

## 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.

## Further information

### 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 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.

The best source of information to meet specific personal preferences will be found in most cases from local authorities, faith and community groups and voluntary organisations that reflect that interest, and local schools. Parents may also find information from these sites helpful.

### Single sex education

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

Single sex provision is available in the independent sector in both faith and secular schools.

[Schoolsfinder](#) (provides profiles for all schools in England).

[Edubase](#) (provides lists of all types of state schools in your selected area(s)).

[National Middle Schools Forum \(NMSF\)](#) lists these schools by name and local authority and has information for members.

[Directgov: local authorities](#) (This has contact details of all local authorities and you can access lists of state schools from their web sites).

[Independent Schools Directory UK & Independent Schools Council](#) (provide information about independent schools).

### Home schooling

[Education Otherwise](#) (This has information about home education and can put you in touch with home educating parents).

### Personal preferences

#### Faith schools

[Teachernet: faith schools](#) (provides a general picture of the number and type of faith schools with useful links to other sites).

#### Gay friendly schools

[DIVA-Gay friendly schools](#) (provides information about local authorities and some individual schools

which are considered to be supportive of the children of gay and lesbian parents).

[Passing Twice](#) (provides an informal network for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people who stammer. Members can pass on and receive information that may be helpful when making educational choices).

## Parents' online forums

[Directgov-Parents](#) (an informative government site with comprehensive information).

[Gingerbread](#) (offers information and support to single parents).

[Mumsnet-Education](#) & [Netmums](#) (provide information for parents on all matters and contain useful reports from parents of their own personal experiences of all types of school and often of named providers. Parents can also ask questions about educational provision as they choose and other members frequently give useful information in their replies).

## State-maintained schools

### Planning ahead for secondary school choices

Once you have read [options in secondary education](#) you can start to make a list of possible individual schools. It is advisable to start thinking about this at least 18 months before your child would start. Remember that even if your child is placed in a primary school that feeds the local secondary school admissions criteria apply so admission is not guaranteed. However, if you already have made your decision, **and can be certain that your child will be accepted in the school of your choice**, you can conveniently skip this whole section.

**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, 90 per cent of children are educated in state-maintained schools, the majority referred to as mainstream or 'ordinary' schools. State schools have a lot in common; they are all funded by the state, follow the [National Curriculum](#) and are regularly inspected by the [Office for Standards in Education \(OFSTED\)](#).

### Main categories of state-maintained secondary schools

**Only read this if you are concerned about what body has responsibility for running the secondary school, you may just be interested in how the school delivers and can skip this section.**

- **Community schools** - the commonest state school run by the local authority (LA), which employs the staff, owns the school land and buildings and has primary responsibility for deciding on pupil admission criteria.
- **Foundation** - the Governing Body owns the land, employs staff and is the admission authority with the LA. Usually there is some LA representation on the Governing Body.
- **Voluntary aided** - owned by a voluntary body, usually religious, who appoint most of the governors. LA funded except for building and repair costs, which are shared between the Governing Body, LA and government. The Governing Body is the admission authority - with consultation again from the LA - and may prioritise practising members of the relevant religion.
- **Voluntary-controlled** - mainly religious or 'faith' schools, but run by the LA. The land and buildings are often owned by a charitable foundation, but the LA employs the staff and has primary responsibility for admission arrangements.
- **Community and foundation special schools** - cater for children with specific more complex special educational needs, such as physical or learning difficulties.

**Other state schools** - in some cases these schools are allowed to select a small proportion of their pupils according to aptitude. This is constantly being reviewed so parents should always check the individual admission arrangements before making an application.

- **Academies** - These are independent state schools sometimes established by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups in partnership with central government and local authorities. Primary schools may now apply for academy status although most academies are currently all-ability secondary. Academy status can give individual schools freedom from the local authority and for Headteachers almost complete control over budgets, the curriculum, hiring staff, term times and the length of school day. Extra funding is provided to support the conversion to an academy. The first wave of new academies from 2010 will be drawn from schools rated as outstanding by [OFSTED](#).
- **Specialist schools** - though they follow the National Curriculum, specialist schools focus on a particular subject area. Examples include Sports, Technology or Visual Arts.
- **City Technology Colleges** - These are independently managed, non-fee-paying schools in urban areas for pupils of all abilities aged 11 to 18. They are geared towards Science, Technology and the world of work, offering a range of vocational qualifications as well as GCSEs and A levels.
- **'Free' schools** are schools which once the legislation is in place may be set up by parents and teachers.

**Maintained boarding schools** - offer free tuition, but charge fees for board and lodging

**Types of state schools - parents have a wide choice of school**

**Mixed comprehensive high schools** - are 11-16 or 11-18 for pupils of all abilities. Occasionally they are single sex.

**Grammar schools** - in some areas. These are mixed or single sex, 11-18, where entry is decided by academic ability. There may be an entry examination at 11 plus.

**Middle schools** - some local authorities also provide these. They 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.

**All-age mixed inclusive schools** - less commonly found. There are now some based around the same campus.

**Faith schools** - are mostly run in the same way as other state schools. However, their faith status may be reflected in their religious education curriculum, admissions criteria and staffing policies.

**When can your child start attending a state secondary school?**

**Year 7: in September of the school year in which your child reaches the age of 12.**

**Where can I find out more about state education?**

[Directgov: local authorities](#) (This has contact details of all local authorities and you can access lists of state schools from their web sites).

[Edubase](#) (provides lists of all types of state schools in your selected area(s)).

[Schoolsfinder](#) (provides profiles for all schools in England).

[State boarding schools' association](#) (gives information about these).

[Teachernet: faith schools](#) (provides a general picture of the number and type of faith schools with useful

links to other sites).

## Independent schools

### Independent schools

Independent schools are not required to teach the National Curriculum and have their own admissions systems and individual school policies. The policy on special educational needs and bullying may be of most concern to the parent of a child who stammers. All these schools have to be regularly monitored for standards either by [OFSTED](#) or the [Independent Schools Inspectorate](#).

A number of schools admit children into their secondary department at 11, but most of the major public schools have entry at 13. Most schools are day schools but some also offer boarding facilities on a day or termly basis. While many are mixed, some are single sex. Some schools will have an affiliation to a religious faith.

The range of facilities and fees payable are variable according to the school selected. Fees of £2-4,000 per term for independent day schools in different areas are typical while those regarded as outstanding public schools are much more expensive, at £25,00 per annum or more for boarding pupils. Criteria for admission will vary according to the popularity of the school but are likely to include at least an interview and some basic tests, and these may be quite formal in the most prestigious schools. Parents have described some of these tests as very demanding and many parents have provided tutors for their child to practise on entry papers beforehand. **When your child stammers, it is important to consider how demands on him may affect his speech and general levels of anxiety. If you are considering this option, it may be helpful to talk to the therapist.**

**If you choose a private school you will find that practice in supporting children with speech, language and communication needs will vary between schools. It is very important to consider what support your selected school can provide for your child who stammers and to what degree a speech and language therapist can be involved in this. Staff need to demonstrate empathy with your child's needs and be prepared to use the classroom strategies available from [BSA:Education](#) and from this resource: [Information about Stammering](#).**

Parents living in areas where the state secondary school of their choice is likely to be over-subscribed sometimes opt to apply for an independent school place at the same time as making one for the state school. As independent schools themselves may be over-subscribed it is advisable to apply for more than one. This may involve your child in a number of entry tests.

**However, when you child stammers it is important to make the whole process as stress-free as possible and your therapist may be able to advise on this. The [BSA:Helpline](#) can offer information and support.**

### Where can I find out more about independent education?

[Independent Schools Directory UK](#) & [Independent Schools Council](#) (provide information about independent schools and give useful links to follow up).

[Schoolsfinder](#) (provides profiles for all schools in England).

## Home schooling

### What is home education?

Home education is when a child is educated at home rather than at school. It's perfectly legal in the UK to educate your child at home and you don't need to be a qualified teacher to do so. Children who are home educated receive all their education from their parents or carers, sometimes with the help of

outside tutors. If you decide to home educate your child you don't have to follow formal rules about how you teach or when you teach.

In some ways home education is a continuation of the teaching that every child receives from parents or carers. But from the age of 5 education is a legal requirement, so if you have chosen to home educate after this age you will be used to planning extremely carefully. You must have been able to offer supervision by an adult all day. Parents need to take advice from the local authority and any professionals involved with the child, such as the speech and language therapist, and ensure that the child himself supports the decision.

### **Why do people choose home education?**

Some people know from an early stage that they want to home educate their child. They may have philosophical or religious reasons for this. Or they may have been home educated themselves or raised in situations in which education wasn't focused on a traditional school environment - their parents may have travelled a lot.

In other cases a child may start off in school but later be taken out and educated at home. The reasons for this vary - a child may have special needs or be unhappy at school in some way. Sometimes parents feel that the methods of teaching in school aren't right for their child and that they can provide a better education for them at home. Other parents sometimes home educate because they can't get a place for their child in a school of their choice.

Some of these reasons may apply to you if your child stammers and you have become disillusioned by what you have heard about or experienced of the school system. **Take care though to make the decision in the interests of your child and not because of your own experience of formal education.** Schools have changed and improved over the years and teachers have more sympathetic attitudes to the individual needs of children, so if you are considering home schooling do take the time to really investigate what is available in formal schooling before you make the decision to home school. It may be helpful to discuss your choice with your child's therapist. The [BSA:Helpline](#) can offer information and support.

### **What laws apply to home education?**

If you home educate your child you don't need to follow the National Curriculum or take SATs or other national tests. But you are required by law to make sure your child receives full-time education that's suited to their age, ability and aptitude. Parents in England are now required to register with their local council annually if they intend to home school their child. They also have to demonstrate that they are providing a suitable education for their child. In Scotland, home educating families are already visited once a year by their local authority and this practice is developing in England.

### **Where can I find out more about home education?**

If you're interested in home education and are new to it a good first step is to talk to other parents who do it. Many home educating families keep in touch with each other so that they can swap ideas about learning at home and so that their children can socialise. It is also important to contact your local authority to discuss your intentions at least 18 months before your child would start secondary education and it would be advisable to take advice from your child's therapist as well.

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## **Summary**

## 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](#).**

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