

Positive Communication with School & How to Raise Concerns.

Regular and reliable communication between school and home is an important part of parent engagement, especially when you have a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

When strong links are established, home and school become united and the outcomes for your child or young person are greatly improved.

It is important to find out the methods schools use to communicate with parents and what to do if you have a question or need if you need to raise a concern.

When you're not clear about how your child is progressing socially, emotionally or academically, it can make you feel anxious and concerned about their future.

It is useful to try to find out early on from the school what methods they use to keep parents updated with important information.

It maybe that this is enough communication for you and your child with SEND however it maybe that you need more. Some examples of what could be expected our below-

- Annual Report
- Meetings at least 3 times per year (maybe extra time at parental consultations)
- Parent Views for an EHCP Annual Review or as a part of updating a SEN Support Provision Map/Individual Education Plan.

Depending on the age of your child, the phase of school life that they are in and their needs you may need much more regular communication.

For example if your child is in Reception and has communication needs of their own then you may wish to use a communication diary with school for every day communication.

However if your child's communication is good and they are in secondary then this would not be appropriate.

Here are some general ways of how schools communicate with parents:

Book Bag

A letter in your child's bag is still a really common way of sending information and messages home at primary school. This is also where schools can put the home school communication book for younger children to help you to know what kind of day they may have had. However be mindful that as the child gets older this may not be as appropriate.

Email

It can be useful to ask about email as a way of communicating with your child's class teacher or the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator of the school. It maybe that the school will ask you to email the main school email account and they then direct it to the teacher or SENCO in order for them to response. Emails can also be a useful way of keeping a log of communications.

Face to face

There's often a chance to talk to teachers at the start or finish of the school day on certain days. Check which days this happens and make an appointment for anything more than just a quick catch up or you want to discuss something that needs more privacy. It is important that you are allowed some privacy if you discussing anything that you feel is sensitive information about your child and your family. If you're not in school regularly, speak to the office and arrange a meeting for a time that suits you, or ask if the teacher can call you. Most schools take a flexible approach.

If you feel that communication has broken down or you wish to raise a concern with your child's school there are steps you can take.

It is important to take a step by step approach to this so that you are successful and keep a positive relationship with school.

Here is a step by step approach to raising a concern with your child's school:

- Look at the schools complaints procedure (on the website)
- Speaking to the class Teacher
- Addressing things informally with the SENCO
- Addressing things in writing to the Head Teacher

Following these steps if you are not satisfied with how the school have responded to your concerns there are more steps you can take. Please see Fact Sheet **Making a Formal Complaint.**

Contact **Telford and Wrekin SENDIASS** for information, advice and support:

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