

This document is not exhaustive; it is intended as a quick overview and was produced for our SEND events in March 2026 where we talked about the issues in more detail.

At first glance...

March 2026

The Schools White Paper & SEND reforms

A white paper sets out government proposals for future laws.
There is a 12-week consultation period about the SEND reforms so you can have your say.

What is it

- Published on 23rd February 2026, it's still very new.
- *Every Child Achieving and Thriving* - 120-page white paper, setting out a range of national education changes.
- *Putting Children and Young People First* - 132-page document about proposed SEND reforms.

Existing SEND law has not changed. There is no immediate change to the support, provision, or legal rights your child or young person currently has.

What we know

The government's SEND reforms proposals include:

- A tiered support structure in mainstream schools: universal, targeted, and specialist tiers intended to broaden early and everyday support.
- Individual Support Plan (ISP): statutory plans produced by schools setting out day-to-day support.
- Education, health, and care plans (EHCPs) to be for those with the most complex needs; others will primarily be supported through ISPs and specialist packages.
- 'Inclusion bases' in every secondary school.
- National Inclusion Standards to define what support should be on offer across schools.
- Investment to increase access to experts such as educational psychologists, speech and language and occupational therapists, in mainstream schools.
- Changes to routes for dispute resolution, including rights & powers around the SEND Tribunal.

What we don't know

- The lack of detail means it is difficult to properly answer some of the consultation questions.
- How are complex needs defined; who would qualify for the different levels of support?
- How changes would be implemented, and what accountability mechanisms there would be, or what consequences there would be for not following the law.
- How different parts of the system will work together in practice, such as health support in schools for children without an EHCP.
- How changes will be properly tracked and monitored to know if they are working well.
- How realistic it is that there will be experts to fill the new roles.

It will take time to read and understand everything that is set out in the government's proposals, but we already hear concerns and we will do everything we can to represent YOUR views. We will share more opportunities soon to talk about these proposals in the next couple of months.

What do you think?

Share your views, concerns, and hopes here

