



PREPARING FOR SCHOOL MEETINGS

PARENTS AND CARERS OF C & YP WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES.

You may have been invited to a meeting at your child's school / college or education setting.

Or, you may want to request a meeting to discuss any issues or concerns you have with your child's education.

This document will help you prepare for school / college meetings so that you can get the best out of them.

I want to request a meeting – who should I ask?

If your concerns are related to a learning or special educational need (SEN), you may wish to meet with the class teacher, form tutor and/or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo).

If you don't know who the SENCo is, call the school to ask for their name and the best time to talk to them.

You can request a meeting by telephone, email, in writing or in person. Don't forget to include the easiest way to contact you, so that a suitable date and time can be arranged.

If there are particular people who you feel should be there, ask for them to be invited.

If you or your child need particular help at the meeting because of an individual need, remember to tell the people holding the meeting to make sure they arrange what you need.

If English is not your first language or 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, if possible.

Support

You could take a supporter with you to the meeting. This could be a friend, relative or support worker. (It is advisable to let the school know who this is, before the meeting).

Be prepared: take a pen and paper to make your own notes. If you do have someone coming to the meeting with you, ask them if they can take notes for you.

Meeting Preparation

Planning

Ask who else will be at the meeting. Ensure you are aware of what their role is and what information they will be bringing to the meeting.

If you have requested the meeting, has everyone that you would like to attend been invited? If a key person is not available to attend, you may want to re arrange the meeting for another time that will be convenient for everyone.

Prepare everything you want to take to the meeting with you well in advance and keep all important information 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.

Think about what questions you might want to ask the school? Make a list before the meeting to prepare.

For example:

What are the areas that cause greatest difficulty in the school day for your child?

What is working well for your child / what isn't working so well.

What support is being given?

Is progress being made?

How is progress monitored?

Keep your questions relevant to what you want to achieve and remember this is an opportunity for you to discuss your child's achievements as well as challenges and any good work the school are doing should be fed back.

If it will help you, practice saying your questions out loud in a calm and measured way; this will help you to be comfortable and confident with what you want to say.

Your child should be able to attend the meeting with you. If they are not going to attend, remember to ask them for their views before the meeting.

For example:

Do they have any worries?

What does your child find difficult at school and what would they like to see happen?

What do they enjoy?

What would they like to ask their teacher?

Timings

You might want to check how much time is being allocated for the meeting. If you feel that not enough time has been allowed you can request a longer time, or you may need to arrange a different day.

At the meeting

If there are no introductions, ask who each person is and what their role with your child is.

Check if anyone will take notes at the meeting. If so how will any actions be recorded and when can you expect to receive a copy of the notes?

If the people in the meeting use jargon or specialist terms, ask them for an explanation. Your friend or supporter might also be able to ask for things to be explained more fully.

If a report or any new paperwork about your child is brought to the meeting, ask for time to read it.

If you disagree with things being said about your child, don't be afraid to speak up. You know your child in a way that others don't and if you think what is being suggested might not work, say so.

Make your points in a calm and polite way. By doing this this, you may find people are more willing to listen and cooperate with you. If things become too difficult, ask to take a break.

Be prepared to be flexible and talk about different options and alternatives to achieve the outcome you need for your child.

At the end of the meeting you can ask for any actions to be confirmed. Ask the questions:

Who is doing what?

By when?

How will this be reviewed?

Will there be a further meeting?

When?

After the meeting

To clarify everything that has been discussed, send a letter / email to the school as soon as possible confirming what you felt were the agreed outcomes and actions.

Discuss with your child any changes that have been agreed to the support they may be receiving. The school should also do this but this is your opportunity to prepare them in advance for anything new.

Further advice.

If you need further advice and information around issues relating to special educational needs and disabilities for parents, carers, children and young people aged 0-25, please contact Bexley IASS.

HOW CAN BEXLEY IASS HELP YOU?

We offer a range of support and advice for parents and carers who have children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) including:

- Advice about SEN support in schools
- Information and advice about education, health and care plans (EHCP)
- Support with transition between stages of education
- Help you prepare for meetings
- Help and support with exclusions
- Support and advice about transport
- Provide advice about education law relating to special educational needs and disabilities
- Help with appeals to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

CONTACT US

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The information, advice and support BEXLEY IASS offer is impartial and FREE. We will not pass your information on to anyone without your permission.