

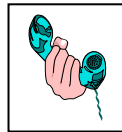
Checklist for Visiting Schools

Choosing a school is a big step and can be a worrying time for parents and indeed, pupils. Allow yourself time to think, visit and plan your application – don't add to the worry by leaving it late.

Schools are used to having visitors and won't be surprised by any of your questions, nor will they be offended if you decide not to choose their school. If in doubt - request a second visit.

Before arranging a visit:

- Ask the school for their School prospectus and read it.
- Carefully think about and jot down questions that you would like to ask.
- When you would like to visit? (it is best to visit during school hours)
- Will you be taking your child?
- Do you want someone else to accompany you?
- Is the school easy to get to? (think about transport arrangements)
- Would you like to talk to the SENCO?
- Do you want a guided tour?
- Will you be able to meet staff who would be involved with your child?
- Will you be able to talk to other parents who have children at the school?



During the visit:

- Use your senses, is it welcoming-do staff and pupils seem happy?
- Check walls and noticeboards- is pupils' work on display?
- Is there a hum of activity- or just noise?

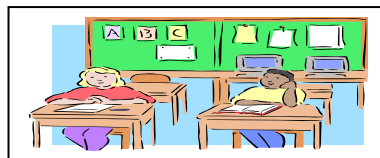
After the visit:

Discuss your thoughts and feelings about the school with someone else:

- Did you feel welcomed at the school?
- Did the children seem happy, friendly and helpful?
- Do you think your child would be happy at that school?
- Did the school answer all your questions?
- Have you got any other questions that you would like to ask the school?
- Consider the admission criteria and transport arrangements.

Sample questions:

- What is the general structure & timetable for the school day?
- How many children would be in your child's class/ lessons?
- How many members of staff would be in your child's class?
- How do the school support children with Special Educational Needs?
- Do the school know anything about your child's difficulty or disability?
- Have the school ever taught any other children with similar difficulties?
- Are all areas of the school accessible to your child? (are adaptations required)
- How will your child be supported outside lesson time?
- How do the school manage difficult behaviour?
- How is bullying dealt with at the school?
- How does the school help children mix and make friends? Eg Buddy systems
- What extra activities does the school provide at lunchtime and after school?
- What will you have to provide for your child? (uniform/stationery/money for trips, events, extra activities, etc.)
- How does the school communicate with parents?
- How should parents contact school & Who should they contact?
- When can parents talk to their child's teacher/learning support staff etc?
- What arrangements are there for parents to get involved with the school?
- What opportunities are there to meet other parents? (P.T.A., organised events, etc.)



PLEASE REMEMBER :-The suggestions in this leaflet are intended to help you, but they may not all be relevant to your situation and there may be other questions you need to ask.



PUBLICATIONS

This leaflet is one of a range of information leaflets specifically produced for parents. As they are written for parents, please feel free to comment on the range and content and let us know if you think they can be improved in any way.

Parent Partnership also publishes a newsletter, which is sent out to all schools in Wigan each term. It is also distributed to support groups, other agencies and individual parents by request. With over 1600 copies circulated, it is a very useful way of exchanging information, publicising forthcoming events for parents and also advertising various support groups.

If you wish to be included on the mailing list, or indeed have any comments to make please contact the service at the address below. We are keen to hear your views on any aspect of Special Educational Needs.

This leaflet is from a range of information produced by Wigan Education Department and Wigan Parent Partnership Service. Topics include: - Statutory Assessment, Statementing: Disagreement Resolution Service, Tribunals: Annual Review & Transition: etc.

If you would like to access more information, please feel free to contact:
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or via e-mail sheila.robinson@wiganmbc.gov.uk
Further information may also be available from the Access & Inclusion Team - Tel: 01942 486132



If you need information in another format eg larger print, Braille, audio, or in a language other than English, please contact us on: Tel: 01942 486131



Children and Young People's Service in conjunction with



*Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to provide a Parent Partnership Service.
Wigan PPS is funded by Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council and managed by
Children & Young People's Services*

**FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE
OR MAY HAVE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

A Checklist for Visiting schools



**Choosing a school may often seem a difficult task,
Hopefully some of the suggestions included in this
leaflet may help you in getting the information
required to help you reach a decision.**