SMiRA | Selective Mutism Information & Research Association

KS1 PHONICS SCREENING Summer 2027

We often get asked about children with SM and the KS1 Phonics Screening which takes place in June for children in Year 1, so we thought it would be useful to put together a document. All the information comes from the Government website. KS1 Phonic Screening Gov Website

Section 4.1 states that it is the headteacher's decision as to whether a child should take it. In reality, we would like to think this has involved a discussion with parents, teacher & SENCO.
Specifically, the guidance notes that headteachers should "make a judgement on whether pupils are in a fit physical and mental state to take the check". We believe that extreme anxiety means a child is **not** in a fit mental state to sit the assessment and that parents should have the right to request that their child does not take part in the screening if they feel it will cause their child undue anxiety.

Section 5.2 specifically mentions children with SM as being exempt under the heading "Pupils who should not take the check".

5.3 Access arrangements
"You may need to adapt the phonics screening check for some pupils. You must base adjustments on normal classroom practice for pupils with specific needs.
You do not need to request permission to make adaptations, but you must ensure any modifications are necessary, do not advantage pupils (see Delivery of phonics screening check materials) and do not amount to maladministration (see Maladministration)."

However, **Section 9.2** gives the Special educational provision and reasonable adjustments, which say that "Mainstream schools must use their best endeavours to ensure that special educational provision is made for those pupils who need it.
"All schools must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to their peers." I would therefore argue, that "reasonable adjustments" could be put in place for a child with SM.

Some schools are already quite generous with their accommodations for a child with SM around this screening, which is great; but hopefully, this information will give you what you need to have a conversation with your teacher or SENCO should you require it.

Remember, these tests are nothing major, and a pass or fail is not really going to affect your child's future. As a teacher myself, I would hope that colleagues would not base their teaching on a single assessment! They are really an indicator to the Government, of how well the school is teaching phonics. So, whatever the outcome, don't let it worry you!

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Revised Nov 2026

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