

**Blackburn with Darwen**

**Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)**

**Information, Advice & Support Service (IASS)**

**SENDIASS**

**(formerly Parent Partnership Service)**

**Checklist for visiting**

**primary and secondary schools**



***From the 1st September 2014 Parent Partnership Services (PPS) in every local authority will evolve into Information, Advice and Support (IAS) Services. Each IAS Service will provide support similar to that of a PPS, although the type of support, and who is entitled to receive it, has been significantly expanded.***

**September 2014**

**Choosing a school is a big step and can be a worrying time for parents and indeed, pupils.  Allow yourself time to think, visit and plan your application – don’t add to the worry by leaving it late.**

**Before arranging a visit:**

* Ask the school for their School Prospectus and read it.
* Check the Ofsted Report
* Ask for school policies and performance information
* Carefully think about and jot down questions that you would like to ask
* When you would like to visit? (it is best to visit during school hours)
* Will you be taking your child?
* Do you want someone else to accompany you?
* Is the school easy to get to? (think about transport arrangements)
* Would you like to talk to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

(SENCO)?

* Do you want a guided tour?
* Will you be able to meet staff who would be involved with your child?
* Will you be able to talk to other parents who have children at the school?

**During the visit:**

* Use your senses, is it welcoming - do staff and pupils seem happy?
* Check walls and noticeboards- is pupils’ work on display?
* Is there a hum of activity- or just noise?
* How do parents get involved in school life?



**After the visit:**

* Discuss your thoughts and feelings about the school with someone else
* Did you feel welcomed at the school?
* Did the children seem happy, friendly and helpful?
* Do you think your child would be happy at that school?
* Did the school answer all your questions?
* Have you got any other questions that you would like to ask the school?
* Consider the admission criteria and transport arrangements.

**Schools are used to having visitors and won’t be surprised by any of your questions, nor will they be offended if you decide not to choose their school.  If in doubt, request a second visit**



**The following are sample questions to ask the school, but please don’t hesitate to ask questions relating to your child:**

* What is the general structure & timetable for the school day?
* How many children would be in your child’s class/ lessons?
* How many members of staff would be in your child’s class?
* How do the school support children with special educational needs & disabilities?
* Do the school know anything about your child’s difficulty or disability?
* Have the school ever taught any other children with similar difficulties?
* Are all areas of the school accessible to your child? (are adaptations required)
* How will your child be supported outside lesson time?
* How do the school manage difficult behaviour?
* How is bullying dealt with at the school?
* How does the school help children mix and make friends? Eg Buddy systems
* What extra activities does the school provide at lunchtime and after school?
* What will you have to provide for your child?

(uniform/stationery/money for trips, events, extra activities, etc.)

* How does the school communicate with parents?
* How should parents contact school & who should they contact?
* When can parents talk to their child’s teacher/learning support staff etc?
* What arrangements are there for parents to get involved with the school?
* What opportunities are there to meet other parents? (P.T.A., organised

events etc.)

* How is supervision for lunchtime and breaks arranged?
* What activities/equipment is available at breaks inside and outside?
* Are there extra curricular activities after school and lunchtime clubs?

**Publications/references**

**Information leaflets**

At the present time information leaflets are currently being updated.

**Useful websites:**

* [www.blackburn.gov.uk](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/) – Blackburn with Darwen Council – Local Offer
* [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk/) – Special Educational Needs & Disability Guidance
* [www.cafamily.gov.uk](http://www.cafamily.gov.uk/) – Advice and links on medical disorders and syndromes
* [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/) – Recent Ofsted reports
* w[ww.gov.uk](http://www.educational.gov.uk/) – where you can access guidance on:
  + Code of Practice 2014
  + Special Educational Needs & Disability – A guide for Parents
  + Implementing a new 0 to 25 special needs system: advice for local authorities and health partners
  + 16-25 high-needs funding arrangements: additional information
  + Supported internships
  + School Admissions Code & Regulations 2012
  + School Admission Appeals Code 2012
  + School: guide to 0 to 25 SEND Code of Practice
  + Further education: guide to the 0 to 25 SEND Code of Practice
  + Social Care: guide to the 0 to 25 SEND Code of Practice
  + Transition to the new 0 to 25 special educational needs and disability system
  + Home to school travel and transport guidance
  + Mental health and behaviour in schools
  + Supporting pupils at school with medical condition

## Contact -

## Blackburn with Darwen Information,

## Special Education needs & Disability Information, Advice & Support Service,

## SENDIASS, Cathedral Quarter, 45 Railway Road, Blackburn BB1 1EZ

## Tel 01254 503049

## Email: [office@community.org.uk](mailto:office@community.org.uk)

## Website [www.communitycvs.org.uk/sendiass](http://www.communitycvs.org.uk/sendiass)

*It may not always be possible to speak with a member of the team during the times specified, due to outside office appointments etc. However, the service does operate an answer machine service, so that messages may be left at any time*