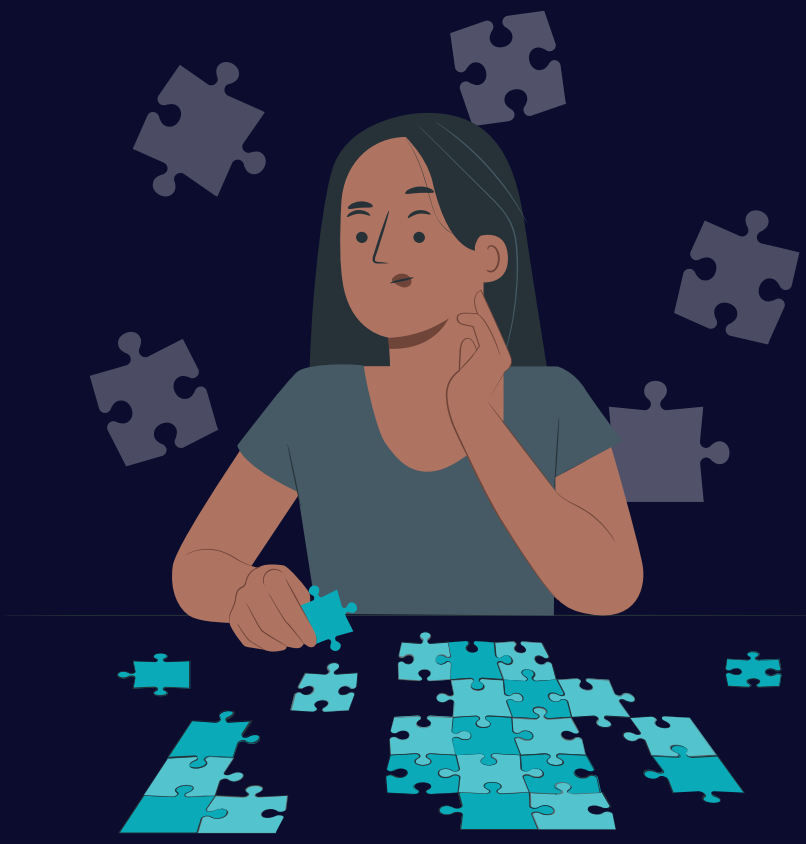
VenturEd Solutions™

GUIDE

MIS Switch Guide

A guide to switching MIS and choosing one that works for your SEND school



Introduction

According to the Department for Education (DfE), choosing the right **Management Information System (MIS)** is crucial for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of schools in the UK. An MIS not only streamlines administrative operations, but also fosters a data-driven approach to decision-making, offering insights and efficiencies that can significantly improve a school's performance.

Given the critical role of Management Information Systems, it is crucial for decision-makers in schools to choose an MIS that fits their needs. This MIS switch guide discusses in-depth the importance of selecting the right MIS and provides guidance on how to make a switch if your current MIS does not meet your needs.

The guide focuses on supporting **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)** schools, recognising a current gap between many available solutions and the requirements of SEND specialist education providers.



The critical role of a robust MIS in school success



The Department for Education (DfE) outlines several advantages of a well-designed Management Information System (MIS), some of which include:

Enhancing administrative efficiency

An MIS should automate routine administrative processes such as attendance tracking, timetable scheduling, and report generation. This automation reduces the workload on staff, allowing them to focus more on teaching and student support.

Facilitating data-driven decision making

With a comprehensive MIS, schools can collect, store, and analyse vast amounts of data related to student performance, behaviour, and attendance. This data-driven approach enables educators to identify trends, monitor progress, and implement targeted interventions to support student achievement.

Improving communication and collaboration

Your MIS should foster effective communication among teachers, administrators, students, parents, and carers. This improved communication enhances collaboration, ensures transparency, and builds a supportive school community which enhances parental engagement.

Ensuring data security and compliance

Protecting sensitive student and staff information is paramount. A robust MIS offers secure, cloud-based data handling and storage, safeguarding against unauthorised access and potential breaches. Additionally, it assists schools in complying with data protection regulations by providing controlled access and audit trails.

Supporting Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

For SEND schools, an MIS should be customisable and flexible. This allows for the integration of assistive technologies and the development of personalised learning plans. By efficiently managing individualised data, educators can better support students with diverse learning needs, ensuring they receive appropriate resources and interventions.

Choosing the right MIS is particularly important for schools aiming to enhance efficiency and support student success. The best solution is one that aligns with the specific needs of the school, rather than requiring the school to adapt to the system. Whether you are in the process of selecting an MIS for your school or transitioning to a new one, this framework will be beneficial to your decision-making process.

Framework for selecting the right MIS

What schools need to consider

This framework is a seven-step guide designed to help schools find the MIS that best suit their needs.

1 **Perform a needs assessment**

A needs assessment allows schools to thoroughly examine their requirements and identify the gaps they want their MIS to address. This can include administrative requirements, educational objectives and special needs requirements.

2 **Undergo a stakeholder consultation**

Stakeholder consultations provide valuable insights from all parties involved, not only in the decision-making process but also those who will interact with the MIS. This might include teachers, admin personnel, school board and IT staff.

3 **Vendor research**

It's essential for schools to take their time to evaluate the market and conduct a thorough vendor assessment with various MIS providers. This enables them to compare options based on key factors such as customiszation levels, customer support, and system reliability, ensuring their needs are met.

4

Check for regulatory adherence and data security

Schools must ensure that their chosen MIS complies with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and includes robust data security protocols to protect sensitive information.

5

Think scalability and flexibility

It's best to choose an MIS that is future-oriented, capable of adapting to upcoming educational and technological advancements. Additionally, selecting an MIS that offers extensive customisation and flexibility to meet evolving requirements is highly beneficial.

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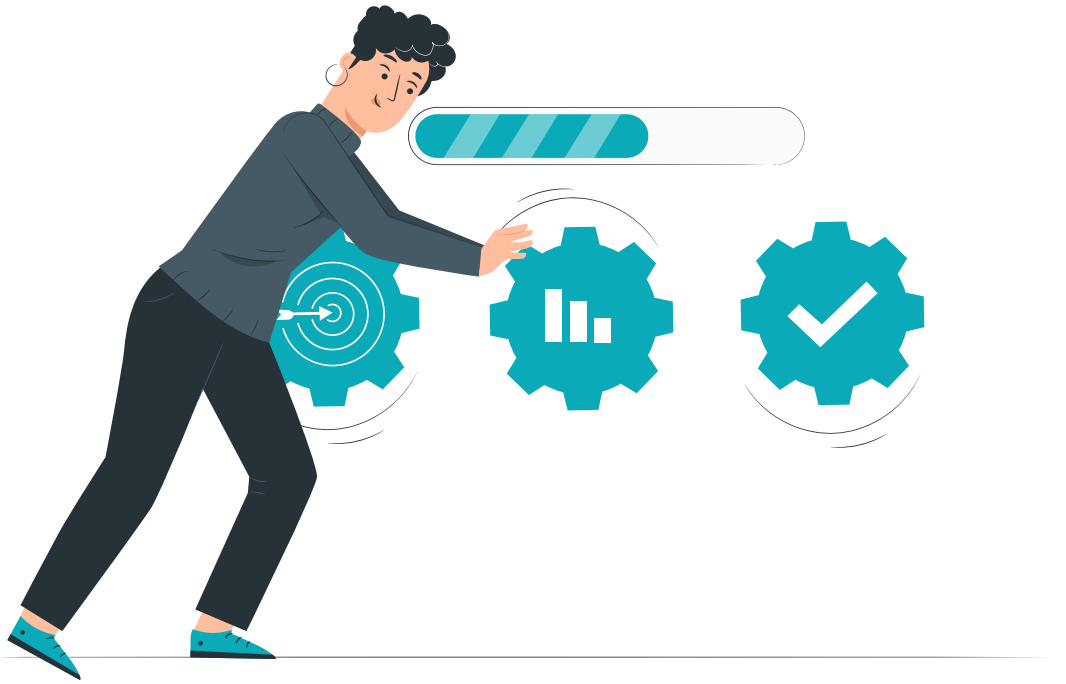
Cost-benefit analysis

This is a crucial step. Schools must evaluate all costs related to the implementation, training, and ongoing maintenance of an MIS before making a commitment. The goal is to perform a value assessment to ensure a return on investment in terms of efficiency gains and improved educational outcomes.

7

Training and support

Schools should evaluate the type of support they need and use this to find a suitable MIS. For instance, a school with an IT manager might require less technical support than one without. All factors should be considered to ensure the selected MIS can provide the necessary support and training.



The unique needs of SEND-focused schools

Schools that cater to students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) require a MIS that goes beyond standard administrative functions. Unlike mainstream schools, SEND schools deal with highly individualised learning plans, specialised reporting, and complex funding structures, all of which demand a system that is flexible, adaptable, and capable of supporting their diverse needs.

A one-size-fits-all MIS often falls short in these requirements, as it may not accommodate customised tracking for Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs), customised assessments, or the varied communication needs of parents, carers, and external agencies. Without the right MIS, SEND schools may struggle with data management, reporting accuracy, and effective collaboration between staff, families, and local authorities.

Why an MIS built for SEND schools matters

An MIS designed specifically for SEND schools plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the diverse needs of SEND students are met effectively. SEND schools often face complex challenges in managing detailed student data, including individualised education plans, behavioural records, and healthcare requirements, all of which need to be easily tracked and accessible for teachers, support staff, and external professionals.

Standard MIS platforms, while suitable for mainstream schools, frequently fall short in addressing these needs, as they lack the customisation options and flexibility required to manage the specific, often nuanced, information SEND schools must handle.

Having an MIS customised to SEND schools allows schools to integrate a wide range of specialised data types that are crucial to student development. For instance, tracking progress on Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) is essential, as these plans are legally binding documents that set out the support a child with SEND requirements.

According to the **National Association of Special Educational Needs (NASEN),** the flexibility of a SEND-focused MIS supports better collaboration between teachers, SEND coordinators, and external professionals, thus improving the quality of support provided to students.



In essence, an MIS designed for SEND schools does more than just manage data – it actively supports the tailored educational experiences these students need. By seamlessly integrating the diverse range of information that SEND schools handle, the system enhances efficiency, communication, and compliance, enabling staff to concentrate on providing high-quality, personalized education to every child.

Challenges in data management, reporting, and communication



In SEND schools, data management goes far beyond basic student information such as names, addresses, and student numbers. The complexity of the data includes a wide range of contextual information that plays a crucial role in understanding and supporting each student. This includes behavioural records, medical data, safeguarding information, educational progress, and funding allocations.

The challenge lies not just in collecting this data, but in managing it effectively and ensuring it can be easily accessed, updated, and reported upon. For example, data related to a student's behavioural patterns, medical needs, and special interventions needs to be recorded and tracked consistently to ensure a holistic view of their development. If an MIS cannot centralise all this information into a single record, it becomes incredibly difficult to provide customised support and track long-term progress.

Therefore, the challenge is ensuring that a SEND centred MIS is flexible enough to handle diverse data points and can produce customised reports that can cater to the varying needs of both internal stakeholders (such as teachers and SEND coordinators) and external stakeholders (including parents, local authorities, and healthcare professionals).

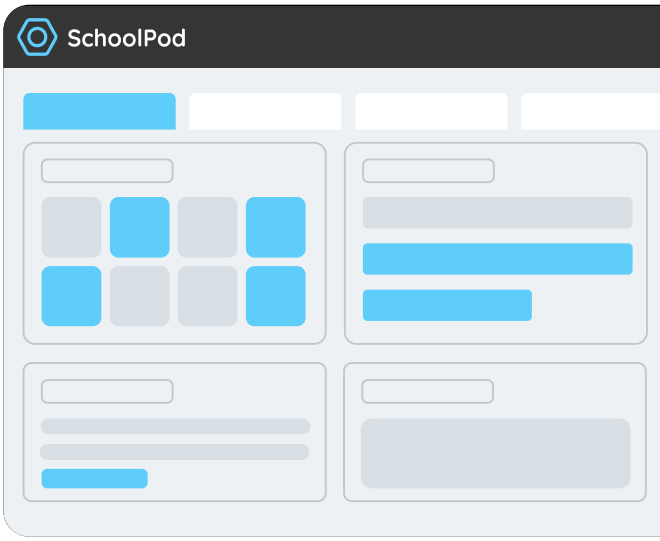
The necessity of customisable solutions to meet specific SEND requirements

Unlike mainstream schools, where the student population may follow a more standardised educational approach, SEND schools must be able to manage highly individualised learning plans, track a range of specific interventions, and collaborate with various professionals to meet the needs of every child. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach simply does not work.

When considering an MIS for a SEND school, it's crucial that the solution isn't presented as a one-size-fits-all package. Instead, the solution must be designed to meet the school's exact needs. This can be achieved by selecting a solution that offers significant flexibility to adapt to the school's specific requirements, whether it's creating customised data fields, tailoring reports, or integrating multi-agency communications. A truly customisable MIS enables a SEND school to adjust the system to capture the data that is most important to them, ensuring that the system aligns with their teaching approach, their assessment methods, and the unique needs of their students.

SchoolPod: a customised solution for SEND schools

SchoolPod is an MIS that offers a highly adaptable solution specifically designed to meet the unique needs of SEND schools, and its ability to customise the system to a school's existing processes is one of its key strengths.



Rather than imposing a standardised solution, SchoolPod works with schools to understand how their internal processes operate and adapts the system to meet these needs. This is a more effective approach than expecting schools to change or adjust their way of working just to fit a rigid, out-of-the-box system.

One of the primary advantages of SchoolPod is its ability to deal with a wide range of complex data, from behavioural tracking to medical care, safeguarding, and care plans. Many other systems fail to offer the depth of data management needed for SEND schools, particularly when it comes to tracking behavioural progress or SEND-specific needs. With SchoolPod, the system is designed to adapt to each school's processes, offering a more seamless integration into their existing workflows. For example, if a school has specific methods for tracking student care plans, safeguarding concerns, or behavioural interventions, SchoolPod can adapt its system to capture and report on these areas in the most useful and effective way.

The approach SchoolPod takes to customisation is more about working with schools than dictating how they must operate. SchoolPod is designed to integrate with the school's existing practices, meaning that it is not a matter of schools having to change their approach to fit the system, but rather the system being adjusted to match their needs. For example, if a SEND school has a particular format for tracking student

behavioural data or care plans, SchoolPod will work to implement a system that supports this. This approach allows the school to continue with their established processes while introducing the benefits of a fit for purpose MIS streamlining day-to-day operations and making data management more efficient.

SchoolPod's advanced SEND support tools

SchoolPod was designed to meet the complex and highly individualised needs of SEND schools through customisable data management, enhanced reporting, and seamless communication tools. Our system ensures that SEND schools can track, manage, and report on key aspects of SEND provision efficiently while maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements.

EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan) Management

Managing EHCPs is one of the most critical functions for SEND schools, requiring a system that can store, track, and update key details on student needs, interventions, and long-term goals. SchoolPod simplifies EHCP management through our Slip Builder system, which allows schools to define and structure EHCP data exactly as they need it.

- **Fully customisable EHCP data storage:** Schools dictate what information they need to store, and SchoolPod builds structured slips that capture those details, whether it is medical needs, support strategies, or learning adaptations.
- **Automated reporting & documentation:** Because EHCP data is stored in a structured way, reports can be automatically generated based on stored data, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders can access up-to-date student information.
- **Letter & document integration:** Schools can instantly generate formatted letters and reports with official letterheads, making it easy to share EHCP updates with parents, carers, or external professionals such as therapists and local authority representatives.

In some cases, schools may still need physical records, and SchoolPod allows for easy document printing, ensuring compliance with any paper-based administrative processes schools still follow.

Detailed student tracking and reporting

SchoolPod has the ability to track student progress and behaviours in a way that is both flexible and highly detailed. SEND schools require a more comprehensive tracking system than mainstream schools due to the wide range of needs their students have. SchoolPod offers:

- **Customised data collection:** The Slip Builder technology that supports EHCPs also allows schools to record and track any aspect of a student's experience, from behavioural patterns and interventions to funding entitlements and support services assigned.

- **Automated and custom reports:** Since all stored data is structured, SchoolPod can generate reports instantly based on any parameter set by the school. Whether that is tracking behaviour incidents, attendance patterns, or intervention outcomes.

- **Holistic student profiles:** Every piece of student data from safeguarding information to care plans and funding eligibility is attached to the individual student profile, ensuring that school staff have a full, contextualised view of a student's needs at any time.

Communication tools for staff and parents

SEND schools require a robust communication system that ensures all stakeholders i.e. staff members, parents, carers, and external professionals stay informed about a student's support and progress. SchoolPod facilitates effective, structured communication between these groups.

- **Staff collaboration:** Internal notifications allow staff to be alerted when updates are made to student records, EHCPs, risk assessments, or intervention plans.

- **Parental and carer engagement:** Schools can generate letters to update parents and carers about their child's progress or any adjustments to their support plans.

- **Secure document sharing:** Schools can export and share EHCPs, risk assessments, and intervention plans with parents and third parties such as therapists and support workers, ensuring that care plans remain up to date.

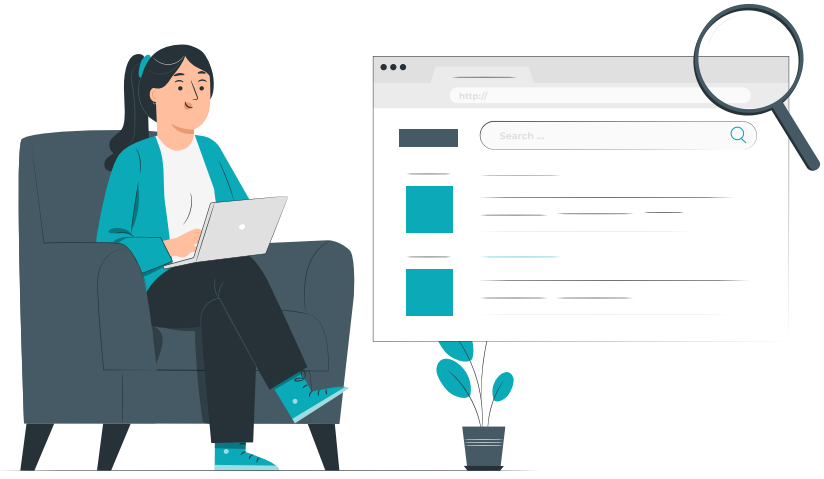
Why SchoolPod stands out for SEND schools

Unlike other generic MIS solutions, SchoolPod's advanced SEND support tools ensure:

- Schools do not have to adjust their processes to fit the system rather the system adapts to them.
- EHCP data is fully customisable and reportable rather than stored in fixed templates.
- Behaviour tracking is more detailed and flexible, offering better insights into student progress and interventions.
- Communication tools specifically support SEND workflows, ensuring that all relevant parties stay informed.

Comparing SchoolPod to Bromcom, Arbor, and SIMS

	SchoolPod	Bromcom	Arbor	SIMS
Customisability	Highly customisable workflows, dashboards, and data fields	Some customisation for general school operations	Limited customisation with preset structure	Low customisation
SEND-specific tools	EHCP tracking, behaviour, intervention planning, care plans and safeguarding tools	Some SEND tools with limited behaviour tracking	Basic SEND tools, no advanced intervention tracking or flexible care tracking	Basic SEND tools, lacks depth in care plans and intervention tracking
Ease of use	Intuitive, user-friendly and customisable, designed for staff with varying technical skills	Modern interface but requires training for staff unfamiliar with MIS platforms	Simple interface but lacks customisation, making complex SEND workflows difficult	Complex navigation and requires significant training for effective use
Reporting and analysis capabilities	Customisable reporting and dashboards to track SEND, behaviour, safeguarding, funding and compliance	Strong reporting for general school management but limited flexibility for SEND data analysis	Good standard reports but lacking deeper customisation for SEND reporting	Rigid reporting, most SEND-specific reporting needs to be done manually
Support and training	Personalised support with comprehensive onboarding, dedicated account manager and ongoing SEND-specific training	Offers support and training but not customised for SEND schools	Standard training provided but SEND-specific expertise is limited	Limited direct support, with schools often relying on third-party consultants for training and troubleshooting



Switching to SchoolPod: a seamless transition

For schools seeking a more SEND-focused MIS, switching to SchoolPod is a structured and highly supportive process designed to ensure minimal disruption. Whether your school is transitioning from an existing MIS or adopting one for the first time, our approach ensures a smooth transition, secure data migration, and advanced customisation through our innovative Slip Builder feature.

The switching process



Ongoing support: partnering for long-term success

Our support team is available at no extra cost, providing assistance via email or phone whenever needed. Every support request is treated individually, ensuring that schools receive personalised solutions for their unique challenges. Whether it is troubleshooting, system guidance, or additional training, we are committed to helping schools get the most out of SchoolPod.

- **Ongoing training and refreshers:** We recognise that staff turnover and evolving school processes require continued learning. To support this, we offer refresher training sessions at no additional cost. Whether it is for new staff onboarding or advanced training for existing users, we ensure schools remain confident in using SchoolPod effectively.

- **Customisation that grows with you:** A school's needs evolve over time, and so should its MIS. We offer schools the opportunity to extend or refine their customisation at any point. Our dedicated team helps schools build new slips to accommodate changing requirements, whether that means increasing or decreasing the level of detail stored.

- **Continuous system enhancements:** SchoolPod is constantly evolving based on feedback from our users. We provide regular updates that introduce new features, improved functionality, and enhanced reporting tools, ensuring that schools always have access to the latest advancements in SEND-focused MIS technology.

VenturEd Solutions™

Get started with SchoolPod

Request a free consultation with our team today to find out more on how we can help you improve your processes!

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