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Wolverhampton Information, Advice and Support Service

Preparing for a meeting guide for parents and carers

As a parent or carer of a child with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) you should be invited to attend meetings in your child's school or setting. Young people should be involved in meetings about their needs and support.

You may also want to request a meeting with the school or college setting. 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 factsheet has been produced to help you to prepare for these meetings in order to get the best out of them.

Who shall I arrange to meet with?

You should ask to meet with the 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 the 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, email, in writing or in person.

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

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- Make a list of the questions you would like to ask for example
 - Is my child making progress?
 - What help does my child receive in school?
 - Do school staff 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 your child is unable to attend the meeting ask your child their views before the meeting.
 - For example: Do they have any worries? What do they find difficult?
- Keep all important information together, such as
 - School reports
 - Medical information
 - Copies of letters from the school
 - Reports from other professionals
 - 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.

During 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, is brought to the meeting ask for time to read it. Ideally any paperwork should be sent to everyone before the meeting
- If you disagree with the things being said do not hesitate to give your opinion
- 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 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 to reconvene



- At the end of the meeting either you or your supporter can ask for any actions to be confirmed so you know what will happen next, who is doing what, how actions will be reviewed and if 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
- Be aware of any actions you need to follow up
- Talk to your child if they attended to see how they feel
- Tell your child what has been agreed so that he or she feels reassured about support

Please contact us if you require further information, advice or support.

Telephone: **01902 556945**

Email: ias.service@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Complete our contact form at: <https://wolvesiass.org/contact-us/index.html>

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