



DEVON PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

BEFORE THE MEETING:

- Feelings
- When and where is the meeting?
 - parking
 - disabled access
 - how long will it last?
- Ask for an agenda
- Why is it being called?
 - review a statement/IEP etc
 - discuss progress
 - discuss provision
 - talk about exclusion
 - school transfer or transition
- Who is running the meeting?
- Who else will attend?
 - teachers
 - governors
 - other professionals
 - your child
- Who will take notes?
- Read any reports that have been written about your child and highlight areas of concern or confusion

- What should you take with you?
 - note pad and pen
 - any relevant reports or letters (eg medical)
 - other useful information (eg own research)
 - your list of questions/views/concerns
- Who else should you take with you?
 - friend or relative
 - Parent Partnership Service supporter
 - Other professional
- What will their role be?
 - to remind you of the key points you want to make
 - to provide professional opinion
 - to provide support
- Advise the host (eg school) who you are taking
- Arrange childcare if necessary
- Dress appropriately
- Eat!

BEFORE THE MEETING - QUESTIONS

- What do you want out of the meeting?
 - agreed action plan
 - support
 - acknowledgement
 - be realistic
- Write a list of questions you want to ask
 - Open/closed
 - Explore effect of negative questions/tone
- Send in advance?

DURING THE MEETING:

- Introduce yourself and ensure you know who is who
- Build rapport
- Refer to the agenda
- Be clear
- Ask questions
- Tick off questions on your list as they are answered
- Don't say you understand if you don't
- Listen and don't interrupt
- Take notes if you need to (or ask your supporter to)
- State your wants, opinions, needs, feelings
- Stand up for your views and don't feel pressured into agreeing things if you are unsure
- **But** don't become aggressive or confrontational
- Use appropriate body language, position, tone and words, eye contact
- Respect others' views
- Be realistic about what can be achieved (priorities, small steps)
- Provide solutions
- If the meeting is going off-track
 - say so
 - arrange a separate meeting if needed
- Ask for a break and water

CLOSING THE MEETING:

- Ask for a summary of the main action points (and person responsible) and deadlines
- Check all your questions have been answered (refer to your list)
- Ask when the next meeting will be
- Thanks

AFTER THE MEETING:

- Ensure you receive the meeting notes or minutes
- Write to the chairperson if you disagree with any points in the minutes
- Write your own letter if notes are not forthcoming
- Keep an eye on deadlines to make sure you and others complete the action points

IF YOU CAN'T AGREE OR IT GOES WRONG:

- Speak to the teacher/school
- Contact Parent Partnership Service (support and signposting)
- Look at school's SEN policy
- Set a follow-up meeting – school, professionals
- Contact CSET
- Look at school complaints procedure
- Arrange a meeting with governors
- Mediation
- Look at other complaints procedures
- Tribunal (SENDIST)
- Solicitor