Some frequently asked questions

What do I do if the school has no money to meet my child's needs?

By law schools must meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs. According to the SEN Code of Practice schools must use their best endeavours to see that pupils with Special Educational Needs receive the help their learning calls for. Each school receives money to enable it to do this.

If you are not satisfied that your child is receiving the help he or she needs you should discuss it with the school's SENCO or head teacher. Southend Parent Partnership Service (http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200071/parental_support/358/parent_partnership/1) may well be able to help in these discussions.

The local authority has the power to intervene if the provision made for a pupil is not sufficient to meet their needs.

How do I get a Statement of Special Educational Need for my child?

According to the SEN Code of Practice schools should adopt a graduated approach to matching Special Education provision to a child's needs. In a high proportion of cases a child’s needs are met through procedures and resources specified through the Stages of School Action and School Action Plus. In general, the local authority will agree to write a Statement only when presented with evidence that significant problems remain despite applying the procedures specified under School Action and School Action Plus.

Parents, or an agency such as Social Services or the Health Authority, can request that a child be assessed as to whether a Statement is necessary by applying directly to the local authority’s SEN Assessment Team. All requests for Statutory Assessment are considered by the local authority’s SEN Panel.

What can I do if I disagree with my child's school or the local authority?

If you have a disagreement with your child's school you should always speak to the head teacher in the first instance. If this does not resolve the issue or you have a
complaint regarding the head teacher you should contact the chair of governors. These procedures will be laid out in the school’s formal complaints procedure.

Southend Parent Partnership Service (http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200071/parental_support/358/parent_partnership/1) offers parents independent advice and may be able to assist in resolving complaints against schools the local authority. Alternatively the SEN Disagreement Resolution Service can mediate between parents and schools or the local authority.

If you disagree with the contents of a Statement or a decision not to write one, an appeal can be made to the First–tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

The Local Government Ombudsman (http://www.lgo.org.uk/) will also deal with complaints concerning local government.