

Choosing a secondary school

Deciding which school you would like your child to attend can be a daunting and difficult decision for any parent, but for parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) the decision can be even more difficult as there are so many other things to consider.

If you are considering secondary education for your child with special educational needs, you will find it useful to obtain a copy of the booklet "*Parents' Guide to Education in Shropshire*". This is available through Shropshire Council's website at: <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/school-admissions/>.

Details of the Open Evenings arranged for schools in your area are contained within this booklet. However, you may find it useful to arrange a personal visit to the schools you are interested in and this can be arranged directly with the school.

The following suggestions should help you to find out all the information you and your child need before making your decision.

Before Visiting the School

Before you visit a school have a look at their website. All schools are required to publish the following information on-line:

- The school's contact details
- Admission arrangements
- Ofsted reports
- Exam and assessment results
- Curriculum details
- Behaviour policy
- Details of Pupil Premium funding – this is funding for disadvantage pupils
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) report
- Governors' information and duties
- Charging and remissions policies
- Values and ethos

You can request paper copies of any of this information which must be provided by the school free of charge.

In addition to this, the school website will include a wide range of information that can be useful for giving you an insight into:

- Extra-curricular activities available at the school
- How the school celebrates pupils' achievements
- Opportunities for parents to become involved in the school through events organised by the school or parent groups.

Most schools publish a regular newsletter which can give you an up-to-date view of the day-to-day running of the school and the way it communicates with parents and carers.

Visiting a school

It is important to visit any schools you are interested in considering for your child. All secondary schools will have a timetable of open evenings but it is important to visit the school during the working day and to ask to speak to key people such as the person in charge of Special Educational Needs provision (SENCO). It is important to ask about:

- The types of special needs the school can support (all Local Authority mainstream schools have to be inclusive and should be able to provide for any type of need).
- The arrangements for support which are available
- The arrangements for communicating with parents and carers about their child's needs, provision and progress.

It is also an opportunity to give the school a brief outline of your child's needs and ask how these could be met in the school.

You can visit as many schools as you wish before making a decision, not just the ones that are suggested to you.

See our leaflet "Checklist when visiting schools".

Where can I get further information, advice or support?

Contact the IASS team on:

Phone: 01743 280019 (Open 10am-4pm Monday—Friday)

Web: www.cabshropshire.org.uk

www.facebook.com/IASSShropshire

Email: iass@cabshropshire.org.uk

Address: Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LY