

First School Conversation Pack

A calm, practical way to prepare the next conversation when your child is struggling to attend school.

How to use this pack

You do not have to explain your child's whole history in one conversation. Use these pages to organise a few observable facts, ask for one proportionate next step and agree when it will be reviewed.

Before the conversation

Complete only what is useful. Short, factual notes are usually more helpful than a long account written during a difficult morning.

Child or young person:

School / setting:

Date of the conversation:

Who is attending or receiving this email:

What is happening with attendance at the moment?

What have you noticed your child saying, showing or finding difficult?

What has helped even a little, and what seems to increase pressure?

Keep the first plan small and reviewable

The aim is not a perfect answer on day one. It is a clear, written next step that everyone can understand and review.

1 Ask for one named contact A reliable contact gives the family and school a clear way to share information and respond when the plan needs adjustment.	
Named school contact:	
Backup contact if they are unavailable:	
How and when we will communicate:	

2 Agree one manageable adjustment Choose the smallest safe practical change to try first. It might concern arrival, a transition, a lesson, a quieter space or the way information is shared.	
The pressure point we are focusing on:	
The first adjustment we will try:	
What would show that this adjustment is helping?	

3 Set a short review point A support arrangement needs a date for reflection. Keep the review focused on what was actually tried, what helped and what needs changing.	
Trial start date:	
Review date:	
What will be recorded before the review?	

Turn the conversation into a clear written record

Use this after a call or meeting. Change the wording so that it accurately reflects your family's situation and the discussion you had.

Subject: Follow-up and agreed next steps for [child's name]

Dear [name],

Thank you for speaking with me on [date] about [child's name] and their current difficulty with attendance. I am writing to make sure I have understood the agreed next steps correctly.

My understanding is that [named contact] will [agreed action], and that we will try [one adjustment] from [start date]. We agreed to keep a brief record of [what will be noticed or shared] and review this on [review date].

Please let me know if I have misunderstood anything, or if there is anything further you need from me at this stage.

Kind regards,
[Your name]

When you need a wider written question

If your child's attendance difficulty is prolonged, the situation is complex, or you are asking the school or local authority for a specific response, keep the same approach: record dates and the support requested, explain what has been tried, and state the question you need answered. The Hub's free letter tool can help turn those facts into a clear starting draft.

This pack is general educational information for families in England. It is not clinical advice, legal advice or individual advocacy. Seek appropriate health, safeguarding or independent SEND advice when needed.