



**Cheshire East
Information, Advice
& Support**

**Information leaflet
for parents & carers**

**Providing confidential, impartial support and advice for parents, carers,
children and young people in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Meetings with school and education staff

This leaflet is about formal meetings including

- **Annual reviews** of your son or daughter's special educational provision. Including reviews of **School Focused Plans, Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan** and **Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)**.
- Meetings where you need to talk things through at some length where several people have been invited.

Sometimes you may meet school and other education staff in an informal way.

*If the **text is in bold** this shows that a definition of the word(s) are explained in the Glossary that can be downloaded from www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ceias.*

If you need any additional help with access or if English is not the language you use at home you should inform the people holding the meeting before you go.

Think about what the meeting is for

- Did you ask for the meeting or did someone else?
- Are you looking for information or particular action?
- Is there a written agenda?
- Can the people who come to this meeting make decisions or influence others who can?

Check the basics

- Do you know when and where to go?
- Who else has been invited and why?
- Is there anyone else you want to include? (If so, you could ask the person who has called the meeting to invite them)
- How much time has been allocated?
- If you don't know, you can ring the school, or office, and ask.

Thinking ahead

Think about what you want out of the meeting. Try to work out the best outcome and any compromises you would be willing to make.

[Make a list of questions to ask and points to raise](#)

You may want to put these in a letter and send it in before the meeting so everyone has time to think about the issues. Take a copy of your list to the meeting and refer to it if you want to. Think about what is most important to you, so that you cover your main points, even if there isn't time to talk about everything. If it's your child's review, the school should have asked you to fill out a form in advance, to give your views.

[Take someone else with you](#)

It can really help to have someone to give you moral support and prompt you if you forget to mention something. This could be a friend or relative, or you could ask Cheshire East Information, Advice and Support (CEIAS) for a supporter. A supporter maybe a paid member of staff or a volunteer who has been on an accredited training course and is up-to-date on current legislation.

Make sure they are aware of what you want from the meeting and what you could compromise on before the meeting.

It is always best to let the school know if you're bringing someone in with you.

[You can ask your supporter to take notes](#)

It can be difficult to remember everything which has been said and a few notes are a great reminder.

[Paperwork and Reports](#)

Be organised

If you have any paperwork for the meeting get it together so you can go through it beforehand.

Keep all the information together and in date order so you can find it easier.

Have you got a copy of everything you need? If not, you may want to ask for copies of **School Focused Plans**, the **EHC Plan** or **Statement** and reports about your child.

If it is an review, you should have received copies of everyone's comments two weeks before the meeting.

You may want to look at the school's SEN policy.

If you wish to you can ask to look through your child's school record. You can get a copy of this too, although you may have to pay photocopying costs to the school.

Try and make a few notes about your child and their achievements as well as difficulties. This might include:

- Any improvements you have noticed
- Any difficulties your child has
- Any action taken or not taken by school
- Any changes in behavior, health, anxiety or self-confidence
- You may also talk to your child about what they enjoy and any worries or concerns they may have.

Is there any paperwork you should fill in and send back before the day?

Try to do this in good time. If you need help with it, call CEIAS. If you miss a deadline, don't panic. Ring and check as they may still accept it.

Talk everything through with your supporter before the meeting.

On the Day

Make sure you allow plenty of time to get to the meeting so you are not worrying about being late.

See this meeting as a positive step towards reaching agreement about the issues raised.

Remember you know your child in a way the professionals do not.

Be ready to ask for a break or a glass of water, at any time, if you feel you need to step out or you want to discuss something with someone who has come with you,

When you arrive, if you don't know everyone, don't be afraid to ask them to explain who they are.

During the Meeting

Make sure you ask all the questions you have prepared.

Ask people to repeat or explain anything you are unsure of.

Look at the list of points you wanted to raise and check everything has been covered. Your supporter could check the list for you and remind you of anything you have missed.

Remember your supporter can also take notes for you.

Focus on the future not what has happened in the past.

Try and remain calm and stay focused and polite.

Be realistic about what you can ask for and be prepared to negotiate.

As the Meeting Ends

For the meeting to be useful, you need to know what happens next.

Focus on the positives and thank everyone for their help.

Sometimes people come away from a meeting with different understandings of what has been said.

It is good to check that everyone agrees what is to be done and has understood each other's views.

- Ask the leader of the meeting to clarify what has been agreed.
- What should happen next?
- What actions or support have been agreed?
- Who has promised to do what?

- When is this be reviewed?
- Do you need to ask for a date to be set for the next meeting?

You can also ask whether there will be a written record (minutes) of the meeting. You could say you would like a copy to be sent to you.

After the Meeting

Talk over what happened and your understanding of the meeting with your supporter. If you do not agree with each other, or if the written record is incorrect, get back in touch and raise anything which still concerns you.

If there is to be no written record, you may want to send a letter in afterwards, summarising what you think has been agreed.

The “Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years” can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>.

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