

EDUCATION JARGON

A

Absence: parents are responsible for making sure that their child attends regularly at school, or are educated "otherwise". Authorised absence is when a teacher or school representative has given permission for the absence when a satisfactory explanation has been given, for example when a child has been off school ill. Unauthorised absence is when the child is away from school without permission; this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. See also: *Attendance*

Admission authority: the official body which decides the rules on how children will get a place at the school and also who is offered a place. For community and voluntary controlled schools the admissions authority is generally the LEA; for all others it is the governing body.

Admission criteria: the rules set down each year by the admission authority to decide who will be admitted to the school, usually when more children apply than there are places available. For fully selective schools, the rules may result in a child being refused a place, even if the school is not full.

Admissions appeal panel: a group of 3 or 5 people who decide whether a child who has already been turned down for a school by the admission authority should be given a place. The appeal panel is set by the local authority/governing body. There are strict rules about who should be on the panel - no member of the panel can be a governor of the school under appeal or a local councillor.

Annual Review: See: *Review*

Attendance: parents are guilty of an offence if their child is of compulsory school age and does not attend their school regularly, unless the child has a legally recognised reason, such as illness, which prevents them from attending school. See also: *Absence*

B

Behaviour/discipline policy: based on the school governors' statement of principles, a policy must be drawn up by the headteacher and publicised to pupils and parents at least once a year.

C

City academies: (now known as academies) publicly funded independent secondary schools, each with a specialism in a particular area of the curriculum. They have sponsorship from the private or voluntary sector or from a religious faith group. They can select up to 10% of pupils on the basis of an aptitude for their specialism.

City Technology Colleges (CTCs): funded by the Government and private business. They provide secondary education with a strong scientific and technological element or in some cases an emphasis on the arts. Their governing body controls their admission procedures.

Class size prejudice: would be caused if a school was to admit an extra pupil above the legal limit of 30 for infant classes (reception and years 1 and 2).

Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs: guidance written by the Government to ensure that children with special educational needs get the right help at the right time at school. Schools and LEAs must not ignore the Code of Practice.

Compulsory School Age: starts in the term after a child's fifth birthday (though many schools will admit children after their fourth birthday). A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the school year in which s/he reaches the age of 16.

Community schools: the majority of all schools. The local education authority owns the school and is the employer of the staff. Generally the LEA is responsible for admissions. The majority are comprehensive and most educate girls and boys together (co-educational), but some are single sex. Religious education is given and whilst being basically Christian it also reflects the beliefs of other faiths established in the area.

Comprehensive schools: open to all children. At banded comprehensives children are assessed so that there is a balance of ability across the school.

D

Department for Education and Skills (DfES): is the government department which deals with education matters in England.

Differentiation: teaching a child in ways and at levels which match their ways of learning.

Director of Education: is the manager of the LEA and might be known as Chief Education Officer.

Disapplication: in exceptional circumstances, head teachers may temporarily exempt individual pupils from the National Curriculum. Parents have a right of appeal against an exemption or against a decision not to exempt their child.

Duty of care: your child's school should try to make sure that your child is safe from harm. If the school knows that a child is being bullied and does not take reasonable action to protect them, the school may be failing in their duty of care and could possibly be sued for negligence. However, this is very rare.

E

Exclusion: to exclude a pupil from school on disciplinary grounds. It should be for the shortest time necessary. The governing body must consider certain exclusions and can also overturn certain exclusions. They may set up a disciplinary committee to perform this function.

Expressing a preference: parents have the right to express a preference for a school and to give their reasons for that preference. They do not have a right to send their child to the school of their choice. Whether the child is offered a place will depend on the number of places available, the number of other applications and any oversubscription criteria, including selection or religious criteria the school may have.

F

Fixed period exclusion: an exclusion for a set length of time. The total duration of fixed period exclusions must not add up to more than 45 school days in a school year.

Foundation schools: schools which receive their money through the LEA and must have LEA representatives on their governing body, as well as representatives of their foundation. They are responsible for their own admissions and employ their own staff. If the foundation is a religious one, the school can refuse admission to pupils who do not meet their published religious admission criteria and may give religious worship and education in line with their particular faith. (Foundation schools are mostly former grant-maintained schools).

G

Governing body: has overall responsibility, with the headteacher, for the school. Governors are not paid for the work they do for the school.

H

Home education: parents do not need permission to home educate their child, and can do this at any time. Parents must ensure that their child is educated according to his or her "age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he or she may have".

Home-School Agreement: a non-binding document setting out rights and responsibilities of parents, schools (and sometimes pupils). A pupil cannot be refused a place at school or disciplined if their parent refuses to sign the agreement.

Homework: schools do not have to provide homework; however the government has guidelines which set recommended amounts of homework:

Years 1 and 2	1 hour per week
Years 3 and 4	1.5 hours per week
Years 5 and 6	30 minutes per day
Years 7 and 8	45-90 minutes per day
Year 9	1-2 hours per day
Years 10 and 11	1.5-2.5 hours per day

I

Indefinite exclusion: an exclusion with no date for return to school is unlawful.

Independent Appeal Panel (IAP): for a permanent exclusion, a panel consisting of three or five people is set up by the local authority, and can overturn an exclusion.

Independent schools: also known as public or private schools. They provide education on a fee paying basis. Most education law does not apply to independent schools.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): a document which explains the extra help a child with special educational needs is getting and which sets targets for the child's improvement.

Infant class sizes must all be limited to 30 pupils per qualified teacher in reception and years 1 and 2.

Inspection: schools are generally inspected every six years by Ofsted. They are inspected on the quality of the education they provide; their standards; whether their resources are managed efficiently and on the spiritual, moral and cultural development of their pupils. A summary of the report of a school inspection must be sent to every parent of a pupil in the school and are available to the public on the internet. See also: *Ofsted*

K

Key Stages: under the National Curriculum compulsory education is divided into four key stages:

Key Stage 1	ages 5-7	Years 1 and 2
Key Stage 2	ages 7-11	Years 3, 4, 5 and 6
Key Stage 3	ages 11-14	Years 7, 8 and 9
Key Stage 4	ages 14-16	Years 10 and 11

L

Learning difficulties mean that a child finds it significantly harder to learn than other children of the same age. They could have behaviour problems, or

particular problems learning to read, or physical disabilities such as poor hearing.

Local Education Authority (LEA): the education department of your local council.

Lunchtime exclusion: Pupils whose behaviour at lunchtime is disruptive may be excluded from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. Lunchtime exclusions count as half-day fixed period exclusions, and should not be for more than five days.

N

National Curriculum: all pupils in community, voluntary and foundation schools follow the National Curriculum. This specifies which subjects must be taught to pupils at particular ages (key stages), the content of those subjects and the means for assessing pupils' attainment. See also: *Key Stages*

O

Ofsted: the Office for Standards in Education, which inspects schools. See also: *Inspection*

P

Parent Partnership Service (PPS): local organisation which can offer information, advice and support for parents of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN). In some boroughs this is done by a single **Parent Partnership Officer (PPO)**, often based in the offices of the Local Education Authority.

Pastoral Support Programme (PSP): may be set up to help pupils manage their behaviour. A PSP should be set up for a pupil who is at serious risk of exclusion, disaffected or at risk of disaffection.

Permanent exclusion: should usually be the final step after a school has tried a wide range of other strategies. It should be a last resort, however in exceptional circumstances a permanent exclusion can be for a first or one-off incident if it is serious and affects the whole school's discipline and well-being.

Primary education: for five to 11-year-olds. Schools are often divided into infant, for children between five and seven, and junior, for seven to 11-year-olds. The two schools are usually on the same site. Sometimes a nursery or nursery class is attached.

Prospectus: document which gives background information about a school; that is the kind of school it is, along with factual information about the school, such as the names of the headteacher and chair of governors, and how well pupils did in examinations.

Published Admission Number (PAN): the number of pupils the admission authority has decided, after consultation, that a school can admit. The school cannot claim that it is full until it has admitted up to this number.

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs): LEA schools designed to take, on a short-term basis, young people who have been excluded from school. Their purpose is to prepare pupils for a return to mainstream school as soon as possible.

Q

Qualifying measures: must be taken by schools if they admit more than 30 children to an infant class. An example would be employing an extra teacher.

R

Review: when a school checks how well extra help is working. At School Action or School Action Plus the school should hold regular reviews to see if the child is reaching their targets and to decide on future action. A local education authority must review statements of special educational needs at least annually (known as Annual Review).

S

SATs: Children aged 7, 11 and 14 take national tests in English and mathematics, and 11 and 14-year-olds take tests in science as well. Children are awarded different levels according to their performance in the tests. Most seven-year-olds are expected to reach level 2; most 11-year-olds are expected to reach level 4; most 14-year-olds are expected to reach levels 5 or 6. Teachers also assess which level they judge their pupils to have reached.

School Action: school based help for children who have special educational needs but who are not statemented. If the child is not making adequate progress with the school's normal differentiation, the school should consider moving them to School Action. The special educational needs co-ordinator and appropriate teachers will collect all available information about their child (including from the parent) and then decide what help to give. Parents should always be consulted and kept informed. The child should be given an Individual Education Plan which should be reviewed regularly.

School Action Plus: if a child on School Action continues to make little or no progress the school may consider moving them to School Action Plus. At this stage schools should consult specialists, whose advice will help the school decide what help to give the child. This will be extra to and/or different from the help given at School Action.

School records: records must be kept by schools and must include reports and other information about each child. Parents and children have a right to see and have a copy of their record. Schools can charge for photocopying. Requests should be in writing and schools have 15 days to respond to a request.

Selective schools: grammar schools are generally fully selective. Partially

selective schools assess a certain number of children for a place at the school under rules decided by the admission authority.

Sex Education: compulsory in secondary school within the framework of moral values and family life. Must include information about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Parents can withdraw their child from sex education which is not part of the National Curriculum. The school's governing body must have a policy on sex education, which parents have the right to see.

Special Educational Needs (SEN): the law says that a child with learning difficulties has SEN and should have extra help at school. Most of this help will be given in ordinary mainstream schools. As many as one in five of all children will have special educational needs at some time in their school life.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST): an independent appeal tribunal which makes a binding decision when there is disagreement between parents and the LEA about specific issues relating to statutory assessments and statements, or where there is a claim of disability discrimination. There are three people on each tribunal and the chair must be legally qualified.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO): the teacher responsible for co-ordinating special educational provision in the school. In small schools this is often the headteacher.

Special schools: cater for pupils with special educational needs, such as physical disabilities, severe or moderate learning difficulties, emotional or behavioural difficulties and autism. They can be day or boarding schools. Some special schools are for children with particular disabilities. Some special schools are outside the state maintained sector (known as non-maintained special schools) which are often run by charities and are non-profit-making. There are also independent special schools, some of which have whole school approval from the Department for Education and Skills.

Specialist schools: have private sector sponsorships supported by additional government funding and may select some pupils for aptitude in their area of specialisation. Many community schools are specialist schools in particular areas e.g. science, sports, language etc.

Standard number: the minimum number of children that can be admitted to a school for entry at the usual time for starting, if the school is to be classified as full. The standard number or, if it has one, the PAN, must be published each year, and should only be exceeded in exceptional circumstances.

Statement: a statement of special educational needs is a document in six parts, which is produced by the LEA giving their views on the child's learning difficulties and the extra help that they must have.

Statutory assessment: when the LEA assesses the child's educational needs

to see whether or not they need a statement of special needs.

U

Unreasonable decision: a decision by an admission authority which is not rational in terms of its legal responsibilities.

V

Voluntary aided schools: mostly set up by churches or other religions and a few by charities. They own the school buildings and have some responsibility for repair and maintenance, for which they receive help from a government grant. These schools get most of their money from the LEA but have greater independence than community schools. They are responsible for admissions and employment of staff. Most are denominational church schools - the majority are Church of England and most of the remainder are Catholic, with a small number of other faiths. They can refuse admission to pupils who do not meet their published religious admission criteria and may give religious education and worship in line with their particular faith. The composition of governing bodies of voluntary aided schools allow for fewer LEA and parent governors while the voluntary body has a majority.

Voluntary controlled schools: funded fully by the LEA and run almost exactly like community schools but there is some representation of the voluntary body among the governors. If the voluntary body is a religious one, the school may give religious education in line with their particular faith.