



SEND newsletter

Special Educational Needs
and Disability

Welcome from Sarah Black - Chair of Milton Keynes Parent Carer Forum (PACAMK)

As we see the start of a new term in Milton Keynes, I am excited and honored to introduce myself as the new chair of the Milton Keynes Parent Carer Forum- [PACAMK](#).



As a parent of a child with special educational needs myself, I understand the joys, struggles, and complexities that come with navigating the SEND landscape and that this can often feel overwhelming. But, you are not alone and I hope that together we can continue to build a strong, supportive community that advocates for the best possible outcomes for our children and young people.

Our forum is built on the strength of our community, and together, we are dedicated to amplifying the voices of parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

I look forward to meeting many of you in person at our forthcoming events and sharing ways you can get involved to make your voice heard, we encourage each of you to engage with us, share your thoughts, and be part of the conversations that shape the services and support our children receive. Your experiences, insights, and support are invaluable. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of SEND children and young people across Milton Keynes and we thank you for your continued support and commitment to our wonderful community of families.

Starting secondary/upper school in September 2025

The Citizens Portal opened on 1 September 2024 for parents and carers to apply online for a secondary school place. The closing date is 31 October 2024 and all applications must be made before the closing date to receive a school place offer on 3 March 2025 (national offer day). This information only applies if you want to apply for your child to start in Year 7 at secondary school in September 2025 (children born between 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014)

Please note – If your child attends a middle school in a neighbouring area and you live in Milton Keynes you can apply here for an upper school place.

Please find further information on the [admissions page on the MKCC website](#).

If your child has a finalised EHCP then you do not have to apply through the Citizen Portal as consultations for placements are made through the SEND Team and emails with information about this process have already been sent to parents in the Summer Term 2024. Please contact the SEND Team if you have not received this information at EHCP@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Where EHC Needs Assessments are in process, please follow the general admissions process, through the Citizen Portal.



Family Centres

We understand that families may need additional help every now and again, or maybe just someone to talk to.

If parents/carers need support please be aware your local Family Centre may be able to help. If you feel you could benefit from additional advice or support please contact your local Family Centre.

[Please find a list of the local Family Centres](#)

Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) guidance

As part of the emotional wellbeing and mental health strategy workstream, the EBSA guidance for schools is being updated with partners from education, health, social care and PACA parents representatives and will be shared at the beginning of January following feedback. Parental views and comments shared during the PACA MK EBSA coffee morning held during the last academic year will be shared in this document. Key updates in the guidance will include references to the new statutory guidance for schools - [working together to improve school attendance](#) and shared experiences from schools and children/young people. Later in the year we shall be looking to review the EBSA guidance for parents/carers. Please find information on the [SEND Local Offer](#).

SEND Support Service

The SEND Team have been reviewing how schools, settings, parents and carers reach out for support from the service. Following this review, we have made some changes to how you can reach us to ensure you receive appropriate and timely communication. We are moving to an improved email only service. Responses from the SEND Team will include both email and telephone call backs.

Please find supportive advice and information on the [SEND Local Offer](#).

To contact the SEND Team for enquiries, please email sendsupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk. This will then be processed by the team. Please allow 5 working days for a response.

SENDIAS

If parents/carers would like support with their child/young person with regards to placement, process around applications for an EHCP/ annual reviews or tribunals, please reach out to SENDIAS as they offer free impartial advice and support.

Contact information for SENDIAS can be found here: [SEND Information, Advice & Support Service | MK SENDIAS](#) they can also be contacted by email contact@mksendias.org.uk

SEND processes

As part of the inclusion SEND strategy workstream, during the summer term we have been working towards documents that detail the ordinarily available provision within our settings and schools. These documents are currently being discussed more widely with setting/schools and we hope for these to be available in November.

EHC Needs Assessment Request

Collaboration between parents/carers and setting/school is essential to support children and young people with SEND. When considering making an application for an EHC needs assessment, we advise that parents/carers first meet with their child's setting/school to discuss concerns. An Education, Health and Care Plan requires information from both school and parents where available to ensure the best support is put in place for the child/young person.

Parents know their children best and have valuable knowledge into their child's strengths and challenges. By working in collaboration with school staff you can ensure that your child's specific needs are clearly understood and the right support put in place without delay. Should a child require provision beyond that available via the graduated approach, this information can then be articulated during an EHC needs assessment process where an assessment is agreed.

Parents have the right to make an EHC needs assessment request. However, if your setting or school are in agreement for a request to be made, MK LA expects that the setting or school would ordinarily make the request as a part of their part of their professional duties. If you are considering making an application for an EHC needs assessment, we first advise that you reach out to your child/young person's school/setting to share your concerns and agree next steps together.

Further information can be found on the [SEND Local Offer](#).

The Children with Disabilities Short Breaks Team

Who are we?

We are a specialist service who support children and young people with disabilities, their families/carers, by providing short breaks known also as respite.

The team is made up of one Manager Mandy Fell and four experienced Short Break Practitioners, Karen Brammer, Sophia Natale, Tracey Collet and Chanee Randall.

All team members aim to empower families to access support independently, but can assist with the following:

- Assessing the needs of your child/ren with disability, creating tailored respite care packages
- Setting up Direct Payments
- Attending EHCP Review Meetings with professionals/parent/carers
- Conversing with professionals on behalf of parent/carers
- Signposting to relevant support services
- Completing internal and external referrals

What is a CwD Short Break/Respite?

A Short break/Respite enables and supports children and young people with a disability to access services to meet need, to have fun, try new activities, gain independence, and make friends. These services may also provide parents and carers with a short break from their caring responsibilities. Local authorities are required under the Children Act 1989 to provide services designed to give breaks for carers of disabled children. [The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) sets out what local authorities should do to meet their duties in relation to the provision of short breaks.

As a part of the Short Breaks team, we will not be asking to meet with you more than twice a year, and usually, this will be at your child's EHCP Review meeting. Of course, should we have contact from any other professional who may be worried about your child, then we will give you a call to discuss or you can call our duty line or email us on the details below

Making a referral?

If a professional has a safeguarding concern about a young person, then a referral needs to be made through Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) will need to be filled in.

However if there are no safeguarding concerns and there is a request for short breaks only then you can call or email us:

CWDshortbreaks@milton-keynes.gov.uk

01908 252042 (Monday to Thursday, 9:30am - 5pm & Friday, 9:30am - 4:30pm)

Referrals can be made by:

- Parents
- Carers
- Professional

Short breaks

The online booking system booking lab is now up and running for parents/carers of children and young people with a finalised EHCP to register and book activities for their child or young person. We are continuing to expand the providers available.

Short break summer activities: We hope that children and young people enjoyed the short breaks summer activities offer, where 10 providers offered sessions from 24 July – 30 August and a total of 1392 places were available to children and young people.

Thank you to the 87 families that completed the summer short breaks family feedback survey. Parents/carers have shared:

- 61% of parents/carers shared the summer short breaks made a real difference to their child or young person.
- 40 % of families rated the selection of activities available as excellent.
- 45% of families found the process of booking activities very simple.

We will continue to work with children, young people, parents, carers and providers to ensure the short breaks offer meets the needs of children and young people in Milton Keynes.



School Travel Support Update

It has been a good start to the new academic year with nearly 1600 children being supported with different forms of school travel support. We have nearly 200 active contracts out on the roads every day, ranging from small cars to double decker

coaches! Over 250 children are being supported with our flexible Mileage or Family Led Travel Budget options and great to see over 150 children using the city's network of public buses with their free pass! The Compliance team are busy out in the field, making sure the passengers are getting a high quality service and visiting all the main school locations to ensure the operations at the start and end of each day run as smoothly as possible.

If you are in need of travel support and you are unsure if you are entitled, please visit our webpage to read about the criteria [here](#) or if you want to apply for school travel support click here for a public bus pass.

Or [here](#) for an alternative transport options application.

Over the summer an FAQ document was drafted to try and simplify some of the aspects of transport. This information will be shared on the [school travel support page](#) soon!

For any questions related to School Travel Support, please contact a member of the team on sts@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Parent SEND Strategy survey

Milton Keynes has a [SEND strategy](#) that runs from 2019 - 2024. A strategy is a document that's created by a partnership to identify what they agree needs to change or happen and how they will get there. Agreeing a strategy allows partnerships to ensure that they are all focusing their energy on the things that are most important to change or improve and help them work more effectively together.

As the SEND strategy ends at the end of this academic year, we are looking ahead to develop our 2025 - 2028 SEND Strategy.

We already have lots of information about our SEND services in Milton Keynes, captured from the inspection outcome, our current strategy, our Parent and Carer Alliance PACA MK, data that we analyse about the work that we do and from the regular feedback that we receive from families, schools and other professionals about services in the area. We'll be using this information to generate our new strategy priorities, but we also want to give you a chance to tell us specifically what you think we should be focusing on.

[Please answer our short survey](#)



Programmes and workshops

Information on our parent and carer programmes can be found on the SEND Local Offer [parent and carer programme page](#).

Autism in teenagers

Our autism in teenagers programme will be running in the autumn term, with dates starting from 10 October - please find further information available on the SEND Local Offer [parent and carer programmes page](#).

To book your place please email us on SENDsupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk stating that you would like to attend the Autism In Teens parent programme.

SENDIAS are running the following workshops:

- [Education Health Care Plan](#) - Tue 22 October, 10am - 11am
- [Annual Review of EHCP](#) – Fri 08 November, 10am - 11am

For more information and booking please visit the [Milton Keynes SEND IAS website](#).

Autism Bedfordshire

Please find the offer from Autism Bedfordshire, there is a cost to attend these sessions. The sessions being offered are:

- [Autism and mental health](#)
 - [Autism and demand avoidance](#)
 - [Autism, puberty and relationships](#)
 - [Autism and engaging effectively with education](#)
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SEND Drop In

[SEND Drop-In session](#) at the Moorlands Family Centre on Thursday 17 October
9:30am - 11am.

Future drop in sessions can be found on the [SEND Local Offer SEND events page!](#)

SEND Drop-In Session at the Moorlands Family Centre



Need help with the special educational needs processes relating to education, health and social care? Find out what support there is for children with additional needs and how our services can support you.

Thursday 17th October 2024	9:30am - 11am	Moorlands Family Centre Beanhill Local Centre, Dodkin, Beanhill, MK6 4LP
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A statutory service offering confidential and impartial information, advice and support. The service supports children, young people (0-25) with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as their parents/carers.

T: 01908-254518 | E: Contact@mksendias.org.uk



Parent Forum - An independent and voluntary group of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs.

T: 01908-257828, 07852526057 | E: pacamk@gmail.com



Carers MK are dedicated to supporting the wellbeing of unpaid family carers in Milton Keynes.

T: 01908-231703 | E: mail@carersmiltonkeynes.org



An opportunity to find out more about the SEND Local Offer website and the SEND Team offer of support.

T: 01908-657825 | E: SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk

World Mental Health Day - 10 October 2024

On [World Mental Health Day](#), let's all come together to talk about mental health and show everyone that mental health matters. Talking about our mental health can

help us cope better with life's ups and downs. So, on World Mental Health Day and beyond it, why not check in with your friends, family, peers, or colleagues?

World Mental Health Day is celebrated every year on 10 October.

We wanted to share the services available to support mental health:

- [MK Wellbeing service](#)
- [MIND Sanctuary](#)
- [Mental health Hub on the Local Offer](#)
- [Zone-INN](#)
- [Every Mind Matters](#)

For more information, advice and support please visit our [mental health and wellbeing hub](#).

SEND Local offer



Have you heard of the SEND Local Offer?

The [Local Offer](#) provides information, support and signposting for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.

What can I find on the Local Offer?

A calendar with information on clubs, activities and events in the local area for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and their families.

A mental health and wellbeing hub, coproduced with our health colleagues

Information about the Short Breaks scheme and how to apply

SEND Support advice and information for parents, carers, schools and settings

Information on EHCPs, including information on processes and how to make an application

A directory of services in and around Milton Keynes

AND MUCH MORE!!!!

For more information, please visit our [Local Offer website](#).

Our SEND Youth Council, continue to design posters to signpost young people to the Local Offer, we are delighted to share an example below:

Your Path Your Way

Discover MK's SEND Support

www.mksendlocaloffer.co.uk



SEND Local Offer

A guide for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It helps you and your family find out about all the support and services available in your area.

"From how to get a better night's sleep to learning budgeting skills, there's advice, support or services that can help you live life to the full!"

live your dream.



Including:

- What's going on in your community
- How to stay active
- Advice on moving from school to college or work
- Support for your mental health
- Information on puberty and relationships

Produced by MK SEND Youth Council

PACA

Thank you to all our Parents and Families that have completed our Annual Survey which will be published



shortly and feedback shared with the SEND Area Partnership.

Please see details of our forthcoming events, come and chat with other parent carers who are walking the same SEND Journey and understand the frustrations and difficulties too. All our Parent Reps have lived experiences themselves and we look forward to seeing and chatting with you!

Online Chat & Coffee, Friday 11th October and 8th November 11am -12pm. To join us online simply email for a link pacamk@gmail.com. You can chat with other parent carers who are walking the same SEND Journey and understand the frustrations and difficulties too. All our Parent Reps have lived experiences themselves and we are looking forward to chatting!

Coffee Mornings - Sat 19 October 2024 10 -12, and Sat 9 November 2024, 10-12

At: The Mead Centre, 67a High St, Newport Pagnell, MK16 8AB

Children and young people are welcome. Sensory room available. No need to book, just drop in!

PACA Steering Group, Tues 15th Oct, 6pm-7.30pm. In person at The Quaker Centre, 1 Oakley Gardens, Milton Keynes MK15 9BH

PACA Steering Group, Wed 13th Nov, 9.30am – 11am, online via Zoom.

New members are always welcome. If you would like to attend please email pacamk@gmail.com We look forward to seeing you!

Keep an eye out for more events to be added shortly <https://pacamk.org/calendar/>

School holiday activities

We are continuing to update our SEND Calendar of events, please do check the calendar at the bottom of the home page on the [SEND Local Offer](#). Please see below some examples of the activities and providers that are available over the half term.

[Thomley have a variety of activities over the October half term, please see their calendar](#)

[MK Gallery Relaxed Screening: RB&O: Wolf Witch Giant Fairy](#)

[Autumn Family Fun Day organised by Xtra Special Families](#)

[Gravity SEND Sessions](#)

[Top Jump SEND Sessions](#)

[SEND Family swimming](#)

[SEND Splash swim sessions](#)

The below sessions are not SEND specific, children and young people with SEND are welcome:

[Cirquise Halloween Spooktacular Circus Show](#) - please contact the provider directly and they will support with advice and support including seating.

[Thrft Farm Halloween Fun](#) - If eligible ticket can include carer, please see website for more details.

By sharing this information, we are not endorsing or quality checking any events or activities, and parent/carer/families remain responsible for their own research. We recommend contacting providers directly.



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We welcome your views on the newsletter and any ideas you have for future editions, please share your views via [email](#).