



Funding for special educational needs in mainstream schools

What is SEN funding and where does it come from?

All mainstream schools, including Local Authority (LA) maintained schools, academies and free schools (but excluding independent schools) have a budget to support their children who have special educational needs. They need to plan their provision from this funding to make sure that there are enough resources and support for their pupils to make adequate progress and that reasonable adjustments are made to further this.

Funding for SEN provision is from three sources (“elements”)

Element 1:

Schools get money for each pupil, based on actual pupil numbers. It is known as the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU). This money funds the teaching and resourcing needs of all pupils in the school within the normal differentiated curriculum and includes a small amount for general SEN provision e.g. the cost of providing the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

Element 2

If a child has special educational needs, they will require support in school that is additional to and different from that of their mainstream peer group. These needs are usually met from element 2 funding which is an identified amount, based on a set formula, which each school receives annually to provide additional support. The maximum funding that a child can receive from Element 2 is £6000 per year – but not every pupil with SEN will need this full amount; some children will need less help – and some children may need more; the school is not allocated enough for every pupil with SEN to have the maximum amount.

Cheshire East has published a Local Offer to help to identify which type of resources this money might be spent on and to give more details about the Graduated Response. You can also ask your school how it is using the budget to support your child.

Element 3

Where a school has children needing very expensive provision which might absorb a lot of the SEN support funding, the school can request additional funding. The LA is responsible for managing Element 3 funding. The funding can be used to make specific provision for individual children or for a group. The school has to demonstrate necessity and how it has implemented the Graduated Response

What about children in Special schools?

The funding for children with the most complex needs, who are in special schools, is arranged differently. A set amount is paid to the school per planned pupil place and an agreed additional amount for each pupil is allocated depending on their level of need. This will enable schools to provide high level interventions and to meet the needs of individuals who require periods of significant support.

Where can I get further information?

Look for the SEN Information Report on the school website.

The Local Authority has published a **Local Offer** to give an overview of the education, health and care provision available (depending on need) to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This tells you about the support and opportunities that are available in Cheshire East and informs you how the funding in schools/colleges might be directed.

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/local-offer-for-children-with-sen-and-disabilities/local-offer-for-children-with-sen-and-disabilities.aspx>

The “Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years”:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

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