

# Attending a meeting with a teacher or SENCO

## Guidance for parents

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is responsible for coordinating extra help for pupils with SEN. The SENCO works with the class or subject teachers to plan and monitor the help each child or young person needs.

If you think your child needs some extra help in the classroom, make an appointment to speak to their class teacher or the SENCO about your worries.

**You can use our sample letter as a template to request a meeting with your child's teacher or the SENCO.**

This information is to help you prepare for and take part in a meeting with your child's teacher or the SENCO. You know your child best, so you will have important information to share with school, including strategies for how your child can best be supported.

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### Before the meeting

- Consider asking a friend or relative to come along to give you informal support at the meeting. It is helpful to let school know if you do ask someone else to attend.
- Ask school if there is any new information that they will be sharing at the meeting that you can read beforehand.
- Think about what you would like to get from the meeting.
- Gather as much information as possible before the meeting.
- Look at your child's school reports and the results of tests and assessments.
- Check your child's home-school book or planner.
- Gather samples of your child's work, if available and appropriate.
- If you have kept a diary of events, take this with you and if not, consider starting one after the meeting ready for when a review takes place.
- Speak to your child to gather his/her views and note down what they say and how they are feeling.
- Make some notes to help keep you focussed during the meeting including:
  - Your key questions/concerns.
  - Any positive ideas you may have.
  - Any strategies that are likely to make the situation worse.
- Your emotions are likely to be raised because this involves your child but remember the meeting will go better if you remain calm.

### Questions to ask in the meeting

Here are some questions you may want to ask in the meeting. You can, of course, ask any questions or raise any other issues relevant to your situation.

- What level is my child working at?
- Is my child at the expected level for his/her age?
- Is my child making progress?
- Is my child achieving his/her full learning potential?
- Is my child getting any extra help?
- Is the extra help given to my child in a group or individually? Is it every day? How long is it for?
- Is the extra help having the desired impact? If not, what needs to change?
- What assessments, if any, have school done to find out about my child's difficulties?
- Have school referred my child to any specialist services?
- Can I see my child's Individual Education Plan (IEP)? (Your school may have a different name for this.)
- What can I do to work with school and help at home?
- What will the next steps be if my child needs more help?
- Do we need to consider a request for an EHC needs assessment?

## During the meeting

- Make sure everyone introduces themselves and you are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- If anyone is going to take notes ask for a copy, or take your own notes.
- Action points, in particular, should be recorded and agreed before the meeting ends.
- If anything is said which you do not understand, ask for an explanation.
- Share your concerns and what you see as your child's main difficulties.
- Share what support and approaches you have found to help.
- Tell school about any changes or events at home that could be affecting your child's learning.
- Ask questions to gain a better understanding of the situation.
- Acknowledge the school view and any support they are offering.
- Ask what you can do at home to help.
- At the end of the meeting, make sure you know what will happen next.
- If your concerns have not all been discussed, ask how this might be followed up - phone call, email or a further meeting?
- Agree a date to check on progress and ask for the name of someone you can contact in the future.

## After the meeting

Following the meeting, you should know:

- Who is going to do what and when.
- How the action points are going to be reviewed.
- How any other issues are going to be followed up.
- Who to contact if you have any questions.

If, after the given timescales, the situation has not improved:

- It may be that the strategies in place are not successful and that something else needs to be tried.
- It may be that agreed actions have not happened.

If you are unhappy, speak to the Head Teacher. Then, if you still feel unhappy, the school must have a Complaints Policy for if you want to take things further.

## Maintaining a positive relationship with school

The relationship between a parent and school can sometimes be tested, for example where there is disagreement about your child's rate of progress or the support they are receiving. It is helpful to talk to school as soon as possible so that you can be reassured about what is happening. It could be that the planned support was not working and school have made some changes that they have not told you about, or maybe there is a temporary staffing issue due to illness. Sometimes staff are working on one of the agreed actions and intend to work on another action later, so as not to overwhelm a child. Try to maintain a calm and friendly approach, a positive relationship with school will help your child.

## Where can I get more information?

- The Tameside **Local Offer** website brings together a range of information on services, support and guidance for you and your child or young person with SEN. You can find it at [www.tameside.gov.uk/Education/Tameside-Local-Offer](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/Education/Tameside-Local-Offer)
- Every school must publish an **SEN Information Report** about how they support pupils with SEN. You can find this on the school's website.
- Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the **SEND Code of Practice** explain the action that early years providers, schools and colleges should take to identify and support all children with SEN. You can access the SEND Code of Practice online at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search SEND Code of Practice.

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For further information, please contact:

**SENDIASS** (Tameside Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service)  
Tel: 0161 342 3383      Email: [sendiass@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@tameside.gov.uk)      Website: [www.tameside.gov.uk/sendiass](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/sendiass)