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Information for parents – Special educational arrangements

Dear parents

Children and young people with a disability or serious developmental challenges have access to special educational arrangements. These arrangements are available to people with a mental health disability, a physical, visual, hearing or speech disability, as well as to those with autistic spectrum disorders, serious learning disabilities and attention disorders. Here we aim to inform you about the purpose of special educational arrangements and the rights you have.

Who needs special educational arrangements?

Special educational arrangements are available to children/young people whose progress cannot be adequately supported by the special needs provision in mainstream schools.

The first step is to carry out an assessment of the child/young person's current level. The parents, possibly accompanied by their child, the teacher, the special needs teacher, the therapist as well as the early years special needs teacher, discuss the situation and, if special educational arrangements are being considered, request an assessment by the educational psychology services. This assessment should indicate whether special educational arrangements are advisable.

If required, the educational psychology services bring in further specialists (eg medical specialists). In a further parent-school meeting, the evaluation report from the educational psychology services is discussed and a proposal is submitted to the school governing board.

The school governing board decides the need for special educational arrangements and what form these will take on the basis of the evaluation by the educational psychology services and their consultation with the parents. How far a child/young person with special educational needs can be integrated in mainstream schooling is assessed and decided by the school governing board, taking the individual circumstances into account. This is based on the evaluation by the educational psychology services, further expert opinion where relevant as well as the views of both the mainstream school and the parents of the child/young person.

Options

Depending on the needs of the child/young person, special educational arrangements can be made in an inclusive setting in mainstream school, in a special school or in a residential school:

Inclusive special needs education (in mainstream school)

Special educational arrangements are made to meet each student's needs. The following support can be provided in addition to the lessons taught by the class teacher:

- Team teaching
- Individual or small group intervention
- Therapy sessions



- Socio-educational support
- Learning support assistants
- Teachers and parents receive specialist support and advice that focuses on specific disabilities

If required, the child/young person has access to specialist support outside the classroom - with an additional learning support professional if necessary - if provided by the local authority.

Special school

The child/young person attends lessons in a class at special school and therapy sessions if required. Socio-educational support is provided before and after school as well as during the lunch break subject to the school's opening hours.

If necessary, further support can be provided outside the classroom in the special school or in the area where the child/young person lives. If the child/young person cannot make their own way to school, suitable transport is arranged.

Residential school

The child/young person attends lessons in a class at residential school and therapy sessions if required. The socio-educational support in the residential school is suited to the needs of the child/young person (if required, up to 365 days a year). If the child/young person cannot make their own way to school, suitable transport is arranged.

Financing

The local authority or the county covers all costs incurred for special schooling, therapies, socio-educational support (within the scope of the opening times of the special school) and transport.

Parents cover the following:

- Financial contributions towards the cost of meals if the child/young person has meals at school (see guidance on financial contributions from parents here: www.vsa.zh.ch → Schulrecht & Finanzen → Schulrecht → Empfehlungen, Reglemente, Verfügungen)
- The costs of before- or after-school support programmes as part of the inclusive special needs education, subject to the rates charged by your local authority.
- The costs of support programmes that take place outside the special school's opening hours, subject to the rates charged by your local authority.
- The costs of additional expenses subject to arrangements made with the residential school
 - After-school support programmes as part of the inclusive special needs education, subject to the rates charged by your local authority.
 - Support programmes that take place outside the special school's opening hours, subject to the rates charged by your local authority
 - Additional expenses subject to arrangements made with the residential school



Parents' rights

At least once a year parent-teacher talks are held to evaluate a child's current level. These talks provide parents with the opportunity to play an active role in their child's developmental planning (setting of broad developmental goals) and in assessing the provisions for special education.

At the start of special educational arrangements, parents are informed about

- Their rights and opportunities for taking an active role
- The details of the arrangements for inclusive special needs education or about the plan the special school has for school, care and therapy
- The authorities responsible (School governing board or responsible organisation and the Zurich Education Authority, Volksschulamt (Elementary school), Sektor Sonderpädagogisches (Special needs education service), Telephone 043 259 22 91).

An appeal against any decisions by the school governing board can be made to your district councillor.

Information / Advice

A list of special schools can be found at: www.vsa.zh.ch → Schulstufen & Schulen → Schulen → Sonderschulen

Framework for inclusive special needs education can be found at: www.vsa.zh.ch → Schulbetrieb & Unterricht → Sonderpädagogisches → Sonderschulung → integrierte Sonderschulung

Legal services for people with a disability:

- Pro Infirmis, Beratungsstelle für Eltern (advisory service for parents), Tel. 044 299 44 11, www.proinfirmis.ch
- Procap Rechtsdienst für Menschen mit Handicap, Tel. 062 206 88 77, www.procap.ch

Organisations for particular disabilities:

The VSA manages an overview of organisations that cater for specific disabilities. The overview provides information on the type of disability/type of school, region and contact details (You can find the overview here: www.vsa.zh.ch → Schulbetrieb & Unterricht → Sonderpädagogisches → Sonderschulung → Berufswahl- und Lebensvorbereitung von Jugendlichen in der Sonderschulung → Beratung und Unterstützung)