

One minute guide

Families of Schools and Family Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs)



Date: June 2025 Version: 1

What are Families of Schools?

Mainstream schools in Nottinghamshire are grouped within Families of Schools. This is usually done on a geographical basis i.e. the secondary school and its feeder primary schools. However, some Families of Schools are made up of schools from different areas across Nottinghamshire due to being faith-based schools.

The Family of Schools structure is used to facilitate peer support, access to training and resources, arrange the allocation of funding to children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and share good practice.

The role of Nottinghamshire's Family SENCO

Each Family of Schools has a "Family SENCO". This role is non-statutory but has been developed in Nottinghamshire and identified as good practice by the Department for Education. A Family SENCO may be an experienced SENCO in one of the schools in the Family, who jointly holds these responsibilities alongside those of their SENCO role. Others may be employed in the Family SENCO role for one or more Families of Schools. The local authority actively supports the development of the role by:

- Sharing information via email and through the East Midlands Education Support Service website.
- Giving part of the High Needs Block funding directly to Families of Schools to manage.
- Providing a means of collating data.
- Providing benchmark data for use as comparison between Families of Schools.
- Representing SENCOs views in National forums.

Funding

Some funding decisions relating to support for children and young people with SEND are given to local school partnerships, including Families of Schools and School and Behaviour Partnerships. One element allocated directly to each Family of schools is Additional Family Need funding (AFN). The Family SENCO works with the SENCOs to review requests and distribute this funding within that Family of Schools. In addition, mainstream schools can access top-up funding for children with the highest level of need via the centralised High Level Needs (HLN) budget.

Families of Schools will also receive Family Needs Funding (FNF). This is to support activities such as:

- Special educational needs training and development in schools.
- Management and co-ordination time for the Family SENCO (equivalent to 23 days a year).
- Providing support for pupils with high level needs in mainstream settings during transition.

Responsibilities of the Family SENCO

- To be the point of contact for the local authority in sharing information across the Family of Schools.
- Contribute to district moderation events.
- Coordinate Family of Schools moderation to enable the allocation of funds.
- Ensure that there is moderation of requests made to the High Level Needs panel, as well as of any emergency requests, and check the list sent from panel prior to each meeting.
- Ensure that the local authority is provided with funding and monitoring data.
- Liaise with their District SENCO, in a supporting role, in carrying out an annual SEND Funding review.
- Attend termly District SENCO Network events.
- Ensure that the Family of Schools are aware that they must update and publish a SEND policy and an annual special educational needs information report in accordance with SEND reforms.
- Represent the views of the SENCOs and Headteachers in their Family of Schools at district events.
- Lead/facilitate the termly primary and secondary springboard meetings for their Family of Schools.
- Provide information to enable the District SENCO to track the features of High Needs funding in their Family of Schools.

Additional responsibilities

Some Families of Schools may use their combined funds to employ their Family SENCOs for more than 23 days to enable them to complete additional tasks that are relevant for their Families.

For example:

- Contribute to special education needs network events.
- Coordinate the identification of Family SEND training needs.
- Visit the Family of Schools to promote and share best practice for the use of resources etc.

Further information

Family SENCOs are supported within their roles by District SENCOs. Further information about the role of the District SENCO can be found in a separate one-minute guide.

Key contacts

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www.notts.icb.nhs.uk

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