

Addressing a School Concern Calmly, Fairly, and Early

A school concern is easier to solve when it is addressed early, calmly, and with clear facts. The goal is not to prove that one person is wrong. The goal is to understand what is happening and agree on a useful next step for the child. Begin by listening to your child. Ask short questions and write down the child's exact words when they may matter. Gather direct observations, dates, schoolwork, attendance information, or messages that help explain the concern. Do not decide the cause before hearing what the school has observed.

Contact the person closest to the problem, usually the classroom teacher. Explain the concern in a few factual sentences. Describe how it affects learning, attendance, behavior, health, safety, or well-being. Avoid accusations, long histories, and conclusions that have not been verified.

Ask specific questions: "What have you noticed?" "When does this happen?" "How often?" "What has already been tried?" and "What seems to help?" Listen to the teacher's information and compare it with what you see at home. A calm meeting should create a fuller picture, not a contest between two versions.

Request one reasonable action that can be observed. The plan might include a seating change, a daily check-in, clearer homework directions, a short practice period, or contact with appropriate support staff. Agree on what the school will do, what the family will do, and how progress will be measured.

Set a follow-up date and allow appropriate time for the plan to work. After a meaningful conversation, send a brief, friendly email that summarizes the concern, the agreed actions, and the review date. At follow-up, decide whether the plan helped, needs adjustment, or requires additional school support. Immediate safety concerns should not wait for a routine meeting.

Did You Know?

- ✓ The CDC defines parent engagement as parents and school staff working together to support and improve children's learning, development, and health.¹
- ✓ National PTA says effective family-school communication should be proactive, timely, two-way, understandable, and open to family follow-up.²
- ✓ The U.S. Department of Education provides sample questions to help families prepare for productive conversations and build stronger partnerships with schools.³

Research Sources

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ["Parent Engagement in Schools."](#) November 22, 2024.
2. National Parent Teacher Association. ["Standard 2: Communicate Effectively."](#)
3. U.S. Department of Education. ["Family Partnership and Engagement."](#) Page last reviewed February 26, 2026.

Concern Meeting Planner and Friendly Follow-Up Email

Use this planner to organize the facts, prepare focused questions, agree on one reasonable action, and document the plan with a brief, respectful follow-up email.

Parent/caregiver: _____	Meeting date: _____
Child: _____	School/grade: _____

1. Define the Concern with Facts

Concern in one sentence: _____

Direct observations, dates, or examples: _____

Child's exact words or reported information: _____

Effect on learning, attendance, behavior, health, safety, or well-being: _____

2. Questions for the School

What has the teacher or staff member observed? _____

When and how often does it happen? _____

What has already been tried, and what seems to help? _____

What information is still needed? _____

3. Request One Reasonable Action

Requested action: _____

How the action will be observed or measured: _____

School responsibility: _____ Family responsibility: _____

4. Agreement and Follow-Up

Agreed action: _____

Person responsible: _____ Start date: _____

Follow-up date: _____ Time allowed: _____

Result at follow-up: ☐ Helped ☐ Adjust plan ☐ Additional support needed

5. Friendly Follow-Up Email

To: _____ Subject: Follow-Up Regarding _____

Dear _____,

Thank you for speaking with me on _____ about _____.

My understanding is that the school will _____ and our family will _____.

We agreed to review progress on _____. Please let me know if I misunderstood any part of the plan. Thank you for working with us to support _____.

Sincerely, _____