



# Information, Advice, and Support Service (IASS) for SEND in Northamptonshire

## Choosing a School: Things to Consider When Visiting Schools

Take time to sit down with your child and discuss what is important to you both. Think about the qualities a primary school needs (or how the new secondary school will differ from the existing primary school). Make a list of the things you both find important. There will be differences. When you visit the prospective schools, check how they match against your list.

**These are some of the things that might be important:**

- Older siblings already in the school
- Friends hoping to attend that school
- Location. Will you be able to get your child to your preferred school on time every day? How will you get them there, walking or by bus?
- Sport facilities
- Computers
- School results
- School discipline
- Subject specialism (secondary schools)
- How the school takes care of its pupils (pastoral care)
- ...and many more.

**When visiting the school, consider the following as you go round:**

- The welcome
  - Greeting by staff/pupils/parents
  - Is information provided on how to get around the school/who's who etc.?
- The Organisation of the school day
  - How is the school day organised?
  - Uniform
  - Lunchtime arrangements
- What feeling do you get?
  - Does it feel like a friendly place to learn?
  - Does it feel like your child would be happy?



- Does the school specialise in one or more subject areas? (Secondary)
  - Is your child interested in/good at a specific subject?
  - How does the teaching of a school's specialist subject differ from other subjects or schools?
- Activities at lunchtimes or after school
  - Are there clubs run at lunchtimes or after school?
- Student support
  - How are students looked after in school?
- Resources, e.g. computers
  - Does the school seem well-resourced?

### **What background information can I look at about a school?**

- The school's prospectus (found on their website)
- The school's admissions criteria (found on their website)
- The school's behaviour policy (found on their website)
- The school's latest OFSTED inspection report (via <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>)
- The school's special educational needs policy (found on their website)
- The school's equal opportunities policy (found on their website)
- The DfE's school performance tables (via <https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>)

### **Information, Advice, and Support Service (IASS) for SEND in Northamptonshire**

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