



**Partnership With Parents**

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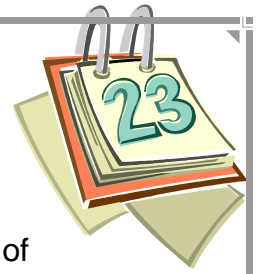
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A PARENT/CARER'S GUIDE  
TO

# Annual Reviews



## Annual Reviews



### What is an Annual Review?

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) the local authority must review that Statement every year. This means that a review of the progress the child or young person is making towards the objectives in the Statement must take place at least every 12 months. If the child is under 5, then the reviews should happen every 6 months.

### Are some Annual Reviews more important than others?



An Annual Review is an important meeting and parents should always attend if possible. This is particularly true if changes to the child/young person's Statement may be necessary.

The Annual Reviews in most school years will be fairly straightforward. However sometimes the meeting will also need to focus on the next phase of their education and development e.g. from Infant to Junior School or Junior to Secondary School.

For pupils in mainstream schools the Annual Reviews in Year 1 and Year 5 are the key ones where there should be a discussion about what type of school they should attend for the next phase. If a place at a special school or a resource unit attached to a mainstream school is recommended, the pupil's papers will have to go to a panel for consideration. This will also apply to the review in Year 10 if a place at a Special School for post-16 provision is to be requested. If a specialist place is agreed the pupil's Statement must be amended by 15 February so that they can move to their new school the following September.

### What is a Transition Review?

The Annual Review that happens in Year 9 is also called a Transition Review because it begins the process of looking ahead to the move out of school and into adult life and opportunities. We can provide specific information about Year 9 reviews if you ask us to. Your son's / daughter's school may hold person-centred reviews in Year 9 and subsequent years – you can ask the school about this.

### What is an Interim Review?

An interim (or emergency) review is one that takes place outside the normal 12-month period. It is usually called if:

- ✓ it was recommended at the previous annual review, or
- ✓ a school identifies that a pupil with a Statement of SEN is at serious risk of disaffection or exclusion, or
- ✓ a pupil has needs that are known to change rapidly, or
- ✓ there is disagreement and parents and professionals need reassurance
- ✓ the pupil's primary need has changed

An Annual Review meeting is not a decision-making meeting. It can only make recommendations to the Local Authority who will then make a final decision on the basis of the recommendations.

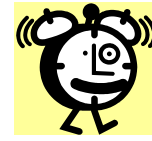
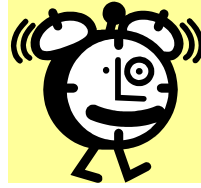


## Top Tips for Meetings

### Before the meeting:

#### Be prepared! Do I know:

- ❑ Where the meeting is?
- ❑ The time?
- ❑ Who will be there?
- ❑ Why it is happening?



- ✓ What I want to achieve?
- ✓ What outcomes might others want?
- ✓ How am I feeling – how might I behave?
- ✓ How are others feeling – how might they behave?
- ✓ Have I written down all the questions I want to ask?
- ✓ Have I got all the information and paperwork I need?
- ✓ Will someone be taking notes?
- ✓ Do I want someone to go with me?
- ✓ Have I got the views of my child or will my child be there?

### After the meeting:

- ✓ Have I understood everything that was said?
- ✓ Am I happy with the way things have gone?
- ✓ Do I feel that agreements have been reached that we can all stick to?
- ✓ Does everyone know what they are doing next?
- ✓ What am I doing next?
- ✓ Is someone coordinating action?
- ✓ Will I get notes or minutes of the meeting?
- ✓ Will I see the AR02 (review form) before it is sent to the LA?
- ✓ When are we going to review progress?

## The 3-stage Annual Review Process

### Stage 1. Collecting and collating information:

The headteacher calls the Annual Review and **must invite** the following people to attend and to submit written reports before the meeting. They don't have to attend but they should still submit a report.

- the parent/s or person/s responsible for the child
- a representative of the Local Authority (LA).
- a relevant teacher (the headteacher will decide whether this should be the Class Teacher, Form or Year Tutor, or the school's SEN Co-ordinator)



Other representatives or professionals who are involved in meeting the child's special educational needs may also be invited to attend the review meeting. These might include:

- the school's Educational Psychologist if there is a concern about the child's progress, particularly if your child is coming up to change of school (Years 1, 5 & 9)
- a representative of Social Services
- representatives of Health Services (this could be the School Doctor, School Nurse, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, or Speech Therapist)



- a member of the Specialist Teaching & Educational Psychology Services (STEPS)

Your child may also attend all or part of the Review meeting as appropriate. The older they are, the more likely that they will be involved.

As part of the Review process, the headteacher will ask you to send in written comments. You may wish to comment on:

- progress you feel your child has made over the year
- areas where you feel special help might be needed in the year to come
- your feelings about the way the school has supported your child
- anything else you feel might help your child's progress



**Your comments and any reports professionals wish to send in will have to be with the school two weeks before the date of the Annual Review. This is to give time for them to be circulated by the school to everyone who has been invited to attend and for further comments to be made.**

## Stage 2. The Annual Review Meeting:

In the light of the reports, the review meeting should consider:

- the pupil's views
- the parent's/carer's views
- the pupil's overall progress over the past year, especially in relation to each Special Educational Need.
- the pupil's progress towards meeting the overall objectives set out in the Statement
- the successes the pupil has achieved in meeting the targets in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the objectives set out in the Statement
- National Curriculum levels including the most recent end of key stage assessment (SATS)
- the pupil's current levels of attainment in literacy and mathematics
- comments on any continuing difficulties, noting successful strategies
- any significant changes in the pupil's circumstances
- any changes in the pupil's special educational needs
- any changes to requirements for equipment, aids and access



As the meeting can also make recommendations to the LA, the following issues should be discussed. Recommendations should be recorded with reasons.

- Does the Statement remain appropriate?
- Is the pupil fully included within their school community? And if not how can it be accomplished?

- If the pupil is currently in specialist provision are they ready to be included in a mainstream environment?
- Is the Statement still needed to achieve inclusion, either within the current school community or in mainstream?
- What does the pupil need in order to be included successfully?
- Is any further action required and if so, by whom?
- Have the pupil's needs changed?
- Is the Statement still needed?
- Should the Statement be amended? If so, why and how?
- If the pupil is not placed in his/her chronological year group (usually because they were kept back a year), can he/she be moved back to the correct year group?
- Are there any other significant recommendations?



**If differing opinions are expressed at the meeting then these views should be recorded so that the LA is aware of the views of all those present.**

A review report will be prepared after the meeting by the headteacher and sent to the LA and everyone who was invited to take part. This must happen before the end of term or by ten school days after the meeting whichever is earlier.

### **Stage 3. The LA reviews the Statement in light of the report of the Annual Review Meeting**

If the Review Report makes any recommendations to the LA for changes to the Statement, the LA will consider these and write to let you, the school and other professionals involved know of their decision within one week of making it.

The recommendations could be:

- No change therefore no action to be taken
- LA decides to amend the Statement so that:
  - a) more or different support can be provided
  - b) a reduced level of support is provided because of progress
  - c) the Statement no longer brings additional resources
- LA decides to cease to maintain the Statement
- LA decides to change the name of the school on the Statement



There would be a right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SEND) if the LA decides to cease to maintain the Statement or to change the name of the school on the Statement; or to amend it in some other way.

There is also a parental right of appeal to SEND where the LA decides not to make any amendments to the Statement following an Annual Review.

## Points to Remember

- the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is the responsibility of the school
- you should be consulted about the IEP
- your child should be consulted about the IEP
- wherever possible you should be given plenty of notice of the date of the Annual Review (at least 2 weeks)
- the Head Teacher must request written advice from parents and others, and must circulate a copy of all advice received to all those invited to the Annual Review, **at least 2 weeks before the date of the meeting**
- make sure you return your comments by the date given
- try to attend any meetings to which you are invited
- you can take a friend or someone with you if you want to
- an Annual Review is not a decision-making meeting. It can only make recommendations to the LA who will then make a final decision on the basis of the recommendations

## My child is moving to the next phase of education – what do I have to do?

If your child has a Statement of SEN, the law says that you have the right to “express a preference” for the school you wish your son or daughter to attend. This means that you can tell the LA which of the maintained schools in your area you would like them to go to. A maintained school is one that belongs to or is managed by the LA, i.e. your local primary, secondary or special school, but not an independent or private school. The LA will then take your views into account when decisions are being made about which school can best meet your son or daughter’s needs.



If you are asked by the LA to express a preference for a school it is important that you do so either in writing or by telephoning your son or daughter’s Case Officer so that the details of your preferred school can be recorded in the relevant paperwork. That paperwork may be considered by special admissions panels that meet in the autumn term to look at placing pupils in Surrey special schools and units.

At your son’s or daughter’s last Annual Review, there will have been a discussion about which school they should go to next. However, unless you had put the name of your preferred school in writing when you completed the Parental Report for the Annual Review, there may be no written record of the school for the LA to refer to.

If you do not know which school you prefer and are happy to wait for the outcome of the process, you should let the LA know that too, again by contacting your child’s Case Officer.

**N.B If your child is educated out of their chronological year group (for example in Year 4 when they should really be in Year 5 because of their date of birth) it is important to talk to your son’s or daughter’s current school and/or your case officer as early as possible.**

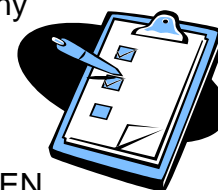
## How do I choose a school?

### Finding a school that will suit your child:

- ✓ visit at least two schools so that you have something to compare
- ✓ start with local schools
- ✓ does the school already have all the things your child needs or could they be developed?
- ✓ try to keep an open mind until you have looked at all the possibilities and spoken to the professionals involved with your child

### Before visiting the school:

- ✓ make a checklist of all the things that are important to you and your child. This will help you to ask the right questions. (see the checklist below as an example)
- ✓ arrange to meet with the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO) . If your child is transferring to secondary school you may like to meet the Year Head too. Ask them to bring the school SEN policy, governors' annual report on SEN, school prospectus, anti-bullying policy and behaviour policy to the meeting
- ✓ look up the school's most recent OFSTED report on the internet
- ✓ decide if you want to take someone with you – perhaps a friend or family member
- ✓ take any relevant information about your child, such as their Statement, any educational psychology advice and copies of individual education plans.



### Sample checklist (to be used for ideas)

- How is SEN provision organised in the school? (ask to see the school's SEN policy and the governors' annual report of SEN)
- What kind of help would your child receive?
- Depending on your child's needs ask about:
  - additional adult support (e.g. learning support assistant, what the class teacher and SENCO do)
  - equipment/adaptations/materials
  - the way teaching would be organised, e.g. whole class, small groups, 1:1
  - SEN support services available to the school – e.g. therapists, educational psychologist, literacy support, support from other schools.
  - medical/personal hygiene support
- What is the school's behaviour policy? How does it apply it to children with SEN? If your child has behaviour difficulties, how would the school respond to this?
- How does the school deal with bullying?
- How does the school involve parents in school life? How will the school communicate with you about your child and his/her progress?

- Are there any after-school activities/trips/holidays, and how would your child with SEN access these?
- If your child will need transport to school, ask for information on this.

Other things to look at –

- Do you feel welcome?
- Do the children look comfortable?
- If your child has any particular religious needs, would they be met?
- Do the classrooms look like places where children can learn?
- Does the school look under control?
- Does the school celebrate different cultures/religions?
- Are the displays current and interesting and do they seem to include pupils of all abilities?
- Do the staff seem interested in you and your child?

(Remember, your own experiences of school may affect the way you see the school. Try to put these feelings aside and look at the school from your child's perspective.)

**NOTE:**

**Chapter 9 of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001 gives statutory guidance on Annual Reviews. The Code of Practice can be downloaded from [www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk).**

