## **Preparing for a Meeting with School About Your Child** **with SEND**

## *For parents and carers in England*

###  **Purpose of This Guide**

This guide will help you prepare confidently for a school meeting about your child’s Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). Whether it’s a regular review, a planning meeting, or a concern you’ve raised, being prepared can make a big difference in getting the right support in place.

### **Types of Meetings You Might Attend**

* **SEND review meeting** (linked to a SEN Support plan)
* **Annual Review** of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
* **Early discussion** to identify needs
* **Transition planning** (e.g. starting a new school)
* **Emergency meetings** following incidents or significant changes
* **Multi-agency meetings** with external professionals (SALT, OT, EP, etc.)

##  **Step-by-Step Guide to Preparing**

###  **1. Know What the Meeting Is For**

Ask the school:

* What is the purpose of the meeting?
* Who will be attending?
* Will any reports or updates be shared beforehand?
* Will the SENCo be present?

➡️ *Tip: Ask for an agenda if possible, or suggest one.*

###  **2. Gather & Organise Key Information**

Create a folder or file (digital or printed) with:

* School reports and previous meeting notes
* Your child’s SEND plan / provision map / EHCP (if applicable)
* Letters or emails between you and the school
* Professional reports: Educational Psychologist, Speech & Language, CAMHS, etc.
* Your own notes about concerns, strengths, behaviours, or progress

➡️ *Tip: Highlight anything that’s changed, improved, or worsened recently.*

###  **3. Make a List of Questions & Concerns**

This keeps the meeting focused and ensures your voice is heard. Consider:

* What progress is my child making?
* What support is currently in place?
* Is it being delivered as planned?
* How is the school monitoring outcomes?
* Do teachers understand my child’s needs?
* Is more help or specialist input needed?
* Are we ready to consider an EHCP?

 *Tip: Write questions down and take them with you — it’s easy to forget in the moment.*

###  **4. Know Your Rights**

Under the **SEND Code of Practice**, you have the right to:

* Be involved in decisions about your child’s support
* Receive clear information
* Be part of reviews
* Request an EHC needs assessment if SEN Support isn’t enough

*Reminder: You are the expert on your child.*

###  **5. Take Someone With You**

* A trusted friend, family member, or independent advocate can:
	+ Take notes
	+ Help you feel confident
	+ Support you emotionally
* Let the school know in advance if someone is coming with you

*Tip: You can ask to record the meeting (with permission), or take written notes for reference later.*

###  **6. During the Meeting**

* Stay calm, clear, and focused
* Stick to facts and lived experiences
* Use your notes and ask your questions
* Ask for explanations if you're unsure (e.g. acronyms or terms)
* Challenge gently if something doesn't seem right

 *Phrase to use:*
 *"Can you help me understand how this support is being delivered?"*
 *"What evidence do we have that it’s working or not working?"*

###  **7. After the Meeting**

* Ask for written minutes or a follow-up email summarising what was agreed
* Write your own brief summary if nothing is sent
* Clarify any next steps, timelines, or follow-up meetings
* Save everything in your SEND folder

 *Tip: If nothing changes or you disagree with the outcome, you can raise concerns in writing or seek independent advice.*

##  **Common Concerns to Bring Up (If Relevant)**

* “My child is struggling despite support — what can we do differently?”
* “Support isn’t being provided as agreed — how can this be addressed?”
* “We need advice from external professionals — how can we access it?”
* “I think we may need to request an EHC Needs Assessment.”

##  **Final Tips for a Positive Meeting**

* You are not being difficult — you are advocating for your child
* Stay polite but assertive
* Keep the focus on *outcomes* – how can your child make progress and feel supported?
* Make it a partnership: *“How can we work together on this?”*

## **Need Support?**

As independent SEND advocates, we can:

* Help you prepare your notes or questions
* Join you in meetings (virtually or in-person, where possible)
* Explain your rights and options in plain English

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