

## **School do not see what we see**

It can be quite common that school do not see the same behaviours in school as you do at home. This can be frustrating for you as a parent and you can often feel like school are not believing you or supporting your child. However, this can also be difficult for schools to identify what support can be put in place for a child when they are seemingly coping with school, perhaps progressing well academically and do not appear to need any extra support.

There are many reasons why this situation presents itself. Parents can describe their child coming out of school and 'exploding like a bottle of pop.' This might be due to the high anxiety or sensory overload they have experienced in the school environment. If your child manages this by masking how they are feeling in school, it will often get missed by school staff that your child is struggling. Children are also very good at taking part in 'busy work' where they appear to be engaging but not actually understanding the work. Similarly, children can often appear to have friends and be socialising because they are 'tagging along' with their peers, but actually they do not have any real established friendships and are struggling to socialise with their peers. These things can cause huge anxiety, upset and frustration which is released in the home environment where your child feels safe and secure.

### **What can I do?**

Keep a record of incidents occurring at home, including dates and times.

Discuss your concerns with school by requesting a meeting. Initially this might be with your child's class teacher or someone who knows them best. If your child is receiving any SEN support, it should be the SENCo that you meet with.

It is a good idea to prepare for this meeting by:

- Talking to your child to gather their views. Can they tell you what they are struggling with at school and what might help them? You can write these down and share these with school or your child might like to attend the meeting if they feel comfortable to do this.
- Writing down what your concerns are. Bullet form is helpful so you can tick off the points as you cover them

- Writing down any questions you have for school. For example, what is currently in place and is your child making progress across all areas (not just academically)
- Being clear what you would like to happen moving forward
- Gathering any assessments/ advice or reports you might have from outside agencies- for example CAMHS, GP etc.

## **What can school do?**

There are a number of things school could be putting in place to try and improve things for your child at school. Depending on your child's age and their individual needs, here are some things you and school could consider.

- A One Page Profile. This should be written with your child's involvement and can be shared with staff who work with your child. For more information, visit the Local offer. <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/>
- Can a trusted member of staff be identified who can be available to your child at a suitable set time? For example- 10 minutes a day to discuss any concerns/ worries
- Can a safe space be identified for your child to take some time out if needed?
- If lunch and break times are an issue- is there somewhere more suitable your child can go and have their lunch? Are there any lunchtime clubs they can join?
- If they are struggling with social skills can some small group activities be facilitated?
- Can school make some focused observations on the child- either in the classroom or at break time depending on where the concerns lie?
- Can there be a home/ school communication book?
- Do school run a specific programme around anxiety that your child can be part of? For example, 'No Worries' programme, Lego or Art Therapy?

Of course these are just examples of the things you could reasonably ask for and is not an exhaustive list. It is likely that you, your child and your child's school will have some ideas about what might help them.

To conclude a meeting with school, it is a good idea to:

- Establish the best way to communicate with school. Who is your point of contact, is email or telephone preferable, when? Remember, this needs to be reasonable. It is not realistic to expect school to call you on a daily basis.
- Request that any agreed actions are written down and copy provided to all attendees.
- Set a date for review. (usually a term is a reasonable amount of time to allow any agreed actions to be put in place and progress reviewed)

All these things are considered low level support, in fact many of them would not fall under SEN support but considered 'Universal Provision', which is what should be available to all learners. However, some small adjustments can make a huge difference to a child.

Some other resources you might find helpful are:

- Shropshire's Provision for SEND- a Guide for mainstream schools- found on the local offer <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/>
- Autism West Midlands Website and online resources <https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/>

### **Where can I get further information, advice or support?**

Contact the IASS team on:

**Phone:** 01743 280019 (Open 10am-4pm Monday—Friday)

**Web:** [www.cabshropshire.org.uk](http://www.cabshropshire.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/IASSShropshire](https://www.facebook.com/IASSShropshire)

**Email:** [iass@cabshropshire.org.uk](mailto:iass@cabshropshire.org.uk)

**Address:** Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LY