



If you need to have a conversation/meeting with your school about a matter you would like to raise with them, here are some positive tips you could apply, to contribute and strive for effective interactions, to find the best way forward.

Before the meeting

Think

- Before you make contact with the school, make a list of key points and be clear on the purpose of your communication.
Ask yourself: what is the outcome you want? Consider: is it reasonable?

Wait

- If your feelings are running high, you might want to give yourself time to think about it, and reflect on what you actually want to achieve from this communication with the school.
- When you do make the communication, allow the school time to respond – school leaders and teachers are usually balancing many competing demands on their time.
- It's also OK to advise the school what time/date works best for you to have the conversation or meeting, so you are not feeling rushed or stressed.

Communicate

- Keep your communication clear and succinct – use a dot point list.
It's good to acknowledge the school is busy but that you would appreciate acknowledgement of safe receipt of your communication and an indication of when you are likely to hear back (e.g. more than 48 hours?)
- State what you would like to see as the desired outcome of the matter, by suggesting any solutions or expectations and sharing them constructively and respectfully.
- Advise the school regarding the best times to contact you and state your preferred method of communication (meeting, phone call, SMS, email or if needed a teleconference/Zoom meeting.)

- It may not be possible to speak/meet with the Principal directly, so this responsibility may be delegated to someone else in the leadership team. Your acceptance of this delegate acknowledges the time pressures on Principals.
- If there are school policies or DET policy guidelines relevant to the issue at hand, request to be provided with access to these prior to the meeting.

The meeting

- Take a dot-point list of discussion items so you don't leave anything out. It's essential that the school hears the back-story to your child's situation, however, don't dwell on historical events that are not relevant. It's critically important that the school understands the impact the matter is having on the child's learning and wellbeing, right now.
- Be realistic in your expectations and be open to options on how best to remedy the issue, or at least to find a way forward.
- If the issue is tricky or sensitive you may want a support person to assist you (e.g. a friend or family member). This person could also take notes for you.
- Both you and the school should know in advance who is attending the meeting - no one should be blind-sided.
- If meeting participants are not all introduced, it's OK to ask for introductions. You could also ask what is each person's role in attending. Confirm the meeting time duration.
- If you have a support person in attendance, agree on a signal you can give them if you are needing to exit for a break.
- It is OK to request a break and to step out of the meeting room for a moment to gather your thoughts.
- It's OK to ask the school/DET representatives to re-state any question, or to clarify anything you don't understand. If you are unclear what they mean, you could ask if they can illustrate an example of what they mean.
- Before you leave the meeting, confirm and make sure you understand agreed **actions** and **timelines** ('by when' dates).

After the meeting

- Depending on timelines stated at the end of the meeting, if you have not heard back from the school by the agreed date, contact the school to request a progress status. It's also proactive to advise positive feedback if all is going well.
- Encourage your child to do a check-in with a trusted school contact, about how they are feeling or progressing.

If matters haven't resolved, make contact with Parents Victoria for further guidance.



Phone: 0419 716 171 Online: parents victoria.asn.au/contact