

Meetings in School

Meetings with school staff can be a very helpful way of addressing concerns, asking questions, improving communication and promoting good home school partnership to support your child or young person. This leaflet provides a few pointers to enable you to prepare for the meeting and make it as useful as possible.

Who?

School Staff: It is really important to ensure that when requesting a meeting you ask for school staff to be present who will be able to answer your questions, will be familiar with your child and will understand what could be done to support them. This could be a class teacher or Head of Year or if your child has special educational needs you might wish the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) to attend. Where you have a serious concern/complaint you may wish to involve senior staff. This could mean that your meeting will take longer to arrange. You may wish to make the request for a meeting in writing.

Support: You may wish to take someone along to a meeting to support you to put your points across or to help by taking notes for you. This may be a friend or relative or someone from a support group. Liaise may also be able to support, particularly if you have concerns or complaints that you wish to resolve.

Other agencies: it may be relevant to ask for other agencies to be included in the meeting and this is something you can discuss with the school. For example, this may be an agency that is currently working with your child e.g. The Working Together Team.

Why?

It is important that everyone invited to the meeting is clear about its purpose. If you have requested the meeting, it can be helpful to send a list of the issues that you wish to be covered in the meeting, or to send in a list of questions in advance which helps the school to have the information in readiness for the meeting.

Where the school has arranged the meeting, are you clear about the reason for the meeting and do you have all the information you need to prepare for it?

How do I prepare?

Agenda – be clear about the issues you want to discuss/questions you want to ask. It would be helpful to list these and tick them off as they are answered and raise any issues that have not been covered.

List the key points you want to make – this will help you to stay focused and, if you are feeling anxious, it will ensure you do not forget things.

Information – depending on the nature of the meeting, you may wish to gather some information in preparation. This might include school policies for example in respect of special educational needs or behaviour. You should be able to find these on the school website. Liaise publishes a number of leaflets relating to Special Educational Needs including 'SEND Support in Schools'. These will help you understand what support may be available and to focus on what outcomes you want from the meeting.

Wish List – When preparing for your meeting, be clear about what you would like to achieve from the meeting, being realistic in your objectives, clear on where you might be willing to compromise but also highlighting the outcome(s) you feel are essential.

Liaise – information and advice can be provided over the phone to enable you to prepare for your meeting and a Liaise Caseworker will be able to discuss sources of additional information, talk through the issues concerned and point you to guidance which supports your request.

The Meeting

Be clear on the time, venue and date of the meeting and, if possible arrive with time to spare.

Be clear who is at the meeting and what their role is – if this is not explained at the beginning of the meeting ask for introductions.

Ask questions and request that any jargon is explained.

Ask your supporter to take notes and be sure that at the end of the meeting any agreements reached, actions agreed etc. are recorded with dates for completion and names recorded against the individual actions. Ask that this be sent out following the meeting. Request that a date for the next meeting is set.

Follow Up - you might wish to request a further meeting for an update on progress and actions agreed. Alternatively, you will need to check how any actions will be communicated to you.