

# The Role of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENCO)

**New SENCO Programme 2018 - 2019**



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The SEND Code of Practice (Jan 2015) sets out in detail how different bodies should fulfil their duties for learners with additional needs. The role of the SENCO is a pivotal role from pre-school through school-age to further education and preparing for adulthood.

The key paragraphs in the Code are:

- The role of the SENCO in pre-school / Early Years settings, *paras 5.52-5.54*
- The role of local authority Area SENCOs for pre-school settings, *5.55-5.58*
- The role of the SENCO in schools, *6.84-6.94*

## Overview

A Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator must have a strategic overview of a school's SEN policy as they hold responsibility for the day to day practical implementation by all staff. A SENCO should be the champion for all learners in their school who have a special educational need and/or disability. They are an advocate for ensuring the needs of learners are met. The role is varied, challenging and incredibly rewarding. There are many aspects to the job but the most important priority is to ensure that the needs of the learner are at the heart of all decisions made - breaking down, where possible, barriers to learning to accelerate progress. A SENCO is not an expert in all areas of special educational needs or disabilities but they are the co-ordinating professional within the school/setting and must be tenacious in working with professionals, within and beyond the school, to best meet the needs of the learners in their care.

A SENCO must have understanding and empathy for children with SEND and for their families, be honest about what is and what is not being provided and above all, demonstrate a commitment to improving outcomes and doing the very best for the learner.

The SENCO will lead on:

- The **IDENTIFICATION** of children with special educational needs in the school;
- Ensuring there is **HIGH QUALITY TEACHING** for learners with SEND
- Developing effective **SEND PROVISION** for learners, in-school and through external support
- **TRACKING** and **MONITORING** the outcomes for learners with SEND and reporting this to senior leaders and governors and parents.

## What does a SENCO do?

- Liaise with families and with children and young people with SEND to ensure the voice of the child is heard and this is integral to the development of the support/provision offered.
- Work closely with school staff to identify learners with special educational needs.
- Ensure that the learner's needs are assessed and set targets for improvement.
- Work with the Head Teacher and other staff to identify barriers to learning and develop effective ways of overcoming those barriers.
- Request support from services external to schools such as Educational Psychologists or specialist teachers. Whilst this means completing and submitting forms/requests this responsibility lies firmly with the SENCO and time additional to PPA should be given to assist with this as well as identified admin support.
- Monitor, assess and review the outcomes for all SEN learners within the school.
- Work with the Head Teacher, senior and middle leaders to ensure that learners with SEN are given a high priority in all decision-making.

## What responsibilities does a SENCO have?

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school/setting's SEN policy.
- Supporting the identification of children with special educational needs.
- Co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs.

- Liaising with parents/carers of children with special educational needs.
- Meeting and liaising with other providers, outside agencies, educational psychologists and external agencies.
- maintaining up to date records for all learners with special educational needs.
- In addition, a SENCO will often be a first point of contact for teachers, teaching assistants and parents when concerns arise. This is a crucial part of the role as it ensures the SENCO is made aware of emerging needs and can act quickly where concerns arise.

### **1. Whole-school SEN coordination:**

A SENCO has the ultimate responsibility of managing and coordinating the well-being, learning and education of all SEND pupils in their school.

SENCOs must be aware of any changing SEND legislation, practices and policies and potential funding changes that could affect the standard of education for learners with SEND. SENCOs are also responsible for the whole-school improvement of outcomes for pupils with SEND. SENCOs, in conjunction with the Head teacher, are responsible for the development and monitoring of the school's SEND policy to ensure it is suitable for the learners with SEND and is providing them with the best opportunities to meet their needs.

### **2. Strategic planning:**

SENCOs should be involved in leading the development of the school's priorities for SEND, setting targets to improve outcomes for learners and identifying the necessary actions to achieve them. This should be part of the whole school development plan. A SENCO must carefully and regularly monitor the school's SEND practices to support in the self-evaluation process. This may involve monitoring the following areas:

- analysis of pupils' assessment information
- observation of classroom teaching
- scrutiny of teachers' planning
- pupils' work
- discussion with pupils and their families
- an audit of staff's professional development needs
- a review of the impact of any school-based intervention

### **3. SEN Funding:**

Each school is provided with Element 2 funding to use specifically for their pupils with SEND. A SENCO should know the school's funding arrangements and have a role in the monitoring process to ensure that funding is being deployed appropriately and is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

### **4. SEN Funding:**

Each school is provided with allocated funding to use specifically for their pupils with SEND.

### **4. Monitoring and evaluation:**

A SENCO must carefully and regularly monitor the school's SEND practice and policy. This is to ensure the educational needs of all SEND learners are met and they are provided with the best opportunities for maximising their individual educational potential. The SENCO should also liaise with the nominated SEND Governor to ensure that the governing body fulfils its responsibilities in relation to learners with SEND.

## **5. Leading and training staff:**

SENCOs have the important task of improving the knowledge and understanding of the staff and governors within school to meet the needs of learners with SEND. A better and clearer understanding of a pupil with SEND will help both SENCOs and the relevant staff to ensure that each learner receives individual and appropriate special educational provision where necessary.

### **What should parents/carers expect from a SENCO?**

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Parents expect to be kept well-informed about the provision for their child and should be invited to termly review meetings where they can discuss their child's progress. In school, the SENCO is expected to advocate on their behalf to ensure everyone who regularly works with their child knows how best to support them.

Learners can present with a wide range of needs at different levels and no individual can be a specialist in every area. However, it is the job of the SENCO to liaise with the relevant professionals to better understand the needs of each learner and to co-ordinate the appropriate support and provision. The SENCO must have a thorough knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice and other relevant legislation so that they are fully aware of the school's duties and responsibilities.

### **New SENCO training, guidance and support.**

The SEN and Engagement Team arrange a termly briefing for all new SENCOs. All SENCOs who are new to Stockton or new to the SENCO role are required to attend the three sessions during their first year. At the end of the year, the Programme of Study, will be signed by the SEN team and sent to Head teachers as a record of your CPD and attendance at these sessions.

If you need support or advice regarding your role as a SENCO please contact any of our SEND services or e-mail [sensection@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:sensection@stockton.gov.uk)

## New SENCO Programme of Study-2018/2019

Topic	Briefing Date	Signed
Knowledge of the Provision Guidance and how to band.	Autumn Term	
Role of the TA in Supporting Children with SEN	Summer Term	
Interventions	Summer Term	
Tracking data	Spring Terms	
Peer observations – SEN focus	Summer Term	
Internal Quality Assurance	Spring Term	
Code of Practice/Statutory Guidance/Children's Act	Autumn Term	
Making Reasonable Adjustments	Summer Term	
Writing Pen Portraits	Spring Term	
Recording and Reporting High Needs Funding	Summer Term	
Record Keeping in Schools	Autumn Term	
Completing Annual Reviews	Spring Term	
Working with Parents	Summer Term	
SEN Support Plan	Autumn Term	
Working with Outside Agencies	Summer Term	
Education Health Care plan Applications/ PCP meetings/Statutory Panels	Spring Term	
One Point Application Forms/Non statutory Support	Autumn Term	
Costed Provision Mapping	Autumn Term	
The Local Offer	Autumn Term	
Keeping an SEN Register	Spring Term	

## SEN & Engagement Service Contact Details



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Stockton's Local Offer for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 0-25 providing SEN information for parents, carers, children, young people and professionals.

[www.stockton.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/localoffer)