

# Parent Teacher Meetings



## 1. Preparation

- a. Subjects – Talk to your child about the subjects they are studying and try to come to grips with the various challenges that each subject brings with it. There may be issues of content difficulty, amount of homework, level of follow up on homework etc. Look at the textbooks before you go so that you have a better idea of what is involved in each subject.
- b. Teacher's names – often the school will supply a list and you need to go through this with your child before the meeting. If the school does not supply a list of names then get your child to make one for you.
- c. Review previous reports – remind yourself of the comments from previous tests and bring these with you to the meeting.
- d. Look at problems from child's point of view – discuss this in an open way before the meeting.
- e. Sometimes children suffer in silence – allow them the space to open up on problems they may be trying to cope with.

## 2. The meeting

- a. Notebook – always bring a notebook to keep track of all the comments you get in the few hours of the meetings. Without notes it may be very difficult to be sure of who said what.
- b. Expectations of homework – ask the teacher about this for their subject.
- c. Limit of time – usually there are a lot of parents queuing to see the teachers so your time slot is limited. However if there is something particularly important don't rush it. If there are major issues to be covered then a general PTM is probably not the right place to attempt this and you should arrange a private meeting where time may be not a limiting factor.
- d. Agree on any actions required on either side – if the child is experiencing problems at school, it is important for parents and teachers to share the responsibility for creating a working relationship that fosters children's learning and development.
- e. Keep an open mind - you may find the teacher has constructive criticism about your child. Keep an open mind to the teacher's comments. Neither your child nor his teacher is perfect, so if a problem arises it's important to consider both sides of the story. The best solution is one that helps your child succeed in school.

## 3. Back home

- a. Sharing the knowledge in a positive way - let your child know what you discussed and if you and the teacher made any decisions or came to any conclusions. If there are problems try to put the focus on looking for solutions rather than finding someone to blame.
- b. Plan for the future – being in school and trying to keep on top of subjects is always a challenge, if there are difficulties then try to work out an agreed plan. The student has to be the prime mover in designing and implementing the plan.
- c. Identify difficulties – make a list of the problems and set targets for solving some of them at any one time.
- d. Become a partner in your child's education – give positive comment wherever you can and be slow to blame.
- e. It helps to have the adult big picture view especially if there are some difficulties.