

School Support Information

The information contained within this newsletter can be adapted for use at any time regardless of any diagnosis.

Building positive relationships with school

Establishing and maintaining positive working relationships with parents is central to ensuring a child's success. Whilst school reports and parents' evenings provide a great opportunity to talk about how your child is getting on at school or something like that about a child's achievements and attainments, it is always good to look at their difficulties they may have occur throughout the year as well. Positive communication between home and school enables everyone to support and encourage children and young people to achieve.



Making meetings matter

You may be invited to meetings at your child's school or setting. You may also want to request a meeting to discuss any issues or concerns you might have. You have the right to request a meeting with any of the team of professionals involved with your child/young person. There are a variety of reasons that you might want to ask for a meeting and these may include concerns about:

- Your child's progress
- How any special educational needs/disability your child may have are being met
- Your child being bullied
- Your child's behaviour, how it is being managed and the impact on their education.

How do I organise a meeting? You can:

- request a meeting by calling the relevant people and arranging a date, time and place that convenient to all
- request a meeting by emailing or writing a short letter that includes who you want to meet with, the issues you would like to discuss and times and dates you will be available
- Ask the school to arrange the meeting.

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Before the meeting.

- Find out who will be at the meeting if you are invited to one, it may help to find out who will be there.
- Ask the person running the meeting what they do and what their role is.
- Find out what will be discussed at the meeting and how long it will last and where and when the meeting will be held.
- If you have asked for the meeting, be clear why you want to have a meeting. Who do you need to meet with? If the issues are school related, you may want to meet with your child's class teacher or form tutor and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and head teacher

Top Tips

1. It's important to recognise the positives as well as the difficulties that your child may be experiencing at school. Celebrate the small stuff and ask school to share the positives as well.
2. Keep communication with school realistic and within school hours where possible. To maintain a positive relationship with school, it helps to remember that teachers/school staff are often busy teaching or preparing lessons even before school opens and after children leave.
3. Most parents have access to school apps and emails. Having a digital trail of conversations is useful so that any support requests or strategies can be backed up with evidence.
4. Even if you meet a teacher in person and share concerns or if they raise concerns with you, consider making a note of the discussion and sending it to school as a record.
5. You know your child best. If you have concerns, be open with staff about them.
6. Some parents report that they often see behaviour at home that school do not. This can happen due to a build-up of energy/emotions which can be described as the coke bottle effect. It can be difficult to communicate why you think this is happening with professionals who have not come across this before. The group 'Not fine in School' has some helpful resources. [Not Fine in School - School Refusal, School Attendance](#)
7. Take time to reflect on your own level of stress and don't feel pressured to respond straight away. Take a breath, give yourself a break.



Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Some children and young people experience very high levels of anxiety about going to school. West Sussex Educational Psychology Service introduced the term 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance': **a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school** (West Sussex Educational Psychology Service, 2014; pg. 4). ESBA can be difficult for all the family. It's helpful not to blame the child or young person. Try to be aware that they may be feeling upset or guilty about not attending school, even if they don't show it. You can



reassure them that you understand that they find school difficult and that you are not angry or upset with them.

To see the guidance produced by Lancashire County Council for schools and families, go to www.lancashire.gov.uk and search "EBSA". (Hyperlink below if receiving this newsletter by email)

[Emotionally based school avoidance \(EBSA\) guidance - Lancashire County Council](#)



Clinical Partners are a private provider who have been commissioned by LSCFT NHS services to provide some assessments for Autism for families as well as creating some co-produced resources based on some of the most common issues experienced by parent carers and their children and young people. This highly detailed resource is available to access for free and also provides regular themed e-newsletters delivered straight to your email addresses. The online support offer can be accessed, regardless of a diagnosis, and is not suggesting that a diagnosis of Autism will be given.

<https://lsc.autismunlocked.co.uk/family-resources>

Topics covered include: Sleep, Diet, Emotions and Behaviour, Managing stress, recognising strengths, communicating with school and more!

Further advice can be found on the Lancashire SENDIAS website or from the Local Authority helpline

SENDIAS Independent Advice and Support Service Lancashire can offer unbiased advice and support when accessing Education, health and social care services. Offer advice and potentially can support in meetings with schools to be your advocate if you need that kind of support.

www.lancssendias.org.uk 0300 123 6706 information.lineteam@lancashire.gov.uk.

The Local Authority SEND helpline number – 01772 533900 can be used to have a SEND query resolved as quickly as possible. You can use it to ask how to make a request for statutory assessment (EHCP), find out who the plan writer is for your child or find out how to ask for a review of your child's plan. You could also book a SEND surgery slot with a SEND case manager for more complex issues or case specific enquiries.

Carol Gray- Social Stories

Carol is best known for the development of Social Stories, a respected evidence-based practice used worldwide with people with autism of all ages. Carol is also known for initiating a very effective social philosophy that 1) 'abandons all assumptions', 2) regards both the typical and autism perspective as 'equally valid', and 3) recognizes the 'social impairment in autism' as shared (noting the well-intentioned but nonetheless misguided mistakes of parents and professionals). She has completed ground breaking work on some of the toughest topics in autism by reviewing the research, developing new theories, and proposing practical instructional strategies, most notably Gray's Guide to Bullying (2004) and Gray's Guide to Loss, Learning, and Students with ASD (2003).

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com>



Visual supports

Visual supports are a communication tool that can be used with autistic people. They can be used in most situations, are adaptable and portable. <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/visual-supports>

IT'S
OKAY

- * TO MAKE MISTAKES
- * TO HAVE BAD DAYS
- * TO BE LESS THAN PERFECT
- * TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU
- * TO BE YOURSELF.

@ STACIESWIFT

If you feel you are struggling and need support for your own mental health, please speak to your GP.

For urgent advice and support call
0800 953 0110

For a range of mental health support charities please go to
www.mentalhealth-uk.org

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