

Special Educational Needs and Disability

What a Link Governor Needs to know

What the legal guidance says:

Under the Children and Families Act, governing bodies **must** (6.1-6.7):

1. use their best endeavours to ensure that needs of children and young people are met. 'There should be a member of the governing body or a sub-committee with specific oversight of the school's arrangements for SEN and disability.'
2. ensure children and young people with SEN engage in school activities alongside others who do not have SEN
3. appoint a SENCo who is a qualified teacher. New to role SENCos with less than 12 months' experience must achieve the NASENCo qualification within 3 years of appointment (6.84-6.94 all relate to the role of the SENCo)
4. All schools must make arrangements for supporting pupils with medical conditions This involves having due regard of the relevant statutory guidance and publishing a policy on 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions'
5. ensure that they publish an SEN information report and update it annually. There is very specific guidance around what must be included in the SEN Information report.
6. ensure that schools do not discriminate against disabled pupils.

What it means in practice:

It is important that the Governing Body receives regular updates and reports about how the school is identifying and meeting needs, and improving outcomes. The Education Inspection Framework 2019 places new focus and additional scrutiny on this area.

Regular meetings between the Link Governor for SEND and the Headteacher/SENCo will help to inform the Governing Body and ensure that all can be knowledgeable and confident in their understanding in this important aspect of the school.

Key things to check:

- Your schools' website compliance:
 - Does the website have a clear, accessible SEN Information Report which is updated annually?
 - Does the school publish information about how they meet the requirements of government guidance around supporting pupils with medical conditions?
- Is your school SENCo able to carry out their functions? Do they have access to CPD and do they have sufficient time allocated to them?
- Can your school evidence good progress for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities? Are they achieving good outcomes? Attainment data is important here, but not simply this; ask the questions about how outcomes are set for learners with SEND, and how progress towards them is monitored. This may be learners with EHCPs, but also those on SEN Support
- Can your school evidence equal access to the curriculum for learners with SEND? Check that reasonable adjustments are being made to the learning environment, teaching strategies and approaches, and to enable participation in the wider curriculum eg school trips and visits
- Can your school evidence an individualised approach to teaching and learning, using an

approach of assess, plan, do, review? Are parents/carers and the learners involved in identifying special educational needs and planning what should be in place to support?

- Is there a strategic commitment to developing SEND practice? Is it a part of the school development plan each year? Ensure that staff CPD in this area is available and accessible.
- How do the finances work for supporting learners with SEND? Be aware, if possible, of the notional SEN funding allocation, and any additional high needs funding allocated to individual learners.

Useful Resources

- [Supporting pupils with medical needs](#)
- [The SEND Code of Practice 2015](#)
The required content of an SEN Information Report is detailed in the Code of Practice 2015 (6.79)
- The National Association of Special Educational Needs (nasen) produces a set of [miniguides](#) which are full of useful information for schools.'
- [The Northumberland Local Offer](#) holds an extensive range of information about roles and responsibilities with regards to SEND, including guidance on the Graduated Approach to meeting need, and the Northumberland High Needs processes and pathways.