

What you  
need to consider  
when thinking about  
**Education for  
your child with  
additional needs**  
in the  
Vale of Glamorgan



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Your Early Years Journey</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Admissions</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Inclusion Service</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Additional Learning Needs Team</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Schools in the Vale of Glamorgan</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Changes in Education in Wales</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Centre of Excellences also known as Specialist Resource Bases</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Specialist Schools</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Elective Home Education</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Seek out support groups</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Visiting schools</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Meeting the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator / Parent Engagement Officer</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Suggested questions to ask the school</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Measuring progress</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Funding and staff</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Useful contacts</b>	<b>11</b>



## Introduction

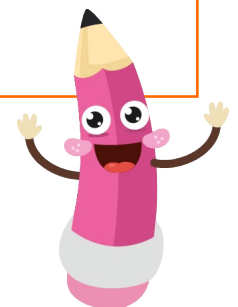
The Index, funded by Families First, connects families of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs to services and support.

We have produced this guide for parents and carers, to provide an overview of what you need to consider when thinking about Education for your child. We have sourced information from a variety of professionals and organisations. This information is correct as at November 2024.

Choosing a school for a child with a disability or additional need can be a very difficult decision. Sometimes it's a natural progression in your child's life, but sometimes, people have moved to a new area, and the previous school is too far away to attend, or sometimes people are unhappy in their current school, and need to move to a new school. We have produced this document to help you as parents and carers.

### Word Bank

<b>ALN</b>	<b>Additional Learning Needs</b>
<b>ALP</b>	<b>Additional Learning Provision</b>
<b>LA</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>
<b>IDP</b>	<b>Individual Development Plan</b>
<b>YYD</b>	<b>Ysgol Y Deri School</b>
<b>ALNCO</b>	<b>Additional Learning Needs Coordinator</b>
<b>Settings</b>	<b>Schools / placements for learning</b>



# Your Early Years Journey

If by the time your child starts school, they already have an emerging additional need, it's likely you have your own strategies at home that may work well for you and your child. We would suggest putting together a **one page profile**, in simple terms a 'getting to know your child' document that school teachers can refer to as regularly as they need. If your child is known to the **Early Years Forum** within the Local Authority, a one page profile is part of their process and will be completed with you and sent to the school ahead of your child's start date.



Teachers are familiar with children presenting all kinds of abilities, needs and behaviours at schools and this can differ between home and settings. The teacher would talk to you about this and would be carefully assessing if your child's needs are more than, or different to others of the same age, requiring ALP, or whether their needs can be met under the school's universal provision. Sometimes it's hard for parents to have meetings with schools when difficulties are present due to the terminology and the challenge of two (or more) environments where the child may present differently. If along your journey you need more support around this, you can always speak to us at The Index. We can make you aware of charities offering support and guidance, to keep you moving through your early years journey.

Please consider **Rainbow Group** for meeting other parents with children with a disability or additional need. You could ask others how they chose a school and how they are being supported.

## Admissions

You can speak to your Local Authority Admissions department to find out about what schools exist in your local area. The Admissions department often get requests to discuss provision for pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) or with a disability.

You can read their 'Parental Guide to Schools Admissions' on their **Webpage**  
**Contact School Admissions: 01446 709844**  
**[admissions@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)**



# Inclusion Service

You can also speak to the Inclusion service within the Local Authority, who can provide advice and support in ensuring your child's needs are identified and they are fully included in their local mainstream school, if possible.

The Service is available to children and young people aged 0-19 on a referral basis.

**Contact the Inclusion Service:**

**01446 709113**

**[inclusionteamreferrals@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:inclusionteamreferrals@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)**



# Additional Learning Needs Team

All children may experience challenges with their learning at some point, and for most children, these difficulties are overcome with support from teachers and home. However, children with ALN are likely to need extra or different help to be able to learn.

Some children may have ALN because of a medical condition or disability, while other children may have ALN without a diagnosis or disability. Children are not considered to have ALN just because their first language is not English or Welsh. A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for ALP.

Settings will support learners under their universal provision, making reasonable adjustments where needed. If a decision is made that your child has ALN, an Individual Development Plan (IDP) will be written.

You can find information and guidance for children and young people who need extra support to learn, by visiting their ALN web pages:

**or contact: [alnenquiries@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:alnenquiries@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)**  
**01446 709180.**



# Schools in the Vale of Glamorgan

Mainstream schools, by law, teach the **Curriculum for Wales**. At a mainstream school, your child will meet children of all backgrounds, some with and some without additional needs.

**Mainstream schools have the following pattern:**

**Reception - Year 6 at primary school and  
Year 7–11 (or Year 7–13) at secondary school.**

They may offer a range of academic subjects and GCSEs. Primary schools are also required to have a policy on Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). Our specialist school (see page 8) develop bespoke curriculum for pupils around their individual needs. What is right for your child will depend on their needs and personality.

## Changes in Education in Wales

**Education is changing in Wales.** From September 2022, a new curriculum began to be taught to those up to Year 6. Year 7 and 8 began using it in 2023, and it will continue to roll out year by year until it includes Year 11 by 2026.

Your child may need **ALP**, which would be detailed in an **Individual Development Plan (IDP)**, as outlined in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act and associated new ALN system. This system has replaced the Special Educational Needs (SEN) system and associated Statements of Special Educational Needs.

You may wish to **watch our video** to learn more about the changes from the old SEN system to the new ALN system recorded with key professionals working on its implementation.

Schools are inspected by **Estyn**, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, at least every six years, looking at performance and prospects for improvement.



# Centre of Excellences also known as Specialist Resource Bases

Local Authority have a range of specialist resource bases that support children with identified ALN, that require specialist ALP.

- **Complex Needs Resource Base** – hosted at Jenner Park Primary School
- **Speech Language and Communication Needs Base** – hosted at Ysgol Y Ddraig
- **Y Bont (Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties)** – hosted at High Street Primary School
- **Physical and Medical Base** – hosted at Palmerston Primary School
- **Physical and Medical Base** – hosted at St Cyres School
- **Hearing support** – hosted at Cogan Primary School
- **Hearing support** – hosted at St Cyres School
- **YYD Hafan** – located at Gladstone Primary School
- **YYD Derw Newydd**
- **YYD - Early Intervention Base (EIB)** – located at St Joseph's R.C Primary School
- **YYD ASC Key Stage 2 provision** - located at St Joseph's R.C Primary School
- **YYD Horizons, Secondary** – located at Ysgol Y Deri Penarth site
- **Welsh Medium Primary Autism Base** – hosted at Ysgol Gwaun Y Nant
- **Autism Resource Base** – hosted at Pencoedtre High School
- **Autism Resource Base** – hosted at Whitmore High School
- **Welsh Medium Secondary Autism Resource Satellite Base** – provided by Ysgol Bro Morgannwg



**Specialist Resource Bases that are under the Ysgol Y Deri (YYD) provision are all overseen by the YYD Head Teacher.**

If it is agreed that your child has ALN that requires attendance at a specialist provision, this maybe suggested by the local authority.

Specialist provision is considered based on evidence from a range of professionals, including school staff. A referral is made by the setting to the local authority for consideration.

- Talk to your school first about how this might work for your child in the first instance.
  - Talk to the Vale of Glamorgan Council ALN department about this.
- Contact: 01446 709180**



# Specialist Schools

Specialist schools often have:

- Specialist staff supporting children with additional learning needs
- Increased bespoke resourced curriculum

**Ysgol Y Deri** caters for a wide and diverse range of differently able pupils.

Ysgol Y Deri helps students achieve and take some of their first steps outside of school, employing the life skills which the school aims to foster in order to equip pupils for life. They work with every child as an individual, ensuring that their educational and therapeutic needs are met so that they can flourish both within the school and when they leave.

## Elective Home Education

You may decide that home schooling would be the best option for you and your child. The financial responsibility for educating your child rests solely on the parent. There are no grants or funds available from the Local Authority (LA) to support home education. The Vale of Glamorgan LA encourages a range of teaching and learning methods, but these can be adapted to suit the individual needs of your child. These might include a variety of independent and group learning styles such as:

- Active learning
- Problem solving and decision-making skills
- Collaborative work in groups
- Teamwork skills

To be aware:

- It may be harder for your child to meet other children and make friends
- Some parents find supporting their child all day tiring and impacts mental health and wellbeing
- Applying to college or university may be harder without a school to help you

See some helpful resources to get you started if this is the right option for you:

- **BBC Bitesize**
- **Super movers active learning (BBC)**
- **online education resources for home learning (GOV.UK)**
- **SEND Home Learning Resource Pack (Twinkl)**
- **Handbook for Home Educators**

You can find further information on our webpage: **Elective Home Education**





## Seek out support groups

Find other parents of children with additional needs through joining support groups. Speak to The Index for information on local groups.

The Index: 0800 587 1014

## Visiting schools

The more contact you have with a school, the more you will know if it's right for your child.

Think about going:

- with your child to see what they think
- without your child so you can focus on talking to teachers
- during school time so you can see how pupils interact

Open days can also be helpful. But they are not the best way to see what everyday life at a school is like.



## Meeting the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) / Family Engagers / Parent Engagement Officer

Under the new ALNET 2018 all teachers are teachers of ALN. Therefore, initial concerns should be discussed with the class teacher.

However, all mainstream schools have an Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCO) previously called the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Some schools have a Parent Engagement Officer too. For more information on their general responsibilities, visit chapter 8 Role of the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator:

You could ask them:

- What is your typical day like?
- What support can you provide for my child?
- What does the school environment look like?
- How will you communicate with me?
- What does the school day schedule look like and is this flexible?



## Suggested questions to ask the school

- What do they think this school does well?
- What is the Relationship Policy of the school?
- How does the school welcome and settle new children with additional needs?
- Do they do anything specially for them or is it the same for all new pupils?
- Do they have any strategies or aids for pupils who struggle to regulate?
- How does the school promote wellbeing?
- Can they describe a typical week at school?
- How much time would pupils spend in the classroom, outdoors?
- How are all staff made aware of my child's needs?
- What strategies does the school use to support children with disabilities and/or Learning Needs?



## Measuring progress

- How do children with additional needs make progress in the school?
- How is progress measured? How often is this shared with parents and how?
- Is more time given to teachers feeding back progress to parents of children with additional needs as opposed to time slotted parents' evenings?
- How does the school communicate with parents on non-academic matters such as relationships, behaviour etc and how often?
- How do parents give feedback to the school?

## Funding and staff

- How does the school provide additional support?
- Does the school commission any outside agencies for support?
- How does the school link with Health and outside agencies? Does the school have any staff with specialist training and qualifications to support my child with ALN?
- How does the school support and educate parents? For example, does the school offer workshops or coffee mornings for parents with children with additional needs and who runs them?

Please note these questions are just suggested to help you. Some will be more appropriate than others depending on your personal circumstances and the school you choose. Please also consider looking at the website of the school(s) you are considering. You will find relevant information there too.

## Contact:

### The Index

Website <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/theindex>

Email [theindex@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:theindex@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

Phone 0800 587 1014



## Useful contacts

### School Admissions:

01446 709844

[admissions@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

### ALN Team:

01446 709180

[alnenquiries@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:alnenquiries@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

### Inclusion Team:

01446 709113

[inclusionteamreferrals@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:inclusionteamreferrals@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

### Families First Advice Line:

0800 0327322

[familiesfirstadvice@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:familiesfirstadvice@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)



## The Index

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/theindex>

[theindex@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:theindex@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

0800 587 1014