA must provide free transport if your child lives further than the legal walking distance from their nearest suitable school.

The legal walking distance is:

- two miles for children under eight years old; and
- three miles for older children.

If you have chosen to place your child at a school that is further away than the legal walking distance when there is a place available at a nearer school, the LA will not normally provide transport.

However, the LA may still have to give your child free transport if:

- they have special educational needs;
- your family has a low income; or
- there are other special circumstances.

If you think your child needs free transport, you should write to the LA to explain why, and ask for a copy of its transport policy. If the LA refuses to provide free transport, you can normally appeal the decision.

If your child has a statement of special educational needs that names a school they can't reach by walking or public transport, the LA must provide another form of transport to that school. This may be specified in the statement.

Further help

Community Legal Advice

Provides free information, help and advice direct to the public on a range of common legal issues. Call 0845 345 4 345

Speak to a qualified legal adviser about benefits and tax credits, debt, education, housing or employment or find local advice services for other problems.

Click www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Find a quality local legal adviser or solicitor and links to other sources of online information and help.

To order leaflets from the **Department for Children, Schools and Families** with information on your child's education, contact:

Publications Centre (in England)

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents

phone: 0870 000 228811

National Assembly for Wales

phone: 029 2082 3683

www.learning.wales.gov.uk

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

General advice line: 0808 800 5793

Exclusion advice line: 0808 800 0327

Free booklets on admission and exclusion appeals, attendance, bullying, complaints, disability discrimination and special educational needs can be downloaded from the ACE website: www.ace-ed.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Campaign

Helpline: 020 7378 1446 10am to 4pm

ChildLine

For help with bullying and abuse

phone: 0800 1111 (24 hours)

www.childline.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre

phone: 0845 345 4345

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Equality and Human Rights Commission in England

Disability Helpline phone: 08457 622 633

textphone: 08457 622 644

Helpline for other types of discrimination

phone: 0845 604 6610

textphone 0845 604 6620

Equality and Human Rights Commission In Wales

Helpline phone: 0845 604 8810

textphone 0845 604 8820

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Education Law Association (ELAS)

phone: 0118 966 9866

www.educationlawassociation.org.uk

Home Education Advisory Service

phone: 01707 371854

www.heas.org.uk

Information Commissioner

phone: 08456 30 60 60

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Independent Panel for Special Educational Advice

Support and advocacy for parents of children with special educational needs

phone: 0800 0184016

www.ipsea.org.uk

Local Government Ombudsman (England)

phone: 0845 602 1983

www.lgo.org.uk

Local Ombudsman for Wales

phone: 01656 641150

www.ombudsman-wales.org

Ofsted

phone: 08456 40 40 45

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (Sendist)

SEN appeals: 0870 241 2555

Disability claims: 0870 606 5750

www.sendist.gov.uk

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Tribunal for Wales

phone: 01597 829 800

www.sentw.gov.uk

The Community Legal Service

The Community Legal Service has been set up to help you find the right legal information and advice to solve your problems.

You can get help through a national network of organisations including Citizens Advice Bureaux, Law Centres, many independent advice centres and thousands of high street solicitors. All of these services meet quality standards set by the Legal Services Commission. Look for the Community Legal Service logo, shown below.

Many of the organisations offer some or all of their services for free. If you cannot afford to pay for advice you may be eligible for financial support through the Community Legal Service Fund (Legal Aid). You can order leaflets about funding from the LSC Leaflet line on 0845 3000 343. You can also use a Legal Aid eligibility calculator on the website: www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

*Community
Legal Service*



The Legal Services Commission (LSC)

The Community Legal Service and the Community Legal Service Fund are managed by the Legal Services Commission. To find out more about us visit our website at www.legalservices.gov.uk or find the details for your local Legal Services Commission office in the phone book.

legal services
COMMISSION

