

Information for Parents/Guardians engaging in PTSC

1. Preparation

- 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 such as content difficulty, amount of homework, level of follow up on homework. Look at the textbooks before you go so that you have a better idea of what is involved in each subject.
- 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.
- Review previous reports – remind yourself of teacher's comments about previous tests and bring these with you to the meeting.
- Look at problems from your child's point of view – discuss this in an open way before the meeting.
- Sometimes children suffer in silence – allow them the space to open up about any problems they may be experiencing.

2. The meeting

- Notebook – always bring a notebook to keep track of all the comments made by each. Without notes it may be very difficult afterwards to be sure of who said what.
- Homework – ask the teacher about their expectations for homework for their subject.
- Time constraints – 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 that you wish to discuss, don't rush. 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.
- 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 helps children's learning and development. If your child has learning difficulties clarify what help is available and other courses of action that needs to be addressed.
- Keep an open mind - you may find the teacher has constructive criticism about you. Keep an open mind about 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 to succeed in school.

3. Back home

- 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. If there are problems try to put the focus on looking for solutions rather than finding someone to blame.
- 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.
- Identify difficulties – make a list of the problems and set targets for solving some of them at any one time.
- Become a partner in your child's education – make positive comments wherever you can and be slow to blame.
- It helps to adopt an open and mature view especially if there are difficulties.

Sample Questions

Obviously emphasis and questions change as your child makes his or her way up through the school, but here is a range of example questions you may find useful.

1. What area is s/he best at?
2. Is s/he working to the best of his /her ability?
3. Does s/he comprehend what s/he reads?
4. Are there any areas s/he finds difficult? If so what are these specific areas?
5. Do you have any suggestions as to what I might do at home to help?
6. Does s/he participate in class?
7. How does s/he relate to others in the class?
8. Does s/he hand up homework /assignments on time, completed and at an acceptable level?
9. How does s/he compare with the rest of the class?
10. Does s/he have difficulty paying attention/following instructions/organising work or notes?
11. Is there anything about his/her performance or behaviour that you are concerned about?
12. Is s/he coping with the particular subject level?
13. How does s/he cope with exam stress?

