

CHILDREN AND ADHD • 6.5

School Support for ADHD: EHCPs, SEN Support and the SENCo

School support for ADHD in England runs on a specific legal framework. The SEND Code of Practice and Children and Families Act 2014 set out what your child is entitled to. This is how the system actually works.

FOR

AUDIENCE AGE

Parents pursuing school support for a child with ADHD

REVIEWED

PART OF

17 May 2026

The NeuroFX resource library

IN SUMMARY

School Support for ADHD: EHCPs, SEN Support and the SENCo

The two main levels of support

- **SEN Support is the default level.** Every school in England must identify children with special educational needs and provide SEN Support, recorded on the SEN register. Movement breaks, structured help with organisation, chunked instructions, fidget tools, seating adjustments, prompts to refocus. No formal diagnosis is required to start.
- **An EHCP is the legally binding higher level.** An Education Health and Care Plan sets out the child's needs, the support they must receive, and the outcomes the support is working towards. Legally enforceable: the school must deliver what the EHCP says, and parents have legal routes to enforce it. Harder to obtain; statutory timeline is around 20 weeks.
- **A diagnosis is not legally required but strengthens the case.** Both SEN Support and EHCP processes can proceed without a formal diagnosis. In practice, the diagnosis substantially strengthens the case for an EHCP.

How the SENCo and adjustments work

- **The SENCo is the main school contact for SEN.** Every state-funded school in England must have a designated Special Educational Needs Coordinator. They maintain the SEN register, coordinate planning and review, liaise with external professionals and manage EHC Needs Assessment requests.
- **Common adjustments at primary age.** Movement breaks, visual timetables, chunked instructions, fidget tools, seating close to the teacher, prompts to refocus, adjusted homework expectations, pre-warning of transitions. Specific support at less-structured times (lunchtime, playtime) where needed.
- **Common adjustments at secondary age.** Exam access arrangements (extra time, separate room, supervised rest breaks), help with organisation across subjects, written or visual instructions, a consistent pastoral point of contact, adjustments to homework deadlines where reasonable.
- **Reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.** Schools have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act. This is separate from SEN Support and EHCP processes and does not require any specific paperwork.
- **A good relationship with the SENCo matters.** SENCos vary in workload, experience and confidence with ADHD specifically. The practical reality of getting things done often depends on this relationship more than on the formal paperwork.

What to do when school support is not enough

- **Request a formal SEN review meeting.** If SEN Support is in place but the difficulties continue, ask the SENCo for a formal review. Bring specific examples and a clear statement of what is not working.
- **Consider an EHC Needs Assessment request.** Parents can request directly; you do not need the school's permission. The local authority has six weeks to decide whether to assess. Refusal can be appealed to the SEND Tribunal.
- **Get independent advice.** IPSEA, Contact, the Council for Disabled Children and local Parent Carer Forums provide free or low-cost independent advice. Independent advice often differs from what schools or local authorities tell parents and is usually more legally accurate.

WHEN TO SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL

Speak to the school SENCo as the first practical step. Speak to your GP if a paediatric ADHD assessment is needed to support the school case. IPSEA (ipsea.org.uk) provides free legal advice on SEND matters. Seek urgent help via 111, 999 or A&E for any acute mental health crisis or significant safety concern.

SOURCES

SEND Code of Practice 0-25; Children and Families Act 2014; NICE NG87; IPSEA; Council for Disabled Children

NEXT STEPS

Speak to NeuroFX

Private ADHD and autism assessment for adults and children aged 6 and upwards.
CQC-registered. Bedford Consulting Rooms, 4 Goldington Road, Bedford MK40 3NF.

neurofx.co.uk · **info@neurofx.co.uk** · **0333 533 3303**