



Phoenix Community College Online

Quick-Start Guide: Homeschooling GCSEs for SEN Pupils

Dear parent, Welcome to Phoenix Community College's Quick Start Guide for Home-schooling SEN Pupils for GCSEs. Here is a simple, parent-friendly starter guide to help you begin your SEN child's GCSE journey at home — **without overwhelm**.

1. Start With Your Child's Needs (Not the Curriculum)

Ask yourself:

- How long can they focus at one time?
- What are their strengths?
- What triggers stress or shutdowns?
- What is their preferred learning style? (visual, hands-on, audio, etc.)

👉 SEN homeschooling is about **fitting education around the child**, not the other way around.

2. Choose Only the Subjects They Need or Can Manage

Most SEN pupils take **3–6 GCSEs**, not 8–10.

Essential for most pathways:

- ✓ English Language
- ✓ Maths

Common SEN-friendly subjects:

- ✓ Combined Science (easier than triple)
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ Religious Studies
- ✓ Business
- ✓ Sociology / Psychology (if they enjoy reading)

Avoid unless you have a supportive exam centre:

- ✗ Art
- ✗ Drama
- ✗ Music
- ✗ Design/Tech

✗ PE

(because of coursework/practical requirements)

3. Choose an Exam Board and Download the Specification

Pick from:

- AQA
- Edexcel
- OCR
- Eduqas

Then download the **specification** → this is your roadmap.

Highlight the topics and work through them slowly.

4. Find an Exam Centre (Early!)

Contact local schools or private exam centres and ask:

- “Do you accept SEN private candidates?”
- “Do you support Exam Access Arrangements?”
- “Can my child have breaks/quiet room/a laptop?”

Book by **December–January** for exams the following summer.

5. Apply for Exam Access Arrangements (EAAs)

These help level the playing field and may include:

- Extra time (25–50%)
- Rest breaks
- Laptop use
- Reader
- Scribe
- Prompt
- Separate room

You'll need basic evidence (diagnosis, psychologist report, or ongoing history).

The exam centre handles the application — so book them **early**.

6. Create a Simple SEN-Friendly Study Plan

Keep it light and flexible.

Example Week (3–4 subjects)

- **Mon:** Maths (20–30 mins)
- **Tue:** English (20 mins)
- **Wed:** Science video + notes (30 mins)
- **Thu:** Tutoring session or revision
- **Fri:** Project, life skills, or therapy

Daily tip:

⌚ **Use short sessions** (10–25 minutes) with **movement or sensory breaks**.

7. Use SEN-Friendly Resources

Best free resources:

- BBC Bitesize
- Seneca Learning
- YouTube (FreeScienceLessons, Primrose Kitten, Mr Bruff)
- Oak National Academy

Tools that help:

- Speech-to-text
- Coloured overlays
- Audio textbooks
- Mind mapping apps
- Fidget tools
- Timers (Pomodoro method)

Focus on multisensory learning: watch → discuss → do → review.

8. Build Emotional Safety First

SEN learners need to feel safe before they can learn.

Try:

- ✓ Predictable routines
- ✓ Calm environment
- ✓ Visual schedules
- ✓ Gentle instructions
- ✓ Praise effort, not speed
- ✓ Low-pressure days when needed

Avoid:

- ✗ Nagging
- ✗ Long sessions
- ✗ Strict deadlines
- ✗ Comparing them to peers

9. Track Progress Without Stress

Use small, low-pressure checks:

- 5-question quizzes
- One page of a past paper
- Verbal answers
- Topic checklists
- Monthly review together

Celebrate tiny wins.

10. Make Exam Season SEN-Friendly

Before exams:

- Visit exam centre
- Practise using access arrangements
- Prepare sensory tools (ear defenders, chewable necklace, stress ball)
- Make a visual plan for exam day

During exams:

- Use rest breaks
- Ask for quiet/separate room
- Bring calming items (if allowed)

After exams:

- Decompress fully
- No pressure to discuss mistakes

11. Plan for Life After GCSEs

SEN pupils have many pathways:

- A-levels
- Functional Skills
- BTECs
- T-levels
- Apprenticeships
- Level 1–3 college courses
- Online learning

Colleges often offer **excellent SEN support**, especially compared to school.

Quick Checklist for Parents

Getting Started

- Identify child's strengths/needs
- Choose subjects
- Pick exam boards
- Gather resources

Logistics

- Find exam centre
- Apply for access arrangements
- Schedule light weekly plan

Ongoing

- Use short sessions
- Adjust according to mental health
- Track progress monthly

Exam Year

- Practise with past papers
- Book exams early
- Support emotional wellbeing

Enrol with Phoenix Community College as a Home-schooled SEN student:

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Visit us: www.phoenixcommunitycollege.co.uk