



Where to Look When Looking for a New School?

When parents are researching and visiting potential schools for their child or young person who has special educational needs (SEN), here is what you should consider:

- **Location** – is the school close enough to travel to daily, or will residential be necessary? What is the residential accommodation like, and what support is provided here?
- **Age range** – some schools cater all through the Key Stages, others may just be for primary/secondary.
- **Types of SEN catered for** – does your child or young person’s needs suit the type of provision available?
- **Girls or boys only school, or a mix?**
- **Therapies** – what therapies are provided, and are these on-site?
- **Layout of the school**, including for wheelchair access. Is there a separate unit/resource base?
- **Number of pupils in each class**, and in particular the potential class for your child or young person.
- **Staff** : pupil ratios. Do the teaching staff have any specialist qualifications/experience?
- **Costs** – of the placement, does this include therapies/additional support/transport?

Our team has also compiled a helpful guide of online resources for searching for new school placements:

- **John Catt’s School Search** – Provides a search option specifically for special schools that includes speciality (areas of SEN) - <https://www.specialneedsguide.co.uk/> and see also the eBook version of the accompanying 2020/21 ‘Which School?’ guidebook - <https://www.specialneedsguide.co.uk/which-school-for-special-needs-2020/21-digital-edition>
- **The Good Schools Guide** - The school search function allows parents to search within specific local authorities/age ranges/type of school, as well as by name/location - <https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/special-educational-needs> and <https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/school-search>
- **Special Needs UK – Find a School** – Provides a quick search option by reference to different types/categories of SEN, this then provides an alphabetical list of schools and links to further information. An advanced search option requires more information, such as age range/board type/institution specialties/location - <https://www.specialneedsuk.org/findaschool.asp>



- **Independent Schools Council – SEND school search** – Combining independent schools as identified within seven associations of independent schools, head teachers, bursars and governors, to provide options to search independent schools by location/residency types/age/gender. Viewing a school’s full profile provides further information about the type of SEN they support and costs - <https://www.isc.co.uk/schools/sub-pages/send/> and <https://www.isc.co.uk/schools/>
- **Department for Education – ‘Edubase’** – This function allows you to search for a school via name/location/local authority, and then provides a breakdown of information including what type of placement a school is - <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>
- **Department for Education – Independent special schools and colleges** – these spreadsheets set out a) the schools and colleges approved by the Secretary of State under Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and, b) independent special schools not approved under Section 41 and non-maintained special schools. The spreadsheets provide links to each school’s or college’s website - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-special-schools-and-colleges>
- **Your local authority’s ‘local offer’** – Each local authority must have a ‘local offer’ on its website that provides information on schools within the borough. Additional information on independent schools/schools in other boroughs may also be available, depending on your particular local authority.

ALL INFORMATION CORRECT AS OF THE DATE OF PUBLICATION (09 MARCH 2021)

If you have any questions or require advice, please contact the Special Educational Needs team on **0118 467 6547** or senexpertsolicitors@boyesturner.com. Appeals to the Tribunal can be extremely difficult and expert advice should always be considered.

This factsheet is provided free of charge for information purposes only, it does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied on as such. No responsibility for the accuracy and/or correctness of the information and commentary set out in the factsheet, or for any consequences of relying on it, is assumed or accepted by Boyes Turner LLP or any subsidiary, member, officer, employee, consultant or other agent of Boyes Turner LLP.