



**Cheshire East Information
Advice and Support
(CEIAS) team**

Getting the most out of meetings

As a parent or carer of a child with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) you will be invited to attend meetings about your child in school. You can also request a meeting, if you want to discuss your child.

Meetings are about talking and listening. Those present at the meeting will ensure the meeting works for you and your child.

Meetings relating to your child's special educational needs or Disability

- Your child's class teacher, or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) will be useful people to meet with to discuss your child's needs.
- If you are unsure who the SENCO is, contact the school, and ask for their name as well as the best time is to talk to them.
- If your child is in Secondary Education, it might be useful to meet their Head of year / Head of house
- If there are particular people who you feel should be there, ask for them to be invited and explain why you think it would be helpful to have them there.

Ways to request a meeting:

You can request a meeting by telephone, email, in writing or in person. Make sure you include the easiest way to contact yourself, so that a suitable date and time can be arranged.

Things to mention/ask when a meeting is being arranged:

- If you need any additional help at the meeting, because of an individual need, make sure you tell the people hosting the meeting, so they can arrange everything that you need.
- If you are invited to a meeting check what it is for. Is there a problem to discuss? Is it an annual review? If you are unsure, do not be afraid to ask.
- If you do not know where the meeting is going to take place ask for directions, arrangements about parking, which door to use and who to ask for.

Preparing for the meeting:

- Plan what you are going to say. Be clear about what you want to ask and what you want to discuss.
- Make a note of any concerns and also the positives/things which are going well
- Make a few notes about your child's achievements as well as difficulties, e.g. improvements, positive action taken, and changes in health, confidence, behaviour, etc.
- Make a list of questions you would like to ask, such as:
Is my child making progress?
What help does my child receive in school?
Does the school share my concerns?
How can I support my child at home?
- Think about what you would like to get out of the meeting.
- List the things that you want to happen.
- Be realistic about what you are asking for.
- If possible, ask your child their views before the meeting e.g.

What do you enjoy about school?

Do you have any worries?

What are you really good at?

Is there anything you find difficult?

Is there anything you would like me to ask your teacher?

It may be appropriate for your child to attend the meeting.

- You could talk to your family or friends about what you are going to say, you could even practice if that helps.
- Take a pen and paper to make your own notes.
- It is useful to send a list of the points you want to discuss beforehand, so that everyone has time to think about the issues. Take a copy of your list to 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 a copy of everything that you send.

Taking people with you.

You may want to take a friend or relative with you to the meeting for moral support

The person with you could 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 and who said it.

They can prompt you if you forget to mention something.

If you are taking someone with you, let the school know.

The meeting.

It is extremely important that you are on time. If you are running late, or cannot attend, let the school/setting know as soon as possible.

If there are no introductions made, ask who each person is, and what their role is. If you do not understand why they are there, do not be afraid to ask.

If you do not understand any of the terms used, ask for an explanation.

If you do not hear or understand something, ask people to repeat or explain things again.

If a report, or any paperwork, about your child is brought to the meeting, ask for time to read it . Ideally any paperwork should be sent out before the meeting.

Listen to those present. Try to understand their point of view and do not interrupt, even though you may not agree with what they are saying.

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 for you, ask to take a break.

Try to focus on the future, not on the past.

Be realistic about what you can ask for; 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.

At the end of the meeting.

Ask the person chairing the meeting to confirm what will happen next, who is doing what, and how you will know when actions have been carried out .

If notes are being taken during the meeting ask for a copy of these to be sent to you.

Make a note of the date of any review meeting.

After the meeting

If you had someone to support you in the meeting you may wish to discuss how you felt the meeting went. They may well remember things which you had forgotten and can remind you of those things.

Make sure that you know if there are any actions that you need to take; if so make sure that you complete these and feedback to those who were present in the meeting on the outcome.

Talk to your child, about what is going to happen going forward and how it will help them. If they were in the meeting ask how they feel. Check that they understood what was being said.

If you are unhappy about the meeting try not to share any negative feelings with your child, emphasise the positives.

Do not be embarrassed to get back in touch if there was something you forgot to ask at the time.

	<p>Cheshire East Information Advice and Support (CEIAS)</p> <p>Website: www.ceias.cheshireeast.gov.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 0300 123 5166</p>
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