



# OAASIS INFORMATION SHEET

## Legal Help

### Do you need help with any of the following?

- the Code of Practice and how it applies to your child
- your child's Statement of Special Educational Need
- preparing for a Tribunal in order to contest what your LEA have planned for your child

### Are you having difficulties with your LEA

- arranging specialist provision for your child?
- refusing or delaying to take the necessary steps for your child?
- not implementing the full recommendations of the Statement of SEN?

First obtain a copy of *The SEN Code of Practice*. This is the publication that sets out the Identification, Assessment, Provision, Statutory Assessment and Statementing procedures as followed by LEAs, Head Teachers, Governors and professionals published by the DfES. For a free copy, telephone DfES Publications on 0845 602 2260, order online at [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk) or download from <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/3724/SENCodeOfPractice.pdf>.

**Then contact the following organisations for free help and advice:**

Your local **Parent Partnership Service** is a statutory service that offers impartial information, advice and support for parents of children and young people with special educational needs. To find your local office look at their website at [www.parentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.parentpartnership.org.uk). Parents in Wales should go to SNAP Cymru at [www.snapcymru.org](http://www.snapcymru.org).

**SEN Mediation** Parents/carers of children with SEN can find themselves in conflict with their LEA or their child's school, often an informal approach is more effective - this is what SEN disagreement resolution offers. Find your local service at Website: [www.sendist.gov.uk/Parents/mediation.htm](http://www.sendist.gov.uk/Parents/mediation.htm) or ask your Parent Partnership Officer for details.

**Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)**

Website: [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

**Helpline (open 10am to 5pm): 0800 800 5793**

**Exclusion Information Line: 020 7704 9822**

ACE offers free advice and support to parents on SEN issues in England and Wales including exclusion and bullying. They publish many helpful handbooks including the ACE Special Educational Handbook; Tribunal Toolkit: Going to the SEN Tribunal; Appealing for a School; Getting Extra Help and various Summaries of the Law and examples of letters to write.

**Children's Legal Centre**

Web: [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

**National Education Line: 0845 345 4345**

Email: [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk)

An independent charity, has The Education Law Advice Unit which provides free legal advice and representation to children and/or parents with issues relating to schools and LEAs, including SEN, exclusions, admissions, bullying and disability discrimination.

**Disability Law Service**

Website: [www.dls.org.uk](http://www.dls.org.uk)

**Tel (10-1 and 2-5pm): 020 7791 9800**

Email: [advice@dls.org.uk](mailto:advice@dls.org.uk)

Small charity organisation providing free confidential legal advice to disabled people, their carers, enablers and other organisations. Areas of law include: further and higher education, employment, disability discrimination, community care and welfare benefits.

**IPSEA: the Independent Panel for Special Education Advice**

Website: [www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)

**Advice Line: Tel: 0800 018 4016**

**General Enq and Tribunal Appeals: Tel: 01394 384711**

A registered charity with trained volunteers providing advice on LEAs' legal duties towards children with SEN. It offers free and independent advice for parents of children with SEN who disagree with an LEA's assessment of their child and offers free representation at the Special Needs tribunal. Their website offers model letters and information on exclusion rights.

**ISEA (Scotland)**

Provides free, independent advice, information and support to parents who have a child/young person with additional support needs, including advice on assessments, placements, appeals, etc.

**Advice Line: 0131 454 0096**

Website: [www.isea.org.uk](http://www.isea.org.uk)

**National Autistic Society**

Advocacy for Education Service and Tribunal Support Scheme **Tel: 0845 070 4004**

Supports parents and carers and provides accurate information on educational provision and entitlements.

Website: [www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk)

**Network 81**

A network of parents working towards properly resourced inclusive education for children with SEN. They have befrienders, trained in Code of Practice and Education Law, who can support parents at meetings and through the assessment procedures, and helpful publications.

**National Helpline: 0870 770 3306**

Website: [www.network81.org](http://www.network81.org)

Email: [info@network81.org](mailto:info@network81.org)

**SENAC (Special Educational Needs Advice Centre)**

Email: [info@senac.co.uk](mailto:info@senac.co.uk)

**Advice Line: 028 9079 5779**

The **Northern Ireland** advice line service for information on the ELBs duty towards children with SEN, especially assessments and statementing issues, also assistance for parents appealing to SENDIST.

Website: [www.senac.co.uk](http://www.senac.co.uk)

**SOS!SEN**

Email: [sossen@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:sossen@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Tel: 020 8538 3731**

An independent national helpline based in Twickenham for SEN issues staffed by volunteers knowledgeable in education and related services, concentrating on helping people find their way through the legal and procedural maze which is so daunting.

**SENDIST (Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal)**

**SEN Helpline: 0870 241 2555**

They are independent of central and local government; they hear and decide parents' appeals against LEA decisions on SEN. Visit their website [www.sendist.gov.uk](http://www.sendist.gov.uk) for further information.

**Discrimination helpline: 0870 606 5750**

The following may also have some advice or answers for you:

**British Dyslexia Association**

Website: [www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/)

**Tel: 0845 251 9002**

**Contact a Family** The link [www.cafamily.org.uk/educatio.html](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/educatio.html) leads you to Contact a Family's Factsheet called *Special Educational Needs – England*, a complete guide to the SEN system from start to finish.

**Tel: 0800 808 3555**

Office for  
Advice  
Assistance  
Support  
and  
Information  
on  
Special needs

**Helpline:**  
01590 622880  
**Fax:**  
01590 622687

[www.oaasis.co.uk](http://www.oaasis.co.uk)

**FREEPOST  
RLYY-TAUC-YRYS**

**Brock House  
Grigg Lane  
Brockenhurst  
Hampshire  
SO42 7RE**

**OAASIS  
A part of  
Cambian Education  
Services**



## **SOME USEFUL BOOKS:**

1. "Special Educational Needs (SEN): A guide for parents and carers". Publisher: DfES. This can be downloaded at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/3755/Parents%20Guide.pdf](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/3755/Parents%20Guide.pdf).
2. "**Special Education Handbook**" (9<sup>th</sup> ed). Advisory Centre for Education (ACE). Practical advice on meetings with schools, examining a statement, disability rights, choosing a school, taking an appeal or complaint through the system. £17.99 + p&p. Credit card order - Tel: 020 7704 3370 or visit their Website at [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk).
3. "**Surviving the special educational needs system – How to be a velvet bulldozer**" Author: Sandy Row, an adoptive parent of 4 siblings who between them have autism, ADHD, dyspraxia and auditory processing problems. Tells her story of misdiagnoses; a long search for help; the SEN system including assessments, appeals and tribunals etc. Available from Jessica Kingsley Publishers [www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com) priced £12.95 + p & p. Tel: 020 7833 2307.
4. "**Appealing for a Special School**" Free guide written by Douglas Silas, solicitor specialising in education law. You can download it from his website [www.douglasilassolicitors.co.uk](http://www.douglasilassolicitors.co.uk) once you've registered some basic details or call 08707 433377.

**LEGAL FIRMS** You may need to use a firm of solicitors. All will charge full professional fees for their services; so ask about their fee structure before you get too involved. Most will offer a short consultation with you first, free of charge, to assess the situation. (Parents on income support can apply for Legal Help in some cases but check with your solicitor). The following specialise in Education Law including Statementing, Appeals and Tribunals, breaches of statutory duty and negligence, bullying and exclusions. OAASIS cannot recommend any personally and this list is not comprehensive:

Mr Yogi Amin	Irwin Mitchell (Sheffield, Newcastle and others)	W: <a href="http://www.irwinmitchell.com">www.irwinmitchell.com</a>	Tel: 0114 274 4642
Mr Chris Barnett	Levenes Solicitors (London, Birmingham)	W: <a href="http://www.levenes.co.uk">www.levenes.co.uk</a>	Tel: 0800 11 88 99
Mr Mike Charles	Sinclair Solicitors (Penarth) (Eng & Wales)	W: <a href="http://www.sinclairslaw.co.uk">www.sinclairslaw.co.uk</a>	Tel: 02920 706444
Ms Lucy Conn	Ridley & Hall (Huddersfield)	W: <a href="http://www.ridleyhall.co.uk">www.ridleyhall.co.uk</a>	Tel: 01484 538421
Ms T Eldridge-Himmers	Ormerods Solicitors	W: <a href="http://www.ormerods.co.uk">www.ormerods.co.uk</a>	Tel: 020 8686 5000
Mr Michael Imperato	Russell Jones and Walker (Cardiff)	W: <a href="http://www.rjw.co.uk">www.rjw.co.uk</a>	Tel: 029 2026 2811
Mr Richard Lemasurier	Parker Bullen (Salisbury)	W: <a href="http://www.parkerbullen.com">www.parkerbullen.com</a>	Tel: 01722 412000
Mr Robert Love	Langley Wellington (Gloucester)	W: <a href="http://www.langleywellington.co.uk">www.langleywellington.co.uk</a>	Tel: 01452 521286
Ms Elaine Maxwell	Maxwell Gillott (Lancaster)	W: <a href="http://www.maxwellgillott.com">www.maxwellgillott.com</a>	Tel: 01524 596080
Mr Felix Moss	Felix Moss (London)	W: <a href="http://www.felixmoss.co.uk">www.felixmoss.co.uk</a>	Tel: 07950 730844
Ms Melinda Nettleton	SEN Legal (Bury St Edmunds)	W: <a href="http://www.senlegal.co.uk">www.senlegal.co.uk</a>	Tel: 01284 723952
Ms Sarah Palmer	The Children's Legal Practice Ltd (Fareham)	W: <a href="http://www.childrenslegalpractice.com">www.childrenslegalpractice.com</a>	Tel: 01329 823322
Mr John Peake	Southwestlaw (Bristol)	W: <a href="http://www.southwestlaw.org.uk">www.southwestlaw.org.uk</a>	Tel: 0117 314 6401
Mr Jack Rabinowicz	Teacher, Stern (Holborn)	W: <a href="http://www.teacherstern.com">www.teacherstern.com</a>	Tel: 020 7242 3191
Mr Douglas Silas	Douglas Silas Solicitors	W: <a href="http://www.dsllaw.co.uk">www.dsllaw.co.uk</a>	Tel: 08707 433377
Mr Phil Storey	Bailey, Wright & Co Solicitors (Birmingham)	W: <a href="http://www.baileywright.com">www.baileywright.com</a>	Tel: 0121 270 1566
Ms Beverley Watkins	Watkins Solicitors (Bristol) (undertake Legal Aid Wk)	E: <a href="mailto:Beverley.watkins@watkinsolicitors.co.uk">Beverley.watkins@watkinsolicitors.co.uk</a>	Tel: 0117 939 0350
Ms Eleanor Wright	Fisher Meredith (London)	W: <a href="http://www.fishermeredith.co.uk">www.fishermeredith.co.uk</a>	Tel: 020 7091 2700
		W: <a href="http://www.clsdirect.org.uk">www.clsdirect.org.uk</a>	Helpline: 0845 345 4345

### **Community Legal Advice**

*Free advice if you are eligible for Legal Aid.* Downloadable information sheets about any legal problem. They have a telephone helpline and lots of information on their website. Search for a solicitor or legal adviser close to you by entering your postcode and category you need help with.

There are 8 **Law Centres** that help parents who are on low incomes and eligible for Community Legal Service - contact **OAASIS** for your nearest one. We also hold lists of other solicitors (taken from CLS Direct) who offer 'specialist help' in education and those who do work funded by the Legal Services Commission.

**FINANCIAL HELP** - helping parents to organise their own financial affairs on behalf of their child, or their child's own finances:

**Blake Laphorn Solicitors** (Hampshire) on **02392 221122** (ask for Rachel Brooks).

**Mencap** offers free legal advice from their in-house solicitor in relation to making wills, reviewing your personal affairs and setting up trusts to protect your child; a range of literature and lists of specialist solicitors. **Tel: 0207 696 5533** (ask for Aarti Puri); or email [Aarti.Puri@mencap.org.uk](mailto:Aarti.Puri@mencap.org.uk).

**The NAS** Legacy Department has information on their website about legacies and a booklet called '*Guide to wills and trusts*' which includes information on leaving money in your will to a person with autism to ensure they are best looked after. They have a list of solicitors in different parts of the country that can help with writing wills to ensure your wishes are carried out.

**Tel: 020 7923 5796**

Web: [www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk)

Email [legacies@nas.org.uk](mailto:legacies@nas.org.uk)

**Everyday Life Ltd "The Way Forward" – Financial Appointee Advocacy Service.** This service offers Financial Advocates who act as a fully legal Appointee for people who lack the capacity to maintain their own finances and require a legal system of accountability. Advocates can set up and manage all bank accounts, apply for benefits and receive them, liaise with benefit/housing agencies, etc: There is a charge for the service. [www.everydaylife-advocacy.org](http://www.everydaylife-advocacy.org) **Tel: 01733 327888**

### **TROUBLE WITH THE LAW**

Young adults with Asperger Syndrome may find themselves in trouble with the police or in court. The NAS produces information to assist criminal justice professionals to understand their needs which can be found on their website: <http://www.nas.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=471>

**Dennis Debbaudt** has an American website giving advice and information to individuals with autism on avoiding trouble and also for criminal justice professionals on dealing appropriately with autistic people. [www.autismriskmanagement.com](http://www.autismriskmanagement.com)

**Expert Witness** on Asperger Syndrome and other ASDs – specialising in criminal cases where the defendant or witness has ASD. Find one at <http://www.bps.org.uk/e-services/find-a-psychologist/expertwitness.cfm>

### **National Appropriate Adult Network:**

Website: [www.appropriateadult.org.uk](http://www.appropriateadult.org.uk)

**Tel: 020 8378 2736**

Young people who are considered to be mentally vulnerable must have an 'appropriate adult' with them when they are interviewed by the police. This network can put you in touch with a scheme providing them.

**Cambian Education Services** run seven residential special schools and colleges for young people with autistic spectrum disorders, Asperger Syndrome/HFA, severe learning difficulties. OAASIS can give you advice on the schools and send you their prospectuses or visit the website [www.cambianeducation.com](http://www.cambianeducation.com). OAASIS produces a wide range of **free Information Sheets**, 8 **publications** entitled 'First Guide to...' and **wallet sized cards** explaining 9 learning disabilities. Please contact OAASIS (see front of sheet for contact details) for the full list, or view and download them on the website at [www.oaasis.co.uk](http://www.oaasis.co.uk). All sheets are checked annually, please ensure you have the current version.