



Preparing for a school meeting

As a parent or carer of a child with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) you will be invited to attend meetings about your child in school. You may also want to request a meeting to discuss your child. It is important that the school/setting has regard to your views, wishes and feelings, and those of your child, and that you and your child participate as fully as possible in decisions.

This fact sheet has been produced to give you some ideas on how to prepare for these meetings in order to get the best out of them.

Young people may also find this information helpful

Who shall I arrange to meet with?

You should ask to meet with your child's class teacher or subject teacher and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).

A SENCO is a qualified teacher who also has responsibility for the children with special educational needs and/or disability in school.

If you do not know who the SENCO is, call the school to ask for their name and find out when is the best time to talk to them. Sometimes, it may be beneficial to also meet with your child's Head of Year or Head of House (especially in secondary school).

If there are particular people from outside school who you feel should be there, ask for them to be invited for example Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist.

Requesting a meeting

You can request a meeting by telephone or in person to arrange a convenient time and date.

You can also request a meeting in writing, remember to include, the person you would like to meet with, the purpose of the meeting, times and dates that are convenient for you to meet and your contact number.

If you need help because of your own additional needs please remember to tell the people holding the meeting to make sure they organise what you need.

If English is not your first language or if you find it difficult, you can ask for an interpreter. This may take some time to arrange so remember to ask for this well ahead of the meeting.

Preparing for the meeting

Plan what you are going to say. Be clear about what you are going to ask and what you want to discuss. You may wish to:

- Make a note of your concerns
- Make a list of the questions you would like to ask:
 - Is my child making progress?
 - What help does my child receive in school?
 - Does school share my concerns?
 - How can I support my child at home?
- Think about what you would like to achieve out of the meeting?
- List the things that you want to happen in order of importance
- Be realistic about what you are asking for
- If possible ask your child their views before the meeting. For example: Do they have any worries? What do they find difficult? Or decide if you would like your child present for the meeting

- Keep all important information about your child together, including school reports, medical information, copies of letters from the school or reports from other professionals. Also keep copies of all letters that you send

Taking people with you

You may want to take your partner, a friend or someone else with you to the meeting for support. The person with you will be able to take notes at the meeting of what was said and by whom. This can be really useful as it can be hard to remember everything that was said after the meeting.

If you are taking someone with you let school know.

The Information, Advice and Support Service may be able to attend the meeting with you or help you prepare.

The meeting

- It is important to keep meetings and be on time.
- If there are no introductions made, ask who each person is and what their role is.
- If you do not understand any of the terms used ask for an explanation.
- If a report, or any paperwork, about your child is brought to the meeting ask for time to read it. Ideally any paperwork should be sent to the relevant people prior to the meeting.
- If you disagree with the things being said about your child do not hesitate to give your opinion. You know your child best.
- Try to make your point in a calm and polite way. If you are able to do this people may be more willing to listen and co-operate with you. If things become too difficult for you, ask to take a break.
- Be realistic about what you can ask for and be prepared to be flexible and talk about different options and alternatives.
- Make sure you have discussed everything you want to discuss before the meeting ends. If the meeting has to come to an end and you have outstanding issues, ask for another date.

- At the end of the meeting either you or your supporter can ask for any actions to be confirmed. Think about what will happen next, who is doing what, how will this be reviewed and when there will be a further meeting.
- If notes are being taken during the meeting ask for a copy of these to be sent to you.
- It may be helpful to agree a follow up meeting to review progress and next steps.

After the meeting

- Make a note of the date of any review meeting.
- If you had support you may wish to discuss how you felt the meeting went.
- Are there any actions you need to follow up?
- Talk to your child, especially if they attended the meeting - how did they feel?
- Tell your child what has been agreed so that he or she feels reassured about support.

You can contact us

Wolverhampton Information, Advice & Support Service

'for special educational needs and disability'

Impartial information, advice and support on matters relating to
a child and young person's special educational needs or disability
from birth to 25 years.

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