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SEND Parent/Carer Guide 2026-27

BULLERS WOOD SCHOOL FOR BOYS

BULLERS WOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AND SIXTH FORM

ALTIORA SEQUAMUR

TUBBENDEN

PRATTS BOTTOM PRIMARY SCHOOL

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1. **Introduction & Aims:**

We understand that navigating the SEN system can be challenging for families, so this guide is here to support you and to give clarity on what you can expect from colleagues in Lumero schools.

Every child in every school is equally important to us, and we will always seek to do our best to support pupils in ways which support their progress, holistic development and independence. With Inclusion as one of our key trust values, we expect and strive for all pupils to have equality of access to opportunities and resources in our schools and to feel a sense of belonging in our school communities.

The overall aims of this guide are to

- Support families to understand how aspects of the SEND system usually work and to answer some frequently asked questions
- Explain how things are done in our schools in relation to SEND, to help schools and families to work together towards the best outcomes for our children and young people

You may find these websites and documents useful for background information on SEND Support:

- UK SEND guide for parents and carers
- Bromley SEND Local Offer
- Croydon SEND Local Offer

Please also read this in conjunction with the Lumero SEND and Inclusion Policy which can be found here: Lumero Educational Trust - Policies and Procedures

Amy Rajah
Trust SEND & Inclusion Lead

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2. Exploring SEND Needs

If a school thinks that a pupil is not making expected progress in any area, they should explore the reasons for this as soon as possible. They do not need parental permission to do this, as it is part of their usual work and expectations.

School SEND teams use a combination of observations, screeners, checklists and other assessments to gather information about a pupil's areas of strength and need, so that support can be planned.

It is expected that schools would speak to parents/carers at an early stage if they feel that a pupil may have a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND). We know that parents/carers have lots of extra information about their child which will help school to build a picture of anything which may be impacting on them.

Sometimes, it can feel intrusive if schools ask questions about home life, but this is just so that they can have a clear picture of anything that may be having an impact on your child's learning, enjoyment or participation at school. For example, it is important to know about a child's early development, such as whether they walked and talked at the typically expected age, whether they experienced a difficult start or traumatic event or if there is anything else which could have an impact on their development.

If there are challenges at home which are impacting on your family, school may also be able to suggest organisations or people in or out of school who can help.

If you as a parent/carer are concerned that your child may have a new special educational need, please discuss this with your child's class teacher or form tutor in the first instance. Where new concerns are raised, schools should try support strategies in the first instance and should gather information about outcomes of strategies and support which has been tried, before deciding whether a specific referral is needed. Schools must follow expected processes in relation to referrals, to maintain their professional credibility and to support robust referrals and assessments.

3. **Sharing of information about your child or family**

It is useful for necessary information about a pupil's SEND needs to be shared with relevant school staff, to ensure that appropriate support can be put in place.

It is also useful for necessary SEND information to be shared in preparation for transition to a new school or setting, so that preparations can be made to ensure that the transition is prepared for appropriately.

If you are concerned about what information is shared about your child or family, please speak to the school about this.

However, schools should not share sensitive information about your child or family without your consent, except where there is a clear risk of significant harm to a child or young person, or where it involves a crime or the prevention of a criminal offence. For more information, please refer to the school or trust Safeguarding policy.

4. **The SEND Register**

If a pupil is identified and assessed to have SEND, in line with the agreed Lumero criteria, the pupil will be placed on a list known as the 'SEND Register', for the individual school. This is required by SEND legislation and ensures that relevant staff are informed of the pupils' needs and support required, and so that their progress towards specific targets can be monitored.

If at any point the pupil no longer has SEND needs, they will be removed from the SEND register. This does not mean that they will no longer receive any support, just that they no longer meet the criteria for the SEND register. A pupil can go back on the SEND register at a later date if required.

Schools must let parents know when their child is placed on or removed from the SEND register. When possible needs are being investigated, or when a pupil is awaiting an assessment, schools are expected to place them on a monitoring list. School does not need to tell you this, but it is expected that you know that they are investigating possible SEND needs.

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5. **Recording Support Strategies**

You can find out about the kind of support which is usually available to pupils at your child's school, by looking at the school's SEND Information Report, which is published on their school website.

If your child has SEND, schools should record any support that they are having and their progress towards any targets. Often this is recorded in a class or individual 'Provision Map'. Support strategies are shared with relevant staff, such as class or subject teachers, support staff and form tutors, so that the support can be put in place consistently.

School should give feedback to parents/carers on your child's progress three times per academic year. This could be in person, for example at parents evening, in a written report or via another form of communication. The feedback can be given by a class teacher, form tutor, SENCO or other member of staff.

Staff working with your child should know the key teaching strategies to use with your child. Many of these will be techniques which teachers are expected to use with all pupils, but your child may also have additional supports or reasonable adjustments in their lessons.

Please remember that some teachers, especially in secondary schools, teach several hundred pupils in their working week. They *are* expected to know your child's needs and key strategies to support them, but there may be occasional unintended errors, or times where it is not possible to use particular strategies (such as when the fire alarm sounds). Please do contact the relevant teacher if there is an ongoing concern.

There are some staff, such as cover teachers from external agencies, who may not have had time to fully learn about your child's needs and support strategies before teaching your child. Schools are expected to be proactive in using their best endeavours to avoid this issue by providing timely information to relevant staff, wherever possible.

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6. Types of support for SEND pupils

- **Universal Support** Many pupils will need some support in one or more area during their time at school. When an additional need is identified, the first step will usually be for the class teacher to try a range of supportive teaching strategies, to help the pupil. For example; movement breaks, breaking down tasks into smaller chunks, specific seating arrangements or help with organisation. This is known as 'universal support'. If this support is not enough to ensure that the pupil makes good progress in their area of need, targeted or specialist support may be tried.

- **Targeted Support** - something additional to what the teacher would usually provide in class, such as a group or intervention to support a specific need. For example; pre-teaching of vocabulary, a maths or literacy group, or individual check-ins with a key adult. Known as targeted support.

- **Specialist Support** - a small number of pupils may need support from a professional in a particular area, such as a speech and language therapist or counsellor.

Schools should ensure that the support given to pupils with SEND targets the pupil's specific needs. This support is likely to change over time, in line with their targets. This support is likely to include aspects at one or more of 3 types of support:

A range of additional, bespoke provisions operate across our schools, supporting pupils in each context to access the mainstream curriculum and provision effectively.

Some pupils will also be supported by 'reasonable adjustments'. For example, the use of noise cancelling headphones, having an 'early lunch' pass, or fidget toys. The adjustment made will depend on the individual pupil's specific needs. Different types of reasonable adjustments will apply to different pupils. Where it has been agreed that a pupil will have a concentration aid such as a fidget toy, we ask that in the interests of safety, these items are supplied by school, or that supply is agreed on an individual basis, since some objects may contain substances of unknown origin, that may be harmful if they burst or break.

Schools are expected to read reports from specialists such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists or occupational therapists and then use their best endeavours to put in place their recommendations.

It should be noted that sometimes schools may have alternative interventions and supports to meet a particular need, which may differ from something specifically mentioned in a report, but which are already in place in the school to meet that same need. For example, precision teaching delivered by a member of trained scho an by list, or the use of a different type of literacy intervention to f aspec

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7. Referrals and assessment for possible SEND

Where it has been agreed that a referral to an outside agency will be made to explore possible SEND diagnosis, schools will usually prepare the paperwork, adding the parent/carer's views, and those of the pupil where relevant. Schools must ask your permission before sending off a referral.

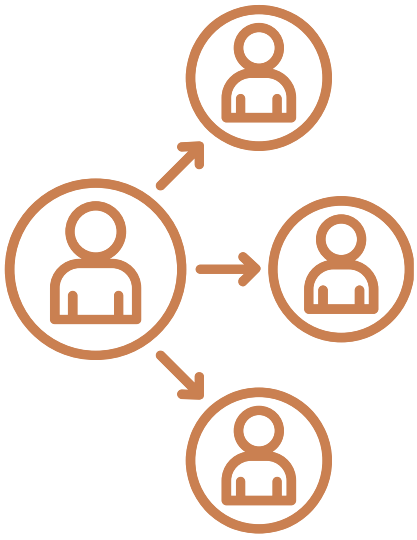
For most referrals, schools need to provide a range of evidence to support the referral and this will take time to gather. For example, they may need to complete a referral form having gathered views from a number of people, submit records of support and outcomes over a period of time, complete observations of the pupil and do individual assessments.

There may be times where schools need to prioritise certain referrals due to acute difficulties or where referrals are safety and/or safeguarding-related. This can occasionally mean that some pupils will wait longer than others. It is suggested that you discuss with the school the likely timeframe for referral completion.

There are long waiting lists for some assessments, which the school cannot influence. You can sometimes contact the service provider eg Community Paediatricians and ask to be added to their 'cancellations' list, so you may be able to access an appointment sooner.

Please note that regardless of whether a pupil has a diagnosis, the school will do their best to provide support for the pupil's presenting needs.

8. Specialist SEND assessments



Where a specialist opinion is needed, schools will endeavour to seek the advice of specialists to inform the support required in order to meet a pupil's needs.

There may be occasions when this is delayed or limited by a lack of access to specialists which is outside of the school's control. Lack of a specialist opinion should not prevent a pupil from receiving support for their needs as far as the school's capacity and expertise allows. Schools should use their 'best endeavours' to provide support for pupils with SEND – this means they should do their very best to provide the support needed.

Right to Choose Schools have usual processes in place for requesting Specialist SEND assessments, often linked to Local Authority processes. In addition to this, the NHS Right to Choose legislation allows parents/carers to choose their healthcare provider for an initial specialist appointment, for both physical and mental health services, as long as the provider has an NHS contract. If you would like to use the 'Right to Choose', please contact the child's GP (doctor's surgery).

Click the link for more information: NHS Right to Choose legislation

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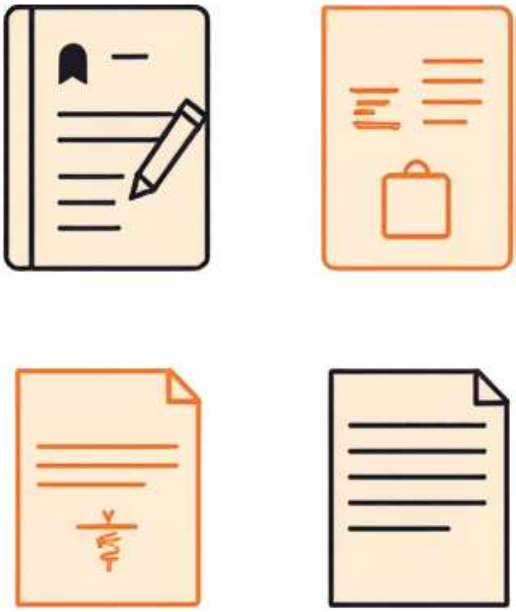
Private Assessments

Parents can choose to pay for a private assessment of SEND needs. It is suggested that you check the credentials of the assessor, to ensure that they have the relevant professional registration and up to date qualifications to assess for the specific need required.

For example, Educational Psychologists must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and Autism assessments should be carried out by a qualified multidisciplinary team including a paediatrician, speech and language therapist and psychologist.

If the assessment is for a pupil who may need an EHCP in the future (please see section 10), you should ensure that the professional is able to give you a report in a format which gives adequate specific information for this purpose.

Sometimes, reports from outside agencies and private assessors may state that a pupil 'may/will need an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)'. This does not mean that the school should or will definitely apply for an EHCP. This would be a decision which is made based on all the presenting information available, including the school's judgement on whether they can meet the pupil's needs within what they can ordinarily provide together with the views of the parent/carer and pupil where appropriate.



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8. Communication with School about SEND

If you need to speak to someone or have a concern about your child's SEND needs
In most circumstances, the first person you should contact if you have a concern is your child's class teacher or form tutor, or a subject teacher if the query is about a particular subject. If the issue needs to be addressed by another member of staff, such as the SENCO, then the staff member you have contacted will contact this person.

The kinds of queries that a form tutor or class teacher should be able to address include initial or follow up queries about possible SEND, concerns about your child's support or learning, feedback about support strategies, or general queries around issues which your child is having at school.

If you mainly contact your child's class teacher or form tutor, this helps to build a relationship with the teacher who has most contact with your child, and supports them to have a better understanding of your child. It also leaves more time for the SENCO to deal with complex issues, and leaving them greater availability when you do need them.

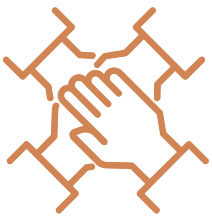
Expectations around Reasonable response times

SENCOs have a very busy and time-pressured role. Some SENCOs are part-time and most have teaching commitments during the school day. They attend multiple meetings and often have additional responsibilities in school. It is important that they spend as much time as possible supporting pupils.

As such, they have limited time to respond to emails or to answer the telephone. With this in mind, please:

- Allow 5 working (term time) days for the SEND team to respond to messages, especially if you have asked them to find something out, as this will take time
- Consider that sending multiple emails about the same thing, or about different things, can cause confusion and be stressful for the SENCO. It is suggested that you send one email containing all the points you wish to make and then await a response. It is suggested that parents avoid sending more than one email per week, unless previously agreed or absolutely necessary.
- Only include those people who need to respond in your email, and copy in those who need to know. Sending the same message to lots of people can cause confusion and/or duplication.
- Only send the SENCO emails about things which are related to SEND, although you may wish to copy them into emails about other concerns if you feel it is relevant.

Some schools may have different or additional systems for contacting them about SEND, such as SEND clinics; the information in this document is a general guide for schools in the trust.



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We understand that being the parent of a pupil with SEND can be stressful and difficult at times, and schools will aim to respond to you as soon as possible.

Please refer also to the LET Parental Engagement and Expectations Regarding Parental Behaviour policy, which can be found here: Lumero Educational Trust - Policies and Procedures

9. **Education, Health and Care Plans - EHCPs**

Some pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This is a legal document outlining the child's educational, health, and social care needs and sets out the specific provision they must receive.

An EHCP is usually applied for by the school, for pupils who need support over and above what is ordinarily available at the school. If a parent/carer feels that their child may need an EHCP, they should in the first instance request a meeting with the school to discuss this and agree next steps and timescales. It is important that any request for an EHCP needs assessment contains information from both the school and family, including the views of the pupil.

Which pupils might need an EHCP?
EHCPs are usually for pupils who have SEND needs which are complex and enduring, including where there are also health or care needs. They are for pupils who need support over and above what the school is able to provide through their ordinarily available SEND Support provision.

You may find this video useful: **What is an EHCP and who is it for?**

Please note that the criteria for pupils being given EHCPs will change in coming years, with the Government having announced changes to SEND funding in schools with a plan that by 2035, only children with the most complex needs will qualify for EHCPs.

When can schools apply for an EHC Needs Assessment?
If the school have tried and reviewed the support in place for a pupil over time and have found that additional support is needed which they cannot provide within their usual provision, school will consider whether an EHCP might help those needs to be met. They will also consider the recommendations for support in reports from external professionals, such as Speech and Language therapists or Educational Psychologists.
They will only apply for an EHCP where it is clear that needs cannot be met within what they can already provide, and where it is clear that an EHCP would be likely to allow them to meet those needs. For example, they may use it to request funding for additional Speech and Language therapy which has been recommended in a report, or for funding for an adult to provide sign language support for a pupil with a hearing impairment.

What is the application process for an EHC Needs Assessment?

Typically, a school will need to gather information to support an EHC needs assessment (application) over several terms. They need to submit evidence which shows cycles of support known as the 'Graduated approach' (Assess-Plan-Do-Review) and what impact in-school support has had over time. There is more detail on this in the Lumero SEND policy (section 9). This includes showing assessments of the pupil's needs, the support in place at school to address these needs, including reasonable adjustments, teaching approaches, and extra interventions, and reviews of what impact the support has had over several terms, for example.

Schools will also need to submit evidence of the pupil's strengths and needs, including reports from professionals. This information will need to be gathered from a range of people, both in school and from other agencies, as well as information from the family and the pupil themselves, where appropriate.
It is suggested that you discuss the likely timescale for any agreed EHC needs assessment with the school.

Parental EHCP needs assessment requests

It is possible for parents/carers to apply for an EHCP, but it is usually advised that parents work together with the school to do this jointly. Parents/carers and pupils should always be a part of the needs assessment process, but the local authority will also need information from school, to assess the child's educational needs in their educational setting.

If a parent submits a needs assessment request without the school's knowledge or involvement, the school will be given a short amount of time by the local authority to submit detailed supporting information and documentation. If they are not prepared for this, they may be unable to fulfil the request in sufficient detail or in sufficient time (especially if the timeframe falls during the school holidays. This can often result in the request for needs assessment being rejected due to lack of evidence.

Please do discuss any queries or concerns with the SEND department.

Who decides whether an EHCP is agreed and issued?

A multi-agency Local Authority panel initially decides whether there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a child may benefit from an EHCP. If there is, they will gather evidence, including reports from specialists, over a period of 6 weeks (check) after which a second panel of professionals will review the evidence and decide whether or not to issue an EHCP.

Use of EHCP funding, including for 1:1 support

When an EHCP is issued, some funding may be allocated to allow the pupil's needs to be met. The amount of funding is specified by the Local Authority, based on the support needed. This funding should be used for the provision described in Section F of the EHCP.

Some pupils may need 1:1 support for some or, in exceptional circumstances, all of the day due to a particular need, such as an intimate care need, or to enable mobility around the school building.

However, for most pupils, it is not usually in their best interests to have a teaching assistant with them all of the time. Research by the Education Endowment Foundation has shown that this can lead to pupils making less academic progress because they have reduced contact with the class teacher, who is the most qualified person to support their learning. It can also reduce both independence and social development skills, because the pupil spends less time with other children.

It has been found to work well where pupils who need support from a TA are given support as and when they need it in the classroom, or in the method specified in a recent EHCP. Teaching assistants have been shown to be beneficial to pupils in helping them to access learning, for example by breaking down tasks or supporting wellbeing, and also when delivering focused interventions, to help with specific targets. They should complement, not replace the teacher's role.

Approved Providers

Where support from an external agency (not provided by school) is specified in an EHCP, schools will use providers which they know have been quality assured by the local authority, to ensure both quality of provision and to satisfy safeguarding requirements. Should families wish to pursue support through a different provider which they have chosen, they can ask the local authority about using a 'personal budget' for this.

What to expect at an EHCP Annual Review meeting

An Annual Review is a yearly meeting to discuss your child's progress towards their EHCP targets and to update their short-term targets or goals. It is also a chance for you and your child to give your views. There may be discussion about whether the plan is still effective or whether any changes are needed.

The Local Authority case officer who oversees your child's EHCP will be invited, but may not attend. You should be given any up-to-date reports and documents before the meeting.

An EHCP will not be updated by the local authority every year. Updates should be requested where things have changed significantly since the last review or update, or where a change of setting (school) is being considered.

More detailed 'transition annual reviews' should happen in preparation for secondary school (Year 5) and in 'preparation for adulthood' in year 9. At these points the EHCP should usually be updated by the local authority.

10. Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs)

Several of the primary schools in Lumero Educational Trust have Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs). These are specialist classroom settings within the mainstream school, which offer intensive, specialist support for the pupils placed there, while they are also an integral part of the wider school.

There are ARPs at:

- Tubbenden Primary School ARP – for pupils with severe and complex needs
- Green Street Green Primary school ARP – for pupils with Speech and Language Disorders
- Darrick Wood Junior School ARP (Griffins) – for pupils who are Deaf or who have Hearing Impairments

ARPs are monitored and quality assured by the Local Authority.

ARP Admissions

All pupils who go to the ARPs have an EHCP (see section 10. Pupils are allocated places following a consultation process by the Local Authority (Bromley), not through the usual school admissions process. The individual schools do not have the authority to place children within the provisions and being at the school does not mean that a pupil can access the ARP, unless the Local Authority allocates a place.

Inclusive environments with continuous improvements to accessibility

11. Exam Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are adjustments made to exam conditions to allow pupils with SEND needs or temporary injuries to allow them to show what they know, but without making the exam easier. These adjustments must reflect a student's 'normal way of working' in school and must be approved based on clear evidence. Having a SEND diagnosis does not automatically mean that a pupil will qualify for access arrangements. Examples of access arrangements include extra time (usually 25%), a scribe, rest breaks or use of a laptop for typing.

A guide for parents can be found here: JCQ-Parent-guidance-information-sheet-2025_26.pdf

Schools will prioritise access arrangements within their wider context of staffing and capacity. Where resources are limited, priority will be given to pupils sitting external exams such as SATs, GCSEs and A-Levels. However, schools should always use their best endeavours to support pupils to have access arrangements whenever possible.

Access Arrangements for 11+ exams

To apply for access arrangements for 11+ exams, a form needs to be completed by the school. Please ensure that at least one month's notice is given before this is required, as the SENCO may be dealing with a number of these requests alongside their usual role.

A note on Dyslexia and Visual stress

It has been shown that although some types of visual difficulty may be more common in people with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, not all dyslexic people experience Visual Stress and the two are completely separate diagnoses, if given. (The terms Irlen syndrome and Meares-Irlen syndrome are no longer used, but you may have previously heard Visual Stress referred to in this way).

Dyslexia and reading difficulties are not helped by the use of coloured overlays, coloured glasses or coloured paper. These aids only need to be used when recommended following diagnosis of Visual Stress, given by an Optometrist or Orthoptist who is qualified in testing for Visual Stress (not any optician).

During an assessment for specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, your child may be asked questions about their vision and an appointment with an optometrist may be recommended.

For pupils who have been shown to benefit from coloured supports to help with Visual Stress, it is suggested that they use coloured overlays wherever possible, to reduce photocopying and administration.
For more information, you may find it useful to refer to the following:

https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/neurodiversity-and-co-occurring-differences/visual-difficulties

Some Dyslexic pupils can benefit from the use of cream or buff-coloured, matt (not shiny) backgrounds when reading, but this depends on the individual.

12. **Completion of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) forms**

School staff can sometimes provide supporting statements on DLA forms, but can only comment based on their knowledge of the pupil at school. They are able to confirm any diagnosis where they have written evidence of this, and the support needed by the pupil at school.

Please give schools several weeks' notice to complete DLA forms before the deadline, or the school may not be able to fulfil the request.

14. **Parent Voice**

We value feedback from parents and families. As such, all schools in the trust as well as the trust as a central organisation will seek feedback at regular intervals, so that your voices are heard. We will act on this information to improve and enhance inclusion and provision for SEND pupils in our community

. **Acronyms and terms used in this document**

LET, Lumero, the Trust	Lumero Educational Trust: Our family of 12 schools across Bromley in Croydon
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SEND Register	A school list of pupils with assessed and identified SEND needs. Required by UK legislation. EHCP
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Pla
TA/LSA	Teaching assistant/Learning Support Assistant
NHS	National Health Service (In the UK)
GP	General Practitioner – a doctor, usually at a local surgery

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