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## **Funding and Application Advice**

Mary Hare School



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# 1 Introduction

This is a guide to help families if you would like your child to attend Mary Hare School. This guide was written following changes in the legislation with the introduction of the Children & Families Act 2014 and the new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice.

We will assist you through the process should you accept a place with us.

This guide does not replace legal advice and should be used as a guide only.

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## 2 Open Days and Events

Every year Mary Hare organises several events for families to come and find out more about Mary Hare School and how to secure a place.

- Secondary School Open Day
- Year 7 Entry Information Day
- Primary School Open Day



**Please check our website for more details and to book a place at one of these days: [www.maryhare.org.uk/admissions/events-open-days](http://www.maryhare.org.uk/admissions/events-open-days)**



Or Scan this QR code  
for more information

You are welcome to book a visit to our school at any time, to come and find out more about what we can offer and see our school in practice. We accept children from Reception through to Sixth Form. Please book your visit through our website and our Admission Manager will be happy to arrange this for you.

If, after visiting, you feel we might be the right place for your child then we would recommend an assessment. This assessment takes place over three days and your child can board during that time or come as a day pupil. During the assessment period your child will have the opportunity to really experience life at Mary Hare. It will also give us an opportunity to assess whether we can meet your child's educational needs.

**Note: See Section 3 on how to book your child onto an assessment and further information about our assessment process.**

## 3 Mary Hare Entrance Assessments

### How deaf are the children that attend Mary Hare School?

*Approximately*

**56%** are profoundly deaf

**30%** are severely deaf

**14%** are moderately deaf

**Approximately 45% of pupils at Mary Hare School are conventionally aided and 55% have cochlear implants.**



Once you have booked your assessment, we will ask your child to attend an assessment that usually takes place over a three-day visit. During this time, they will attend lessons and experience after-school life. If your child is applying for Early Years, Sixth Form, or coming for a Year 7 Assessment, this will take place as a one-day visit. Please discuss your child's individual needs and length of stay with the Admissions Manager when booking your assessment. Before any assessment goes ahead, it is essential that the team have all the required paperwork so that we are fully prepared, and modifications are made to ensure a successful visit.

If BSL is your first language, we can support you in completing the paperwork. Our BSL interpreter can translate the information if requested.

Online assessments are also available if requested. Please note that we cannot admit young people into Years 11 or 13, due to missed vital teaching needed to complete their examinations.

**Note: It may be possible for students to repeat their first year of GCSEs (Year 10) or A Levels (Year 12) but cannot start mid-way through them.**

### Primary Assessments

During the assessment period, we will be considering how your child responds in a range of situations:

- Within the classroom
- Small group discussions
- Whole school activities
- Social play situations
- A one-to-one session
- After-school activities



We may carry out some formal assessments, such as:

- Language Assessments
- Reading (comprehension) and Reading (vocabulary)
- Maths
- Non-verbal reasoning
- English writing

It is important you provide information of any recent Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) assessments and your child's last school reports, along with a copy of the Education, Health & Care Plan, Audiology report and any other supporting documents to ensure the appropriate accommodations are made in the assessment. We will write to you two weeks following the assessment with our decision.

**Note: Younger years' assessments are tailored specifically to your child's age and needs. They vary in length according to which assessments are age appropriate and accessible.**

## Secondary Assessments

### Year 7

- We assess all children for a Year 7 place during the Autumn term of Year 6.
- Your child must be in Year 6 on the date of the assessment to be able to attend.
- We will aim to write to you with our decision by the October half term so that you can give your Local Authority your first choice by 31st October.
- The day starts at 9.30am and finishes at 3.30pm. Parents will have the opportunity to meet with the Principal, Assistant Principals, Head of SaLT and SENDCo. Parents are then free to go, returning at approximately 3.30pm to collect their child.
- Your Local Authority has until the 15th February to name a transition school on your child's Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).

### Year 12

- We hold several Sixth Form assessment days throughout the year.
- We will write to you two weeks following the assessment with our decision.
- The day starts at 9.30am and finishes at 3.30pm. Parents will have the opportunity to meet with the Principal, Assistant Principals, Head of SaLT and SENDCo. Parents are then free to go, returning at approximately 3.30pm to collect their child.
- Your Local Authority has a deadline of the 31st March to name a Sixth Form transition school on their Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).

These are recommended dates to ensure you have the maximum time to approach your Local Authority before they name a school on your child's transitional EHCP. However, we can run assessment days for Year 7 and 12 throughout the year.

## Other Years

If your child is already at school but would like to transfer to Mary Hare School to complete their education, they will need to come for an assessment visit. Once assessed, a request during your child's Annual Review can be made to your Local Authority for a change of placement.

## Is Mary Hare a suitable choice for your child?

Your child must demonstrate:

- An ability to follow the National Curriculum.
- That they will benefit from our approach – our philosophy is in immersing pupils in the English language, developing listening skills and spoken language. Do not be discouraged if your child uses British Sign Language as their first language, attended a school following a total communication approach or had sign support in the past. All they need to demonstrate is the potential to learn through speaking, lipreading and listening. Do not assume that your child will not be able to make that transition. With the right support and motivations many deaf children have made a successful transition.
- Potential – we recognise that your child might be delayed in some areas; that is not a problem for us if we see the potential for them to develop.
- That they are able to wear their amplification system to fully access our curriculum.

If your child has additional needs over and above their deafness, the SENDCo will meet you as a family on the first day of assessment, if not before, to discuss what additional provision may be required. We work with physio and occupational therapists, Qualified Teachers of Multi-Sensory Impairment (QTMSI), Qualified Teachers of Visual Impairment (QTVI) and habilitation therapists. For more information, see the SEN report on our website.

We will use the following measures to build a profile of your child and their strengths and areas of need.

### Activities that will help us to answer these questions are:

- 1 Small group discussion
- 2 Interview with a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD)
- 3 Speech, language, and communication assessments
- 4 Written language task
- 5 Reading ability
- 6 Numeracy assessments
- 7 Non-verbal reasoning





## Boarding: Yes or No?

The primary school offers weekly boarding only, four nights at school and three nights at home. The secondary school offers boarding 7 days a week. Around 90% of our secondary students are boarders. Some students prefer to return home for the weekend, however there are weekend activities available for those that stay.

There is flexibility to accommodate different families' dynamics and needs. Please discuss any specific arrangements with the Admissions Manager.

### Book an assessment for your child

You can access a form to register on our website

**[www.maryhare.org.uk/booking-form-visit-or-entrance-assessment-booking](http://www.maryhare.org.uk/booking-form-visit-or-entrance-assessment-booking)**



Or scan this QR code  
to access the form

If you cannot access the online form please contact our Admissions Manager by email at [admissions@maryhare.org.uk](mailto:admissions@maryhare.org.uk) or by telephone on 01635 244233 / 07570 901101

**We will confirm your child's assessment day once we receive your booking form.**



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## 4 If your child already has an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

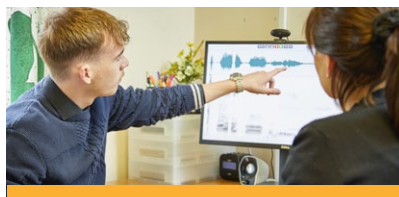
Following an assessment and offer of placement, you will need to notify your caseworker that you have had an offer for your child to attend Mary Hare School, and that you wish to accept it and name Mary Hare School on their EHCP as is your parental preference. **You can then request an emergency Annual Review.**

In the Annual Review you will need to make a formal request to change your child's school placement. It is important that you are completely familiar with the provision your Local Authority offers. The Local Offer is the Local Authority's publication of all the services available to families of children with SEN (including schools). This must include services in the Local Authority's area and those outside the area that are appropriate. You can check these on the relevant Local Authority's website.

**Note: If your child is entering a transition year into Reception, Year 7 or Year 12, your Local Authority should contact you to name your preference of school.**

At the review meeting you will need to state why you want to change provision for your child. You will need to be familiar with what provision is available locally and have a clear argument for why you want the Local Authority to consider a non-maintained school geared towards educating deaf children. It is important that you are able to match needs to provision. Be very clear about what your child needs and identify why the current school is not meeting those needs. Things to consider: academic progress, peer group, Teacher of the Deaf and Speech and Language Therapy support, acoustics and audiology equipment. We can provide assessment results should this be required.

If your Local Authority refuses to name your choice of school for your child on the final EHCP, then you have the '**right to appeal**' and take your case to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. It is important to note that when you get the final EHCP from your Local Authority you have **two months from the date of the letter** in which to lodge an appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. It is therefore crucial that, as soon as you receive the response from your Local Authority you notify us and your representatives so that we can help you with the next steps.





## Entry – Year 7

The process of selecting a suitable secondary school for your child usually starts at the end of Year 5, when you will have a 'Transitional Annual Review' with your Local Authority representative and the Primary School your child is attending.

In this meeting it is reasonable to state what research you are going to undertake to help you select the most suitable secondary school for your child that will best meet their needs. You can start by asking your Local Authority for information published in their 'Local Offer'. The Local Offer is the Local Authority's publication of all the services available to families of children with SEN (including schools). This must include services in the Local Authority's area and those outside the area that are appropriate. It is a good idea to say you will be looking at both local mainstream schools and some non-maintained schools geared towards educating deaf children. It is helpful to visit all the schools being considered so that you can compare provisions and include this information as a rationale for your chosen school.

**Note: According to SEND 2014 regulations, your Local Authority must issue you with a final EHCP and name a Secondary School by 15th February.**

### ***When should you name your preferred school?***

By the end of October of Year 6 of your child's education, it is appropriate to be in a position, usually during the Annual Review, to state your preferred choice of school to your Local Authority representative. This gives the Local Authority time to consider your preference versus other schools that can meet your child's need.

If your Local Authority refuses to name your choice of school for your child, then you have the '**right to appeal**' and take your case to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. It is therefore crucial that you contact Mary Hare School as soon as you receive a response from your Local Authority, so we can advise you on the next steps and who can help you lodge an appeal.

We will be willing to support you as witnesses at tribunal, but we cannot be your representatives.

- The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) may be able to support you with impartial help and advice – Freephone Helpline: 0808 800 8880.
- The Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA) has a wealth of independent legally based advice on their website. [www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)
- You can also contact your local SENDIASS service or a private solicitor to help you navigate the process and advise you.

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## 5 If your child does NOT have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)

### ***What is an Education, Health & Care Plan?***

An Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) is a legal document which describes a child or young person's (aged up to 25) special educational needs, the support they need and the outcomes they would like to achieve. The legal entitlement only has worth, however, if the statement is written in accordance with the law and provides detailed information about the child's difficulties and the help required to support them.

### ***Who can request an Educational, Health & Care Needs Assessment?***

- The parents of the child aged 0 – 16 years
- The child if they are aged 16 – 25 years
- A parent can make a request on behalf of a young person aged 16 – 25 if they are unable to
- A person acting on behalf of a school or post-16 institution
- A paediatrician
- A social worker

### ***Who needs an EHCP?***

EHCPs are for those children (ages 0 – 16) or young people (ages 16 – 19) or adults (ages 19 – 25) with special educational needs and disabilities who require support beyond that which an educational setting can provide at SEN support. A child who has educational needs may also have additional health and social care needs and those can be included in the plan so long as they relate to education. You cannot have a freestanding EHCP for health or social care reasons alone.

### ***Who do you make the request to?***

Write to the head person at your Local Authority, usually called the Chief Education Officer or the Director of Education. You can find out who the head person is by calling your Local Authority and asking them (see template letter in Section 8).

Your Local Authority may also have an option to submit your request online, so please do check as this differs between authorities.

### ***How long will it take?***

The Local Authority must inform you of their decision to assess within six weeks of receiving the request.



### **Remember:**

- 1 If sending your request in writing, send the letter by recorded delivery so you have proof of the date of delivery
- 2 If sending your request in online, ensure you have a confirmation message/ email stating your request has been received
- 3 Keep a copy of your letter
- 4 Make a note of the six weeks deadline for the Local Authority's reply
- 5 Call the Local Authority if you don't get a reply after six weeks

If an EHC Needs Assessment is agreed, then the Local Authority must notify:

- The child's parent or the young person, (and must inform them of their right to express written or oral views and submit evidence to the Local Authority)
- The health service (the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) or NHS England where it has responsibility for a child or young person)
- Local Authority Officers responsible for social care for children or young people with SEN
- Where a child attends an early years setting, the manager of that setting
- Where a child or young person is registered at a school, the head teacher (or equivalent)

The new SEND Code of Practice puts great emphasis on the point that Local Authorities must consult your child and you throughout the process of assessment and production of an EHCP (See draft letter in Section 8 to request a meeting to review the draft EHCP).

The whole process of the EHC Needs Assessment and EHCP development (from the date when an assessment is requested until the final EHCP is issued) must take no longer than 20 weeks. You must be given 15 calendar days to consider and provide views on a draft EHCP and ask for a particular school or other institution to be named on it.

There is also the option to self-fund your child's placement with us. This may be an option for those families not residing currently in the UK, or those that do not wish to go through the option of funding with your Local Authority. Finance options can be discussed in further detail with the Admissions Manager.

## **Why are some EHC Needs Assessments rejected?**

The local authority may decide not to give additional support to young people for various reasons, of which the most common are:

- Needs can be met by the Special Educational Needs support in school
- A lack of awareness of the special educational needs of the individual
- A lack of Special Educational Needs support at their current school
- No report from an educational psychologist
- The child is not deemed to be far enough behind their fellow students
- The Local Authority enforce their policy provision matrix – e.g. attainment not below the 2nd percentile and therefore not delayed enough for an EHCP. Such a blanket policy is likely to be illegal.

Once in Tribunal, these arguments tend to fall apart as they are based on Local Authority policy rather than the letter of the law. This means that, based on that case, there is no legal basis to deny an assessment. The Tribunal will decide the facts of the case including looking at the child's individual needs and decide based on the law. The Tribunal ignores Local Authority policy.

If your Local Authority refuses to issue a statutory assessment for your child, then you have the right to appeal and take your case to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. It is important to note that when you get the final written decision from your Local Authority you have two months (from the date of the letter) in which to lodge an appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. We strongly recommend that you action this as soon as possible.

It is therefore crucial that you contact Mary Hare School as soon as you receive the response from your Local Authority. You may need help to lodge your appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. The NDCS, IPSEA and your local SENDIASS service will be able to support you at this stage. Please note we will support you in any way we can, but we are limited in what is appropriate for us to do with regards to the EHC Needs Assessment.



### Remember:

- 1 Always ask in writing and send the letter by recorded delivery so you have proof of the date of delivery
- 2 Keep a copy of your letter
- 3 Make a note of the two weeks deadline for the Local Authority's reply
- 4 Ring the Local Authority if you don't get a reply after two weeks

### ***Parental Preference – Your right in choosing a school***

You have the right to say which school you wish your child to attend. This is called 'Parental Preference'. The Local Authority should provide you details of suitable schools in your area, as well as non-maintained special schools in the UK, that meet the criteria listed in the following sections of your child's EHCP:

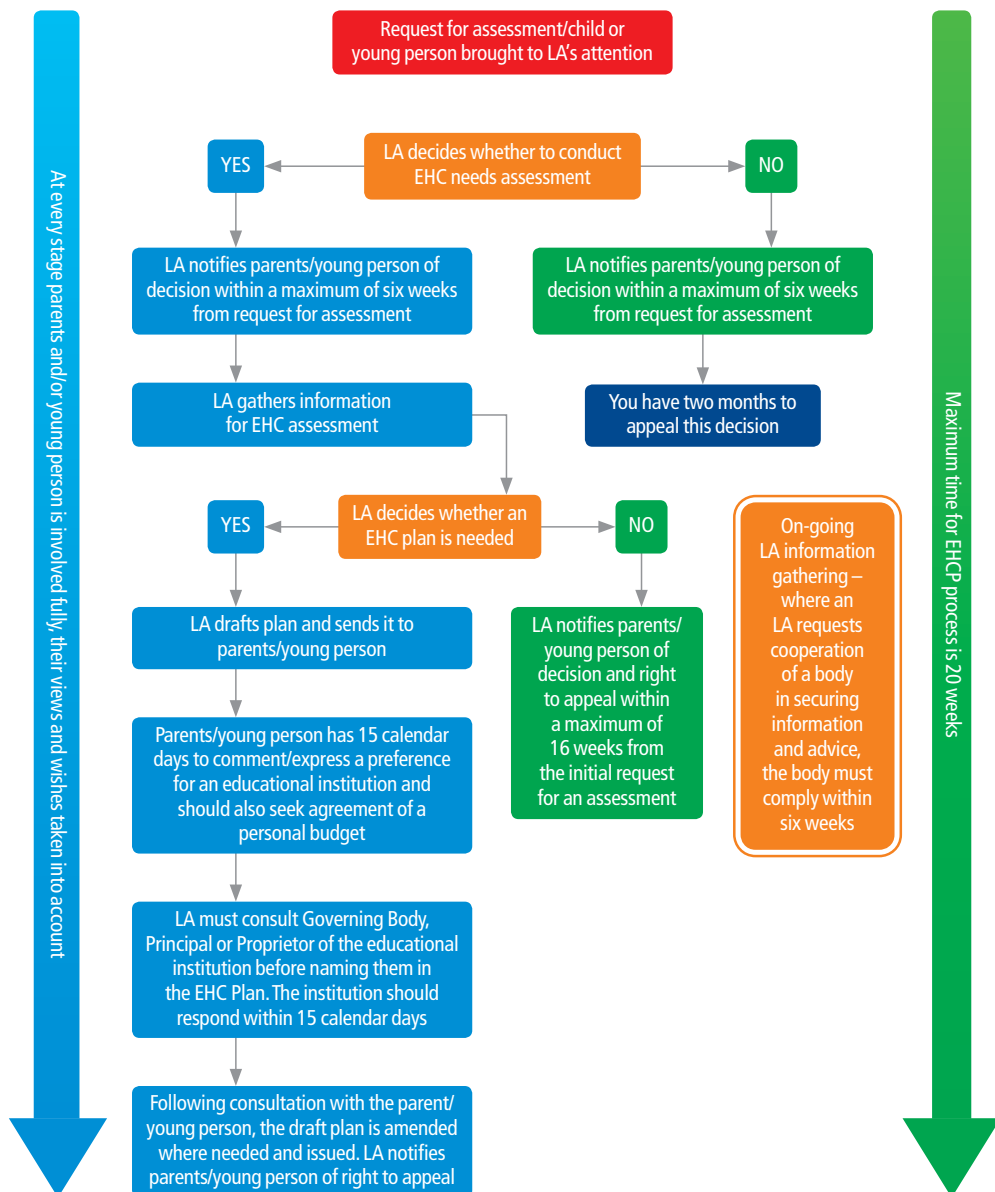
- **B** The child or young person's special education needs
- **E** The outcomes sought for the child or young person
- **F** The special educational provision required by the child or young person

This will be within your Local Authority's Local Offer (usually published on their website). It is therefore important to make sure these parts are a true reflection of what your child needs. If you do not agree with the school or schools selected by the Local Authority and they refuse to name your choice of school in your child's finalised EHCP, in section I (Placement), then you have the right to appeal and take the case to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.



## If the Local Authority (LA) decides not to conduct an EHC Needs Assessment

If the Local Authority decides not to conduct an EHC Needs Assessment, it must inform you of your right to appeal that decision and the time limit for doing so. They must inform you of this decision within a maximum of 16 weeks from the request for the assessment.



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## 6 How to Appeal a Decision

If the Local Authority:

- Names a school which you do not consider appropriate
- Does not grant you a statutory assessment (EHC Needs Assessment)
- The EHCP does not truly reflect your child's difficulties or give them the provision they need

...then you can appeal to a tribunal. There are two routes to tribunal, depending on what you are appealing.

### **1 If you are appealing the decision by your Local Authority not to grant an EHC Needs Assessment, you will have to approach a mediation adviser.**

#### **What is the difference between a mediation advisor and disagreement resolution services?**

A mediation advisor must be independent of a Local Authority and should have received mediation training. Disagreement resolution services cover more than just disagreements about EHC assessments and plans. Disagreement resolution services may be suggested to parents, but you are not obliged to use them. Local Authorities must tell you what mediation advisors are available to you. You will probably receive advice from your mediation advisor via the telephone (but they must make available other communication methods as appropriate).

**You need a certificate from your mediation advisor before you can register your appeal.** Where you decide not to go to full mediation following contact with the mediation adviser, the adviser will issue your certificate within three days after you tell them that you do not want to go to mediation. The certificate will enable you to lodge your appeal. Either within two months of the original decision you received from your Local Authority, or within one month of receiving the certificate (whichever is the later).

### **2 If you are appealing about the name of the school in the EHCP, you do not need to enter mediation, however you do require a mediation certificate to be issued. It is strongly advised to appeal sections B, F & I of the EHCP. Once a mediation certificate has been issued, you can submit your appeal within one month of the date of issue.**

#### **Section B: The child or young person's special educational needs (SEN)**

Section B is the section which must accurately describe each one of the special educational needs of your child, based on:

- Cognition and learning ability
- Communication and interaction skills
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and physical disabilities



## **Section F: the special educational provisions required to meet their SEN**

Section F details your child's support (provision) at school. This provision must be specific, detailed, and quantified.

For example:

*'Mohamed will receive 32.5 hours per week of individual TA support from a TA with at least 20 hours training from the LA complex needs team, on his condition. In the event that the nominated TA changes, any new TA will receive the same training within six weeks or before starting work with Mohamed. The TA will work under the direction of the class teacher who will design and supervise a scheme of work following the advice from the advisory teacher who will visit Mohamed on a half termly basis for at least two hours during which she will review Mohamed's progress, advise on the revised teaching plan, train the plan and record her findings.'*

## **Section I: The name of the school or institution to be attended by the child or young person, and the type of institution**

Section I names the school, college, or educational facility that your child attends. During the draft stage, this should be left blank. The final EHCP will name the school that has been decided by your Local Authority. You can later appeal which school is named for your child to attend. A school or educational facility must admit the student if they are named here.

You must register your appeal with the tribunal within two months of the date of the notice (letter) you receive from your Local Authority with their decision or EHCP, or within one month of your mediation certificate (whichever is later). You will also be supported by Mary Hare School and your NDCS, SENDIASS, IPSEA or private representative if you have one. We will help you to prepare to put your case before the independent tribunal panel, who can order the Local Authority to amend the statement, if they find in your favour.

While it is not without its challenges, the tribunal is designed to be kept as informal as possible, considering the seriousness of its role. Your child does not need to attend unless you wish them to. If you have any concerns about a tribunal, please contact us.

**On the British Justice website in the Special Educational Needs & Disability section (under 'Appeals') you will find a parent's guide called 'How to appeal a SEN decision' with subtitled video clips explaining the tribunal process (you can order a sign supported version if you require).**

[www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/](http://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/)

[first-tier-tribunal-special-educational-needs-and-disability](http://www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-special-educational-needs-and-disability)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/)

[how-to-appeal-a-special-educational-needs-sen-decision-sen37](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-appeal-a-special-educational-needs-sen-decision-sen37)



## 7 Getting an Independent Assessment

An Independent Assessment can make all the difference in securing a place at Mary Hare School. Quite often parents do not have up to date information about their child's ability and progress.

We recommend that you get an Independent Multidisciplinary Assessment that includes all the following areas:

- Speech and Language
- Educational Psychology
- Audiology

Sometimes families choose to miss one of these components to either save money or because they think it is not relevant to their child. However, in our experience, each component can be vital.

Please allow enough time to commission such a report and do not wait until you know you have a problem. It will be useful to have this information even if you eventually decide not to pursue a place at Mary Hare School for your child.

**Please note that if you do have to appeal to a tribunal, the Independent Multidisciplinary Assessment should have been carried out within the previous 12 months.**

### ***Where can you commission an Independent Multidisciplinary Assessment?***

Please note that there are some charitable grants available to support families on low incomes. The Burwood Centre will be able to provide further information about financial support.



#### **The Burwood Centre**

Arlington Manor  
Snelsmore Common  
Newbury  
Berkshire RG14 3BH



#### **Email**

info@burwoodcentre.org

#### **Tel/minicom**

01635 573820

#### **Website**

www.burwoodcentre.org

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## 8 Sample Templates

### Sample letter to request an EHC Needs Assessment

{Insert head person's name –  
Chief Educational Officer or Director of Education}

{Insert Local Authority Address}

{Insert date}

Dear {Insert head person's name}

Re: {Insert child's full name and date of birth} –

Request for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment

I am writing as the parent of the above child to request an assessment of their special educational needs under the 2014 Children & Families Act. {Insert child's name} attends {insert child's current school}.

I believe that {Insert child's name} special educational needs are as follows:

{Insert information}

I believe my child has a special educational need and they require 'additional or different provision' to their same-age peers.

I understand that you are required by law to reply to this request within 6 weeks and that if you refuse I will be able to appeal to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal.

Yours sincerely

{sign here}

{Insert your name}



## Sample letter to request a meeting to discuss a proposed EHCP

The SEND Code of Practice 9.77 states: The Local Authority must send the draft EHCP to the child's parents and give them 15 days to make representation. During this period, the Local Authority **MUST** make its officers available for a meeting with the parent or young person.

{Insert head person's name –  
Chief Educational Officer or Director of Education}

{Insert Local Authority Address}

{Insert date}

Dear {Insert head person's name}

Re: {Insert child's full name and date of birth} –

Request for a meeting to discuss a proposed draft amended  
Education, Health and Care Plan.

I am writing as the parent of the above child to acknowledge  
receipt of the proposed Education, Health and Care Plan and to  
ask for a meeting with the Responsible Officer to discuss it.

Please note that the school we wish to be named on the EHCP  
when finalised is {insert name of preferred school}.

Yours sincerely

{sign here}

{Insert your name}



*Securing the future of  
deaf children and young people*

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   @MaryHareSchool