

Worried about a Special Educational Needs issue – what can you do?

Let's Keep Talking

If you have a child who has special educational needs (SEN) and you are concerned about how they are being supported in school, you will find this information sheet useful. It contains guidance on ways you can express your concerns and, hopefully resolve them to everyone's satisfaction.

You can ask for a meeting with:

- the class teacher/tutor
 - in many cases this will reassure you. If you continue to have concerns, you may wish to contact:
- the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo)
 - the SENCo has a major role to play and is likely to be able to resolve any SEN issues. Exceptionally, having met with the SENCo you may wish to contact:
- the headteacher
 - the headteacher and ultimately the governors have overall responsibility for meeting the needs of children within the school.

You should always discuss concerns with your child's class teacher or tutor. If you usually attend reviews or parent evenings then this would be a good time to raise any issues. If you would prefer not to wait until a parents' consultation evening, you should contact the school and ask for a meeting, explaining why you are asking for one. **Please remember it may be difficult for the teacher/tutor to see you during school hours.**

You can ask to see a copy of the SEN policy which should explain how the school provides education for all children with SEN.

At any stage you can contact the Parent Partnership Service – the address is given at the end of this leaflet. The Parent Partnership Service can support you with information or put you in touch with someone who may be able to go with you to a meeting. As a last resort, every school has a formal complaints procedure which can be followed if you are unable to resolve the issue(s) via the above procedures. Written information about this should be available direct from the school.

**Concerned
about
arrangements
for your child
in school?**

Concerned about arrangements made by the Local Authority (LA)?

If you have concerns with the LA about the statutory assessment process, perhaps over a refusal to assess or the content of your child's Statement of SEN, you will be offered the opportunity to meet with the people involved in making decisions for the LA. The Parent Partnership Service can advise you about this. If a statutory assessment has taken place you should also have been given the name of a contact person at the LA (a named officer).

If you want to, you can take a friend or supporter with you to any meeting.

In a few cases, mediation might be appropriate. Mediation is one of a number of different ways of resolving a disagreement and tends to be used when the people involved are finding it difficult to find a way forward. Mediation involves an impartial third party who won't take sides.

Mediators help people who disagree to find solutions that are acceptable to both parties. They enable all concerned to identify the issues that need to be sorted out and what can be done to resolve them. This approach can bring out helpful ideas that no-one had considered before and can lead to acceptable solutions. The process of mediation can only be started if both parties are willing to join in. It is a confidential process and either party can withdraw at any time. Taking part in mediation may not resolve all the issues but it will not affect any rights you have in law regarding the disagreement, such as your right of appeal to the Tribunals Service Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Details of mediation services and arrangements in your area are available from the Parent Partnership Service.

Hampshire County Council has a formal complaints procedure and further details can be obtained from the Children's Services Department website at: www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/contact-cs/cs-complaints.

Contacts

Parent Partnership Service
Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council
Elizabeth II Court East
The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UG
Tel: 01962 845870
Email: enquiries.pps@hants.gov.uk
Website: www.hants.gov.uk/parentpartnership

This leaflet is available to download at:
www.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications

For a copy of this publication in another language or format (e.g. large print or in an audio format) please contact: **0845 603 5620**,
childrens.services@hants.gov.uk
or **Minicom: 0845 603 5625**