



# SEND Advice

Information, Advice and Support on  
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities



Leaflet 1

## Impartial Information, Advice and Support

How we can help children, parents and  
young people about matters relating to  
special educational needs or disabilities

## What do we mean by impartial information, advice and support?

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This information is about the impartial information, advice and support required by the **SEND Code of Practice**.

### What does the SEND Code of Practice say?

The Children and Families Act 2014 says local authorities must provide information advice and support about special educational needs (SEN), disability, health and social care for children, young people and parents.

The **SEND Code of Practice** says:

***Local authorities must arrange for children with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, and their parents, and young people with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, to be provided with information and advice about matters relating to their SEN or disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care. This must include information, advice and support on the take-up and management of Personal Budgets. In addition, in carrying out their duties under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities must have regard to the importance of providing children and their parents and young people with the information and support necessary to participate in decisions. (2.1)***

This means that every local authority should provide a service that is free, easy to access and confidential and that can help children, parents and young people take part in decisions that affect their lives.

The Local Offer must include information about the sources of information, advice and support for parents, children and young people and how this is resourced.

In the Bedford Local Authority this service is provided by **SEND Advice**.

## What do we mean when we say we are impartial?

The **SEND Code of Practice** says:

***The information, advice and support should be impartial and provided at arm's length from the local authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups (2.8)***

This means that the information, advice and support that we offer are firmly based in the law and the SEND Code of Practice.

We provide unbiased information and advice about the local authority's policies and procedures and about the policy and practice in local schools and other settings.

We do not give priority to any particular impairment, disability or special educational need, nor do we campaign for any particular approach to education.

By being impartial we aim to help parents, children and young people have clear, accurate and relevant information that will help them take part in decisions about their lives.

You can read our Impartiality Policy on our website.

## How do we know that we are impartial?

It is very easy to be biased. Everyone has opinions about most things! Sometimes people can be biased without even realising it.

That is why we really value your opinion about the information, advice and support we offer. We want you to tell us if you think we are not impartial. To help us check that we are impartial we routinely ask those who use our service to say whether they think we have been biased one way or another.

At **SEND Advice** we follow a national set of Quality Standards for services providing impartial information, advice and support developed by the Network of Information, Advice and Support Services. This helps us to monitor the effectiveness of our service we provide and ensure that it is 'at arm's length' from the local authority. By this we mean that we act, and are seen to act, separately and impartially, with no undue influence or control from either the local authority or the Clinical Commissioning Group in our area.

We also publish an **Annual Report** that includes information on what people tell us about our service.

*"The thing that helped me most was knowing that SEND Advice are independent and have an unbiased view." A Bedford parent*

*"I am very happy with SEND Advice's support. I wish they were recommended to me before. I would definitely recommend this service to other parents." A Bedford parent*

## What information, advice and support do we offer?

We offer accurate, up to date and impartial resources and information about the law on special educational needs and disability. This covers:

- education, health and social care
- national and local policy
- the Local Offer
- your rights and choices
- your opportunities to participate
- where you can find help and advice
- how you can access this support.

We provide information in many ways, including our website, publications, training events and conferences.

Sometimes information alone is not enough. You may want help to gather information, make sense of it and apply it to your own situation. We call this advice and we offer this service by email, on the telephone, face to face and through work with groups or in training.

We can also offer more intensive support if you need it. This can include helping with letters, attending meetings with you or supporting you in discussions with the local authority, school or other setting. We may be able to help you find a **key worker**, or an **Independent Supporter** or a volunteer who can support you.

When we are not able to help we will do our best to tell you about, or put you in touch with, other groups or organizations that can help. We call this **signposting**.

## Is the service confidential?

### Yes!

We will not share your information with anyone unless you tell us we can. The only exception to this would be because we have a specific concern about a child's safety.

You can find our Confidentiality Policy on our website.

We will often work with parents and children or young people together. Sometimes we will work with them separately. When we do this the same confidentiality rules apply.

## Where can I find out more?

You can read about impartial information, advice and support in the **SEND Code of Practice** Chapter 2.

The Local Offer includes details of Bedford Borough arrangements for providing information, advice and support.

Look at the **SEND ADVICE** website for information about our services, copies of our publications and contact details and for links to the Code of Practice and Local Offer.





## Further information

As well as talking to staff at your child's school, you may also talk in confidence to SEND Advice.

You can download this and other leaflets from our website. If you would like further copies of any of our leaflets, information about our services or details of how to volunteer to be an Independent Supporter, please telephone or write to us at our address below.

Për Informacion	তথ্যের জন্য	معلومات کے لئی
للمعلومات	Za Informacije	Informacija
برای اطلاع	Per Informazione	ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ

## Contact us

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 [www.bedford.gov.uk/sendadvice](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/sendadvice)

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Details correct at the time of printing but please check our website for updated versions of all of our information. We gratefully acknowledge the help of the Information, Advice and Support Services Network in preparing this leaflet.

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