 Fact Sheet

 Preparing for meetings

 Introduction

As a parent or carer of a child with special educational needs and/or a

disability (SEND) you may be invited to attend meetings about your child in school. You may also want to request a meeting to discuss your child.

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.

 Who do I need to meet with?

• If the concerns are related to school you may want to meet with the

class teacher and/or the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and possibly the Headteacher. 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. Alternatively, you should also be able to find the Senco’s name on the school’s website, usually on the School’s Information Report.

• You can request a meeting by telephone, email or in writing. 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 from outside school who you feel should be there, ask for them to be invited. It may be helpful to have their contact details available to pass on to the school, if you have them.

• If you need help because of your own disability please remember to tell the people holding the meeting to make sure they can 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.

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 Preparing 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/emails that you send.
* Plan what you are going to say. Be clear about what you are going to ask and what you want to discuss. You may find it helpful to make a list of things that you want to discuss, you can then use this list as a prompt during the meeting.
* If you are going to ask school for specific information, it may be helpful to contact school and let them know what you would like to discuss, and what information you would like beforehand. This will make the most of your time in the meeting.

During the meeting

* Written notes should be taken during the meeting as a record. Before the meeting starts, you should check who is making notes. This is usually somebody from school e.g. the Headteacher, class teacher or Senco. Parents should not be asked to take formal notes or minutes.
* Introductions should be made at the beginning of the meeting. Make sure you know who everybody is, and if you aren’t sure what somebody’s role is, then ask.
* You can use your list of questions to make sure you mention each point that you want to discuss. It can also be helpful to tick off each point as it is covered.
* As the meeting draws to a close, there should be a recap of any actions that have been agreed. These actions should be written down and recorded alongside the name of the person who is going to do them.
* If it is agreed that a follow up meeting (or review meeting) is necessary, it is a good idea to agree the date of this next meeting whilst everybody is together.
* You should be given a copy of the meeting notes at the end of the meeting. If they need to be typed up and sent on to you, make sure that you give your email address, or postal address, so that they can be sent to you.