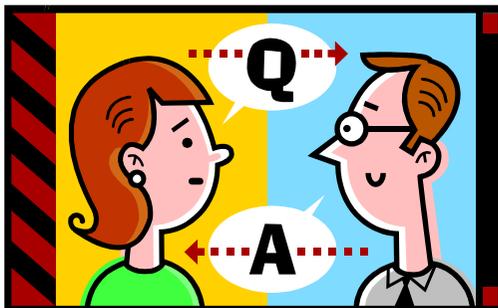


# Questions to ask the SENCO

Liverpool Parent Partnership Service



## **Introduction**

This guide has been produced to help you when you are meeting a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the first time at your child's school or when your child is going to a new school.

It explains briefly what a SENCO does within a school or setting and what questions you may want to ask to find out how they can best meet your child's needs. Keeping clear, friendly and honest lines of communication with the SENCO is crucial as they are an important part of your child's education.



## **Meeting the SENCO**

This is usually needed when your child is starting a new school or if you have been told that the school has identified that your child has Special Educational Needs (SEN). We recommend meeting the SENCO when:

- Transferring from one school to another – this can be stressful for parents and children. It is likely that you may be more anxious if your child has SEN or a disability.
- Starting school – your child’s introduction to his or her new school is likely to be more successful if you have planned it.
- You have concerns – don’t let these grow. Talk to the SENCO sooner rather than later.

### **The SENCO**

This is short for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. Every school and early years setting must have a SENCO.

The role of the SENCO is to take day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that children have their special needs met.

It is sensible to visit the school you want your child to attend (or are considering) well before the start date. The person who is likely to be able to answer your questions is the SENCO.

It helps if you consider the questions you want answered before your meeting with the SENCO. Write your questions down and check that you have asked everything before you leave.



It might be useful to take someone with you to any meeting you arrange.

It is important that you share information about your child with the SENCO. You might want to take relevant reports and your child's statement if he or she has one.

### **Questions to Ask**

All children are different and your child's needs will be unique. There will therefore be some questions which only apply to your child.



There will be questions which should be suitable for most people. These might include:

1) Ask about the school SEN policy – the SENCO should be able to give you a copy. There might be other policies which would be relevant and which you could ask about. These could include:

- The school anti-bullying policy
- The school behaviour/discipline policy

2) Ask how the school organises its special needs provision. Do they have special classes? Are children withdrawn from class for extra lessons in small groups? How

does the school use its support staff – are there non-teaching staff working in classrooms supporting children’s learning?

3) Ask what training the staff have received. This might be individual or as a whole staff. For example, Liverpool is a dyslexia friendly authority and many schools have received training on how to teach pupils with dyslexia.

4) All children with special needs should have an individual education plan (IEP). Ask to see an example of this. Ask how often IEPs are reviewed and ask if you or your child will be involved in those reviews.

5) Schools are becoming increasingly skilled at meeting special needs. Ask if the school has experience of working with children with difficulties similar to your child’s, and whether it was successful.

Make a list of all the questions you want to ask and take it with you to the meeting (see our leaflet – ‘Preparing for Meetings’ for further information).

Remember! Some SENCOs have a full teaching timetable as well as their SENCO responsibilities. This may mean that there is a delay in them getting back to you, or that they ask you to meet them before or after school or at lunchtime.



## Notes

## **Have Your Say**

Please let us know any comments you may have about this leaflet by contacting the Parent Partnership Service or by completing and returning a 'Have your say' leaflet, which is available from libraries, City Council offices or from

**Liverpool Direct** – Tel: 0151 233 3000

Or email: [parentpartnership@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:parentpartnership@liverpool.gov.uk)

Further copies of this and other leaflets are available from the Parent Partnership Service.

This leaflet is also available in large print on request.

Some of our leaflets are available in community languages on request.

### **Data Protection**

Although we are part of Liverpool City Council's Children's and Young Peoples' Service, any record we make of your contact with us is confidential to the Parent Partnership Service except where you agree to us talking with other agencies, or if a child is at risk.

### **Further Contacts**

If you need any further information, advice or support please contact:

### **Parent Partnership Service**

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Website

<http://liverpool.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/special-educational-needs/parent-partnership-service>

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We update these leaflets regularly. If this date is more than 3 months ago and you were given the leaflet by someone other than Parent Partnership you may want to call us to check it is up-to-date.