

Guidance for Solihull Educational Settings on the provision of adaptations and equipment for children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

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GUIDANCE ON EQUIPMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATIONAL
SETTINGS IN SOLIHULL
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Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to educational settings in Solihull, on the assessment and provision of adaptations and equipment for children and young people with SEND. Educational settings include; private and school based early year's settings (0-5), mainstream schools (5 – 19) and special schools. The provisions of this guidance would not normally apply to pupils in private or independent schools, whereby the provision of such aids would be a matter between the setting and the parent. Nor does it apply to sixth form colleges / FE & HE institutions. This guidance aligns Local Authority (LA) guidance with NHS policy and the SEND Code of Practice (2014), providing clarity about funding responsibilities.

Introduction & Background

Solihull has high aspirations for the achievement of all our children and young people and is committed to ensuring all children and young people thrive, access their full educational entitlement and have the right support, at the right time, to meet their potential.

Some learners will require a range of specialist equipment to facilitate their access and participation in learning activities. Under the Equality Act (2010), all education providers must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to avoid students with disabilities being placed at a 'substantial disadvantage'.

Children and young people with SEND in Solihull will be assessed and have their needs met through the Graduated Approach to support, which is detailed in Solihull's SEND Banding document

<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/children-and-family-support/localoffer/schools-local-offer>

This document provides guidance on the universal, targeted and specialist support, that should be available to all children and young people in early years settings, schools and colleges in Solihull.

It is recognised that the provision of equipment crosses over different sectors; education (schools and LA), health and social care. In response to a lack of clarity in relation to provision of, and funding for, equipment, a multi-agency task and finish group was established in 2019, with the aim of agreeing protocols and practice. The Task and Finish group included contributors from the Specialist Inclusion Support Service (SISS), Merstone Special School, The Specialist Assessment Service (NHS), and the Speech and Language Therapy Service (NHS). The group produced a report which provided detailed information about current processes across education and health in Solihull, gaps in provision and proposed solutions for consideration by Senior Leaders.

This guidance was then developed using the principles of equipment provision into educational settings, as outlined in the Community Equipment Code of Practice – Good Practice Guidance (2011) and has been agreed with Schools Forum and the Schools Strategic Accountability Board, as accepted guidance for practice in Solihull educational settings.

Principles for provision of equipment into educational settings

The purpose of providing equipment is to

- increase or maintain functional independence of children and young people with SEND
- allow for their safe care within an educational setting - for some children equipment is an essential element of postural care, which can become life threatening if children are not positioned correctly
- enable access and participation in learning activities

- support the dignity, communication skills and well-being of the individual Who assesses for, and advises on, adaptations and equipment?

Children and young people are assessed by NHS Therapy Teams and specialists from other disciplines such as specialist teachers. Individual needs are identified through assessment and it is recognised that needs may be met through advice, strategies and provision of equipment.

Some learners may require low level adaptations and reasonable adjustments, whilst others will require specialist equipment. The equipment needs of children and young people at school are not necessarily the same as in their own homes, although care is taken to maintain a consistent approach.

Consideration must be given to the most cost-effective method of addressing the assessed need. Assessing staff will include in their assessment the need for adaptations/ specialist equipment and will liaise with the Educational Setting as appropriate. In the case of specialist equipment e.g. slings, Therapy staff will need to consider compatibility with hoisting equipment available in the Educational Setting.

Guidance in this document should be considered alongside guidance and processes outlined within the Corporate Manual Handling Policy (2020).

Who should provide the equipment?

Educational settings classified as Special School status, are expected to have additional equipment to that of a mainstream school, including basic equipment to assist with toileting, mobile hoist and slings, grab rails etc.

All schools must have an accessibility plan which is regularly reviewed, the LA recommendation would be on an annual basis. It is expected that schools will undertake reasonable adjustments, including the provision of a range of equipment to meet a variety of education needs.

Reasonable adjustments

An education provider has a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to make sure disabled students are not discriminated against. These changes could include:

- changes to physical features, e.g. creating a ramp so that wheel chair users can enter a classroom
- provision of tables and chairs with variations in height, and size and support

- providing extra support and aids

It is expected that small aids to support learning or personal care in school are purchased by the educational setting e.g. reaching aid, long handled shoehorn, pencil grips and cutlery. Information can be provided by Children's NHS Therapy staff about where the recommended items can be purchased/obtained. Information about equipment that is considered a 'reasonable adjustment' is detailed in appendix 1: Examples of Reasonable Adjustments.

Who demonstrates safe and efficient use of equipment?

The NHS therapist and in some cases commissioned specialist teachers will demonstrate the safe and effective use of equipment once. The educational setting will need to share/cascade training, as appropriate, to other staff. More information about safe use of medical device equipment is set out in the instruction manuals of the equipment provider.

In principle, equipment provided by NHS Therapies or LA services is for the named student only and must not be shared between different users. However, some items of equipment are safe to be shared. If specialist equipment funded and provided from the school, or LA, is shared between learners, it must be cleaned and/or decontaminated as determined by the national standards MHRA Guidance (April 2015) on decontamination, manufacturers' instructions. It should be checked with health professionals/ specialist teachers involved, that there are no clinical risks.

Maintenance of Equipment

Where schools fully purchase a piece of equipment, that equipment is deemed to belong to the educational setting and therefore any future maintenance required, would be the responsibility of the educational setting e.g. height adjustable table.

Maintenance of equipment is the responsibility of the school, in liaison with professionals. Schools must ensure that health and safety checks and checks specific to pieces of equipment are carried out e.g. annual servicing and that there is a recording system in place to evidence this.

This equipment is part of the provision for the child and would transfer with them to their next educational setting, if it is still fit for purpose and meeting their needs. In Solihull it has been agreed that where this equipment is less than two years old and has been correctly maintained, the receiving school will pay 50%

of the original cost for this equipment, where the equipment is up to 3 years old 33% of the full price cost and where greater than 3 years old 25%.

General cleaning and decontamination of equipment

It is the educational setting's responsibility to ensure that all types of education owned, or loaned equipment, is kept clean at all times and is only cleaned with products recommended within the manufacturer's instructions.

It is good practice for educational settings to identify a named person to oversee the general maintenance and cleaning of specialist equipment. Their role should be outlined in their Job Description and include:

- Providing and maintaining a clean and appropriate environment, with premises that facilitates the prevention and control of infections.
- Ensuring there are clear arrangements which set out individual responsibilities for cleaning i.e. robust cleaning schedule/ maintenance plan.
- Having infection control guidance on how to clean specialist equipment/medical device and what products to use. The policy/guidance should include:
 - a. How to clean the specialist equipment.
 - b. What products and equipment to use when cleaning.
 - c. Safe storage of and accessibility to cleaning products
 - d. What to do and what products to use, if there is a spillage of blood or body fluids.
 - e. Details of the training that is required for staff.

Insurance and replacement of equipment

The school is responsible for maintaining and servicing equipment purchased by them, in accordance with manufacturer's guidance. Equipment provided on loan by the LA will need to be made accessible for appropriate checks, repairs and maintenance when requested.

All repair and maintenance of LA loaned equipment e.g. radio aids, will be carried out by the LA provider, or authorised sub-contractor where appropriate. SISS, on behalf of the LA, will be responsible for maintaining a list of all loan equipment requiring on-going and regular maintenance.

The LA will provide insurance for equipment that is loaned to an educational setting e.g. radio aids. In the event that there is loss or damage to equipment, whilst it is in, or under, the care of the educational setting, a claim can be made against the LA Insurance Policy.

- The Educational Setting will be responsible for paying the policy excess
- The insurer will indemnify the insured up to a maximum of £1,000 for any one article and any one student, for claims over this amount, the LA will cover the remaining costs
- Insurance cover will only operate whilst the items are in a building, or are in the possession of the student, or a responsible adult
- Cover will not apply if Damage is caused by the use of the equipment by or over a sink, bath, toilet or other domestic liquid receptacle
- The insured is to issue guidance for correct use of such devices to all qualifying students

This is a new arrangement for 2020-21, information will be collated in relation to the nature of damage and losses of equipment, so that the LA can understand the nature of the losses and the costs. Future arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis. An agreement will be signed between LA, school and parents on provision of equipment using the form provided in Appendix

2.

Recycling equipment for children

For children within specialist settings there is a shared store of equipment that physiotherapists can access, this is not used for children in mainstream settings.

Solihull schools have agreed that when children no longer require a piece of equipment, the school will be responsible for cleaning and decontaminating the equipment and storing it for up to two years; this will be dependent on their storage capacity. They will inform the LA Specialist Inclusion Support Service (SISS) Sensory and Physical Impairment Team and Occupational Therapy Service that the equipment is being stored, by completing the form in Appendix 3.

Equipment can then be reissued by health professional recommendation, across the borough within the two year period. Where equipment is reissued, the receiving school will pay a contribution for the equipment, up to 50% of the cost, depending on the age of the equipment.

Risk Management

Schools, have specific legislative responsibilities commonly known as “a duty of care” to students and staff as detailed in the Health & Safety Work Act (1974) sections 2 & 3. This includes equipment which carries particular risks of which schools need to be aware. Equipment risks need to be managed in the context of advice from the Medicines and Health Care products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), compliance with the Provision of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER), the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) and information from suppliers and any other requirement of health and safety at work statutory legislation.

Moving & Handling Assessments

Reference should be made to the Corporate Manual handling Policy (2020). Educational setting staff will need to complete a risk assessment as soon as a student with moving & handling needs moves into the school. The SISS PD team will then provide a moving and handling risk assessment for children requiring moderate assistance or higher. This must be reviewed each time there is any change in health or functional ability.

Educational settings have a responsibility to provide moving and handling training to all staff involved with a child who requires this. Free training is available for schools to access twice a year. This is delivered by SISS for mainstream schools and early years settings and by Reynolds Cross and Merstone Special school trainers, for special school staff.

Special Schools: Key members of special school staff will need to be competent and confident to recommend which moving and handling, school owned, equipment is appropriate for the range of needs within the school setting. Standard equipment provided by the special educational setting should include equipment such as handling belts, slide sheets, hoists and slings in different styles and sizes.

Referrals for additional professional expertise from Moving and Handling Advisors, Physiotherapists, or Occupational Therapists, may be required when none of the equipment in the school meets a student’s needs and alternative, or bespoke, solutions need to be considered.

Processes and funding for adaptations and equipment in an educational setting

Early Years (0 – 4 years)

It is expected that an Early Years setting will provide equipment that is considered a reasonable adjustment.

AREA OF NEED	PROCESS	FUNDING
Audiology	Assessment for audiology equipment is provided by the SISS Hearing Impairment Team	Equipment required for a child aged 2-4 years to access their statutory education entitlement and that is not considered a reasonable adjustment, can be funded through the setting making an application to the Early Years Inclusion Fund Panel – equipment budget https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Children-and-family-support/localoffer/inclusion-fund
Children with Physical Disabilities (PD)	Equipment required for settings is assessed for and recommended by an NHS OT or Physiotherapist	
Children with Visual Impairment (VI)	The SISS Visual Impairment Team will assess whether equipment is required- there is low need for such support within this age group	
AAC process for EY children	SISS and the NHS Speech and Language Therapy Service work closely together to identify equipment needs. Equipment will usually be low tech AAC such as iPADS at home and in settings. Symbols and communication boards may also be introduced.	

SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (5-16yrs)

It is expected that all schools will provide equipment that is considered a reasonable adjustment. Details about the type of equipment this may include, is outlined in Appendix 1.

	PROCESS	FUNDING PROCESS
Audiology	<p>Solihull LA is responsible for providing audiology equipment for Solihull children in an educational setting.</p> <p>Radio Aids are provided by SMBC through the Hearing Impairment specialism of SISS. SISS also provide the Test Boxes required to regularly test equipment.</p> <p>Health provides hearing aids and cochlear implants including associated parts such as tubing, shoes and batteries.</p> <p>SISS work in partnership with audiology clinics and hospitals and liaise with other services</p> <p>Insurance to cover replacement of lost or damaged equipment is provided by the LA. In the event of loss or damage to equipment, schools are responsible for paying the policy excess and the LA any additional amount.</p>	<p>There is an Audiology budget of £12k that is held by SISS.</p> <p>All purchases of Audiology equipment for educational purposes are advised by the SISS Lead for Hearing Impairment and audiology</p> <p>The LA currently provides insurance for lost or damaged equipment. An agreement is signed between LA, school and parents on provision and care of equipment.</p>
Children/ young people with a physical disability	<p>The Community OT and/or Community Physiotherapists make recommendations for any specialist equipment which is then purchased by the setting</p> <p>Children in specialist settings can access</p>	<p>Schools are expected to pay for reasonable adjustments, which could include equipment, up to £6000.</p>

(PD)	<p>equipment from Physiotherapy Stores</p> <p>Birmingham Children’s Hospital (BCH) provides one sling for children requiring a hoist for use at home. It is the expectation that schools and settings are responsible for slings where they are required.</p> <p>Children requiring accessible toilets or access adaptations to the school building are discussed with SMBC and quotes for work prepared</p> <p>This group has advised that the LA has an accessibility plan for the next 10 years to develop fully accessible schools spread across the LA</p>	<p>Children and young people with an EHCP could be provided with additional ‘top up’ funding for equipment, dependent upon the banding level of their EHCP</p> <p>– Team Around the Child (TAC) agree at annual review and submit to START.</p> <p>SMBC have a budget to provide capital funding for adaptations to school buildings. LA schools are required to contribute 20% of overall costs to any individual project.</p> <p>Academies can apply to a funding panel that considers building adaptation requests</p>
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<p>Children/ young people with VI</p>	<p>IPADs and laptops should be provided by schools. Software can be downloaded for free.</p> <p>SISS holds key equipment such as CCTVs (5) and they can be lent out as needed to schools and families.</p> <p>SISS have 3 Perkins Brailers that can be loaned to schools and families – schools are expected to provide the paper for the braille.</p> <p>Solihull/Heartlands Hospital provides low vision</p>	<p>VI equipment beyond that specified can be provided through the SISS audiology and visual impairment budget following recommendation by the SISS specialist QTVI teacher.</p>
	<p>clinics. Magnifiers can be prescribed.</p> <p>SISS work in partnership with Ophthalmology Clinics and hospitals and liaise with other services.</p> <p>Children with a Birmingham GP can access FOCUS low vision clinics.</p>	

<p>AAC process for school age children/ young people</p>	<p>Reasonable adjustments such as switches are available for children in specialist provision</p> <p>IPADs are used in mainstream settings</p> <p>A small bank of resources e.g. switches are available to loan from Health. A loan agreement is in place and schools are responsible for repairs and replacement of lost or damaged equipment</p> <p>High-tech equipment is accessed through referrals to the Access to Communication and Technology (ACT)</p>	<p>Health fund including school training and equipment provision</p>
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ASPECTS OF CURRENT PROCESS REQUIRING ACTION:

Through the working group, there were a number of areas that require development in 2020:

Audiology – Solihull will develop an agreed Audiology Policy in 2020/21

AAC – to develop a shared loan scheme for low tech devices such as switches, which are not routinely provided in mainstream schools. It is dependent upon individual need, but SALT, or SISS (working in partnership) would assess their use, before schools were requested to purchase them.

Children from Out of Borough Attending Solihull schools – agreement to be sought that Solihull schools provide reasonable adjustments and home LA and health provider advises on, and provides, specialist equipment.

Specialist Personal Care Equipment – this includes changing beds, hoists and specialist toilet seats. Currently these are funded by schools and clarification is needed as to whether proportions of this funding should be provided by health.

Post-16 –Equipment funding is linked to funding streams, for example, if a school has a 6th Form, SISS would provide support and equipment. This is different for 6th Form Colleges and FE Colleges who are expected to fund equipment themselves. For any equipment funded by health, at 16yrs, support is moved to adult services. This needs to be agreed and detailed in Policy.

Accessibility of Schools –Some projects for example hygiene rooms are estimated to cost £30,000 and other costs could be higher. The working group felt that there needs to be long term planning to work towards all schools in Solihull becoming accessible.

Appendix 1: Examples of equipment that may be provided in Mainstream Settings

- Prima bath step
- Toilet rails/ infill seats
- Combi-potti chair
- Toilet seat with postural support
- Paediatric commode
- Toilet frame
- Changing plinth/ shower stretcher
- Chair for children with no postural needs (including perching stools with arms and back in a range of heights/widths)
- Chair for children with postural or sensory needs
- Mobile hoist
- Ceiling track hoist
- Slings
- Floor sitter
- Standers, standing aids and slings
- Walkers and Walking aids
- Portable and threshold ramps
- Alternative classroom chairs e.g. chairs with arms and footrests
- Standard stool with arms for science lab
- Height adjustable desks in more than one room
- Table raisers
- Height adjustable cooking facilities and kitchen aids
- Standard PE equipment used to enable differentiation e.g. a variety of sized and weights of balls, balls with bells
- Inclusive PE Games e.g. Boccia

Technology:

- Laptops / Tablets
- Switches to enable physical access to technology, Bluetooth keyboard for IPAD, USB Optical Mouse
- Software e.g. for touch-typing etc.

Hearing Impairment

- Hearing Aid care kits
- Batteries for Soundfield microphones Visual impairment Braille paper
- Large print / accessible dictionaries and thesaurus
- Costs of obtaining PDF format text books from publishers
- Membership fees for Clearvision or RNIB library
- Talking scales, Talking thermometer / tape measure
- Liquid level indicators
- Canes (only if recommended by habilitation specialist)
- Light boxes
- High contrast rulers / protractors
- Heavy lined paper / exercise books / graph paper
- PE equipment –High contrast balls / cones / bibs
- Technology and associated programmes needed to support a child with VI, as recommended by a Qualified Teacher of VI e.g.; Teamviewer to connect hardware to whiteboard, touch typing programme with speech

Appendix 2:

Children's Services and Skills Directorate
 SEND 0-25 Service
 Special Inclusion Support Service
 Sensory and Physical Inclusion Team



Local Authority Equipment Loan Agreement			
Child's Name:	DOB:	CA:	Yr:
School:	Head Teacher:	SENCo	

Arrangements have been made for the following pieces of equipment to be loaned to the school for the use of the named student.

Description of Equipment	Serial Number	Security Number	Value

Equipment continues to be the property Solihull Local Authority: Specialist Inclusion Support Service (SISS) and should be returned to the Service when the child leaves school, or if the child ceases to use the equipment (within a period of 6 months).

The LA is responsible for:

- Maintaining a list of all loan equipment requiring on-going and regular maintenance.
- Making appropriate checks, repairs and maintenance of equipment when required, or requested.
- Insuring the loaned equipment
- In the event of loss or damage to loaned equipment, the LA is responsible for replacing or repairing equipment and any costs incurred that are additional to the Policy excess
- Issuing guidance for the correct use of equipment and devices to all qualifying students and educational settings.

The school is responsible for:

- The maintenance and safe keeping of equipment. School should take reasonable care to keep loaned equipment in good working order and request repairs promptly.
- Ensuring that any Health and Safety Regulations are met – information can be sort from SISS Sensory and Physical Impairment (SPI) Team advisory teachers/audiologist/ audiology technicians. For electrical equipment this will include regular safety checks.
- Enabling equipment provided on loan by the LA to be made accessible for appropriate checks, repairs and maintenance.
- Providing guidance to all staff in the setting, including staff covering lessons, on the correct use of equipment and storage processes in place, which minimise the risk of loss or damage to LA loaned equipment.

- Ensuring that, should equipment be allowed to be taken home by the child and family, this is ONLY with the agreement of the Manager of the team who has loaned the equipment.
- Paying the LA Insurance Policy excess, in the event of a claim being made, if equipment is stolen, lost or damaged beyond economic repair. NOTE: Insurance cover will only operate whilst the items are in a building, or are in the possession of the student, or a responsible adult. Cover will not apply if damage is caused by the use of the equipment by or over a sink, bath, toilet or other domestic liquid receptacle.

In the event of any breakdowns, the SPI Team can be contacted on 0121 704 6690 and the procedures be discussed.

If a child is transferring school, any equipment to be used should be handed over to the SISS advisory teacher/audiologist technician, so that it can form part of the transition process and the new Headteacher/SENCO can sign for the equipment accordingly.

I agree to accept the terms of this agreement:

Signed	Date	Role
		Headteacher
		SENCo
		Parent/Guardian
		Advisor Teacher

Appendix 3 Form for Equipment Stored by an Educational Setting



**SCHOOL AND SETTINGS SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT STORAGE
LA NOTIFICATION FORM**

FOR COMPLETION WHEN A SCHOOL/SETTING IS STORING EQUIPMENT NO LONGER
REQUIRED BY A PUPIL IN ATTENDANCE

School/setting:		Equipment:	
Date in use from		Final date of use	
Model		Serial No	
Supplied By:			

Purchase Cost: (File invoice for evidence for insurance purposes or selling on to another setting etc.)

Advice provided by and contact number (include instruction manuals if any):

Full maintenance details enclosed: YES / NO

If NO please detail reasons and how as a school you can provide guarantee that equipment has been maintained and serviced as required:

General advice for this specific piece of equipment (i.e. who, frequency and how to maintain/service):

Once completed, please retain a copy for your records and return to SISS at
SEND0-25businesssupport@solihull.gov.uk