

## Choosing secondary education

### Choices

#### Do staff need to know about stammering in my chosen school?

It is always ideal when your child stammers if staff are knowledgeable about stammering. However, this will not be the case in most schools.

#### Is my choice of school limited when my child stammers?

## NO

**You do not need to restrict your choice of school in any way when your child stammers, as all teachers (and home educators) can learn the very simple strategies to support your child. Speech and language therapists often provide information or training for staff and specific strategies of support for class teachers are available at [BSA:Education](#).**

#### Personal preferences

Parents may wish to consider options in secondary schools that reflect their views on ethics, faith, same sex parenting and selection by ability and/or gender to name but a few of the possible personal concerns that they may have. Consequently, they may also wish to choose a secondary school in an area where appropriate further or higher education facilities are located as well. Some parents may wish to explore home schooling.

State-maintained schools - are all committed to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and follow the guidance of the [Inclusion Development Plan](#).

In England and Wales, over 90 per cent of children are educated in state-maintained schools, the majority referred to as mainstream or 'ordinary' schools. Secondary schools are usually mixed comprehensive high schools that are 11-16 or 11-18 for pupils of all abilities, some are single sex schools. In some areas there may be middle schools too that usually cater for pupils of 8-12 or 9-13 years. In areas where there are middle schools there is provision for pupils to enter a secondary school at 12 or 13, depending on the local arrangements.

#### **Selective state schools**

A minority of local authorities provide 11-18 grammar schools where entry is decided by a selection test, such as an examination at 11 Plus.

Independent schools have a range of provision and are found in every locality. Fees will vary considerably.

#### Home-schooling

Home education is when a child is educated at home rather than at school. It's perfectly legal in England to educate your child at home and you don't need to be a qualified teacher to do so.

#### **General factors to take into account when considering your options in secondary education**

##### **Curriculum**

The National Curriculum is taught in all state-maintained schools although in the academies there is room for manoeuvre with this. Some schools may receive some additional resources to deliver a

specialist subject such as Technology to a high level.

Independent schools set their own curriculum, frequently in many areas modelling the state curriculum as there is much agreement on a pupil's core needs.

However, what is often unique to each school is the manner in which the pupils are taught, and your views on this as it will be relevant to the needs of your child who stammers. You may have a view on whether your child responds best to particular approaches, such as mixed ability teaching where pupils of all abilities are taught in the same subject group, or setting where pupils are taught in a subject group selected by ability. Most secondary schools follow a combination of these approaches to different degrees.

Home educators are not obliged to follow the National Curriculum but must of course be able to supervise their child's learning throughout the day.

### **Ethos and values**

Some state and independent schools will have a religious ethos that supports your beliefs, although a number of them now are able to accept children from different faiths or no faith at all, as long as parents are supportive of the school's basic values. Other schools will have a strong values base which is inclusive and secular.

State secondaries are usually mixed but usually in every local authority area there are a number offering single sex education in both faith and secular schools.

Single sex provision is available in the independent sector in both faith and secular schools. There is debate about the merits of educating pupils separately in this way.

### **Extended school care**

You may prefer a school with 'wrap around care' available to you if you are working and some schools in both the state and private sectors do offer this in breakfast clubs and early evening supervision, but it is not always available in every area. Most schools however, will offer some form of out of school activity: Sports, Musical opportunities for example and this may influence you. Some schools in both the state-maintained and independent sectors also offer a boarding facility.

### **Presence of siblings, children known to your child**

**We know that children who stammer often need to feel very supported as they cope with transition and change and knowing other children is very helpful for them, particularly when they first start a new school. Some parents of children who stammer have said that this is the most important factor for them, as it helped their child to cope with the changes that some children who stammer find difficult and worrying.**

### **Size and atmosphere**

**Some parents have told the BSA that they were more comfortable with a choice of a smaller secondary school as they believed that their child was more likely to be intimidated by a huge campus with many children. Other BSA parents have found that a well run secondary school which is bigger can be just as supportive as a smaller one provided the organisation supports good pastoral care. You need to judge this system and the 'atmosphere' when you go round, before making a decision.**

### **Travel and costs**

How easy is it to get to the school and how much does this matter to you? Do you want your child to be able to walk there, use a bus service or do you plan to drive your child to fit in with your commitments to

your other children's childcare, or your work? **Remember that when your child stammers he may be more sensitive to the demands of a hectic schedule and this might be a factor that influences you when choosing a school.**

The cost of bus fares or school fees if applicable need to be factored in.