

April 2026

SENDIASS

Staffordshire Family Partnership



Welcome to the April edition of our SENDIASS newsletter. As we move further into the spring term, we know this can be a busy and sometimes challenging time for children and young people with SEND, as well as for the families and carers who support them.

At SENDIASS, we remain committed to providing free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to help you navigate education, health and care systems with confidence. Whether you are seeking guidance around EHCPs, school support, transitions, or understanding your rights, we are here to listen and support you every step of the way.

Wishing you a positive and productive April

Warmest regards

The SENDIASS Team

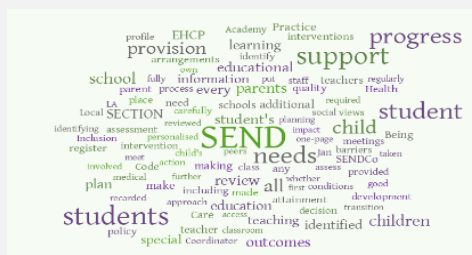


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Schools White Paper and SEND Reform



The Government has published its [Schools White Paper](#) on 23rd February 2026, which includes [proposals](#) to reform the SEND system. These proposals are now subject to a public consultation period, which will run until **18th May 2026**.

It is important to note that **the current SEND legal framework has not changed**. All existing legal duties and protections for children and young people with SEND continue to apply in full. Any proposed reforms would need to go through consultation and further decision-making before they could be introduced, and this would not happen immediately.

The consultation is open to anyone who wishes to respond. Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, as well as young people themselves, are encouraged to share their views and experiences with the Department for Education.

We recognise that discussions about potential changes can feel unsettling for families. At this time, the key message is that **support and legal rights remain the same**.

Details on how to respond to the consultation can be found here:

[SEND reform: putting children and young people first - GOV.UK](#)

Tips for supporting children with SEND during the exam season



Supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) during exam season requires a combination of understanding, planning, and tailored strategies. Here are some tips:

Understand Their Needs

- **Speak with Educators:** Discuss with teachers or SENCos (Special Educational Needs Coordinators) to understand what accommodations are in place and what additional support may be helpful.
- **Know Their Strengths:** Build on their strengths while addressing areas of difficulty.
- **Involve Them:** Include the child in discussions about their needs to empower them and reduce anxiety.

Create a Structured Plan

- **Timetable:** Develop a clear and manageable revision timetable. Include regular breaks and time for relaxation.
- **Chunk Information:** Break study material into smaller, more manageable sections.
- **Set Realistic Goals:** Focus on achievable goals to build confidence.

Use Accessible Resources

- **Adapted Material:** Provide resources that align with your child's learning style, such as audio materials, visual aids, or simplified texts.
- **Assistive Technology:** Use tools like text to speech software, spell checkers, or typing aids if needed.

Provide Emotional Support

- **Acknowledge Effort:** Celebrate small achievements to boost morale.
- **Address Anxiety:** Teach relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or mindfulness.
- **Be Patient:** Offer reassurance and avoid putting unnecessary pressure on them

Tips for supporting children with SEND during the exam season *continued ...*



Tailor Revision Techniques

- **Multi – Sensory Learning:** Incorporate visual and auditory learning techniques.
- **Practice Papers:** Familiarise them with the exam format using past papers or mock exams.
- **Memory Aids:** Use flashcards, mind maps, or mnemonic devices to aid retention.

Ensure Exam Accommodations Are in Place

- **Access Arrangements:** Confirm with the school that necessary accommodations (e.g., extra time, a reader, or a quiet room) are in place.

Access arrangements are designed to enable children and young people with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to take exams and assessments. They include reasonable adjustments that are needed to make exams accessible for candidates who have disabilities.

Please click on the link below for more information:

[Staffordshire Connects | Help to access exams and assessments](#)

Promote Well – Being

- **Healthy Routine:** Encourage regular sleep, a balanced diet, and physical activity.
- **Social Time:** Allow time for hobbies and socialising to keep stress levels in check.
- **Open Communication:** Keep an open line of communication for them to express concerns



Resources offering valuable tips and strategies to support children with SEND during the exam season

Mind provide information for young people on understanding exam stress and where to go for support:

[Info on exam stress - for 11-18 year olds | Mind](#)

YoungMinds provide advice if the pressure of exams is getting a bit too much:

[Exam Stress | How To Deal with Exam Stress | YoungMinds](#)

BBC bitesize provide top revision tips along with videos and podcast:

[Top revision techniques for exams - BBC Bitesize](#)

Barnardo's provide advice on exam pressure and tips for coping with exam stress:

[Exam stress | Barnardo's](#)

Mental health support for children and young people



Where do I go for support and how do I access it?

If a child needs support for their mental health or emotional wellbeing, it might feel like you're not sure where to start. Follow the **SAFE** steps for children and young people's mental health support, to find the right help at the right time.

Where can I go for more information?

For more information on mental health and wellbeing support services in your area, please visit the [social, emotional and mental health directory](#).

Follow the SAFE steps for children and young people's mental health support, to find the right help at the right time.

Self Help

Wellbeing activities

SCYVS - (Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services) - use their [interactive map](#) to find activities near you.

Sports Clubs - Visit the [Together Active website](#) to see what's available in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.

Staffordshire Libraries - [Reading Well](#) offer for children. 2 collections of expert-endorsed books focussing on mental health for children can be found in libraries across Staffordshire.

Digital tools

Stay well - View the [Stay Well website](#) for more information.

Tellmi - A [free app for teenagers](#) (11+) providing resources and a fully moderated community.

Staffordshire Health App Finder - Find [helpful apps](#) for your health and wellbeing.

Sandbox - Online hub for children and young people in the south of the county where they can safely seek help and advice about their mental health. View the [Sandbox website](#) for more information.

It's good to talk

GP - Visit the [NHS website](#) to find your local GP.

Youth workers - Visit the [SCVYS website](#) for more information.

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Mental health support for children and young people *continued ...*



Ask for advice and help

Senior Mental Health Lead - Speak with the school Senior Mental Health Lead

Mental Health Support Teams - Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) work within educational provisions to deliver evidence-based early interventions for children and young people experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems.

[Mental Health Support Teams in Schools: Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust Mental Health Support Team - North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust](#)

x/Twitter: [@MhstNorth](#) [@SouthStaffsMHST](#)

Facebook: [@SouthStaffsMHST](#)

Instagram: [@mhst_northstaffs](#)

Stay Well Service - work within educational provisions and community to deliver evidence-based early interventions for children and young people experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems.

[Stay Well CYP | Stay Well Children & Young People Support](#)

SEND - [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Local Offer](#) and [Graduated Response](#).

Staffordshire 0–19 Families Health & Wellbeing Service – (Health Visiting and School Nursing) - For information about health visiting and school nursing, visit the [Health Visiting and School Nursing website](#).

You can contact the service in the following ways:

Telephone freephone 0808 178 0611

ChatHealth Text Messaging Service

Parents/ Carers text: 07520 615722

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Mental health support for children and young people *continued ...*



Fast specialist support

Single point of access (SPA) North

Tel: 0800 032 8728

Online referrals - [Combined Wellbeing website](#)

Newcastle Under Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands

Children and families single point of access (CaFSPA) South

Tel: 0808 178 0611

Email referrals to: CaFSPA@mpft.nhs.uk

Cannock, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Stafford, South Staffordshire, Tamworth

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Mental health support for children and young people *continued ...*

Emergency help

Mental health crisis

North: North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Crisis Care Centre - for anybody that is experiencing a mental health crisis, please call the all-age crisis centre team: 0800 0 328 728 (option 1) - 24/7 service.

Crisis and Intensive Support South Staffordshire: South Staffordshire can be accessed by NHS 111 option 2

View more information on the [North Staffordshire NHS Combined Healthcare Trust website](#) or the [Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust website](#).



Urgent help

Samaritans - Tel: 116 123 free from any phone

Email: jo@samaritans.org (replies will take several days)

NHS links to support - view the [NHS website](#) for more information.

Papyrus - prevention of young suicide. Visit the [Papyrus website](#).

Hopeline247 -24/7 service

Tel: 0800 068 41 41

Text: 07860 039 967

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

A&E Services - Find your nearest A&E service on the [NHS website](#).

Emergency services - Is there a serious concern about the safety of a child or young person?

Emergency services: 999 or NHS 111

First Response: 0800 0 328 728 - 24/7 service

Please click on the link below for more information:

[Staffordshire Connects | Mental health support for children and young people: Think SAFE](#)

Right to choose pathway



The NHS Right to Choose allows patients, or the parents and carers of a child, to choose which provider carries out their NHS assessment or treatment, provided the provider is NHS-approved and holds a contract for that service. Anyone registered with a GP in England can use the Right to Choose. For children and young people, parents or carers can make the request on their behalf.

To start the process, you can ask your GP to make a referral under the NHS Right to Choose. You will need to name the preferred provider you would like the referral sent to, such as a specific autism spectrum disorder assessment service.

Families often choose this option when local NHS waiting times are lengthy, as Right to Choose providers may have shorter waiting lists.

Parents can request that their child is referred through the Right to Choose pathway even if they are already on a locally commissioned NHS waiting list. They do not need to withdraw from the local pathway to do so.

Please click on the link below for more information:

[Your choices in the NHS - NHS](#)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions



Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools, proprietors of academies and management committees of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) to make arrangements for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions.

In Staffordshire, schools usually create **Individual Healthcare Plans (IHCPs)** for pupils with medical conditions to help ensure they can participate safely in all aspects of school life. These plans are developed with parental input and often involve relevant health professionals.

Schools must follow the Department of Education Guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions. Their medical conditions policy should clearly explain who is responsible for supporting pupils with medical needs.

Key points from the guidance

- Pupils with medical conditions should be properly supported so they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education.
- Governing bodies must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support pupils with medical conditions.
- School leaders should consult health and social care professionals, pupils and parents to ensure that children's medical needs are fully understood and effectively supported.

School policies should include:

- Who is responsible for ensuring sufficient staff are suitably trained.
- A commitment that all relevant staff are aware of the child's condition.
- Arrangements for staff absence or turnover to ensure appropriate cover is always available.
- Briefing arrangements for supply staff.
- Risk assessments for school visits, residential trips and activities outside the normal timetable; and
- Processes for monitoring Individual Healthcare Plans.

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions *continued ...*



Individual Healthcare Plans should be developed in partnership between the school, parents and an appropriate healthcare professional, such as a school nurse, specialist nurse or paediatrician, who can advise on the child's specific needs. Pupils should also be involved wherever appropriate.

The purpose of the plan is to set out the support needed to help the child manage their condition, overcome potential barriers to learning and access the full school experience. It should also outline how the school might work with other relevant services.

Partners should agree who will take the lead in drafting the plan; however, the school remains responsible for ensuring it is finalised and implemented.

Where a child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, the Individual Healthcare Plan should be linked to or form part of that document.

Please click on the link below for more information:

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

Events coming up.....



Date	Event	Details
28.04.26 & 30.06.26	Check in and Chat' Lichfield Family Hub. Purcell Avenue Lichfield WS13 7PH 1pm -3pm	We are delighted to announce our 'check in and chat' sessions at Lichfield Family Hub. If you are a parent of a child or young person with special educational needs and would like to chat to other parents in similar situations, please come and join us. There is no set agenda this is just an informal opportunity to chat to other parents, also chat with SENDIASS, make friends and support each other.

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Competition



Create an Easter Egg competition offers vouchers and a special gift

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) team is currently holding a 'create an Easter Egg' competition.

The competition is open to children in Staffordshire with SEND, aged 0-5 years.

Taking part is easy – children need to create an Easter Egg using craft items and submit a photo. Be as creative as you like using paint, collage, play dough or any other craft your child enjoys.

Here's all the information you need to know:

- All entries must be sent to sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk with the subject line, 'SENDIASS Easter competition'
- The winner will receive a £25 Amazon voucher
- Two runners up will receive a £10 Amazon voucher
- All three winners will receive a special SENDIASS bear
- Entries must be received by Friday 29th May 2026
- Winners will be chosen after Friday 1st June 2026
- Winners will be chosen anonymously by members of our Parent Carer Forum



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What support SENDIASS can offer

We are Staffordshire's Information, Advice and Support service for parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged 0-25 and children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged 0- 25 and can support with issues around education, health and social care. We are impartial, confidential and free.

Helpline: 01785 356921

Email: sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk

Our opening hours are:

Monday: 9am-5pm

Tuesday: 9am – 5pm

Wednesday: 9am – 5pm

Thursday: 9am – 5pm

Friday: 9am – 4.30pm

Saturday: Closed

Sunday: Closed

Please note:

You can ring us out of office hours during the week and weekend, please leave us a message and we will pick it up the next working day.