



How to Handle Disagreements with Your Child's School/School Staff

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Hello Caregivers!

First of all, thank you for all you are doing for the children in your home. We know that you all have busy lives and are juggling so many life happenings so please know we appreciate you and are here to help you!

Sometimes you are going to disagree with a school policy or decision made by a staff member. You may have a different perspective than then school staff does or know things that they do not about your child. Please provide your concerns and information to your child's EDM, CCFS Caseworker, and Education Team. Additionally, here are some information and steps on how to handle the school related disagreements.

Every child in foster care is appointed an Educational Decision Maker/EDM who represents the child in educational decisions. EDMs may be a:

- **Parent, Relative, or Fictive Kin**
- **Foster Parent**
- **Court Appointed Special Advocate or CASA**
- **Volunteer Educational Advocate (VEA) through the Legal Aid Center**

Your child's EDM will represent your child and help you with any issues you are having with your child's school. If you do not know who the EDM is for your child, ask your child's caseworker. Your role in communicating with the EDM on any real time concerns/issues is vital!

Schools often follow a chain of command for solving issues. Here is a general chain of command you may need to follow when disagreeing/appealing a school decision or with an issue with a school staff member:

*School Staff
School Based Foster Care Advocates/Counselors/Social Workers
Assistant Principals
Principals
School District Foster Care Points of Contact
School District Administrators
School District Superintendents/Boards*

Your child's EDM, caseworker, and CAP Attorney are all there to support you in helping your child so please keep them updated in real time so they can support you and your child and help to ensure your child's rights are being met.



Tips for When You Disagree with a School Policy

- **Ask for a Copy of the Policy.** If someone cites a school policy or regulation as a part of a decision, ask for a copy of it. Ask if school policy or regulation is based on a law. If it is not based on a law, it can be amended somehow or by someone.
- **Ask About Any Exceptions/Alternatives to the Policy and Request Them.** Read the policy/regulation. See if there are any exceptions or alternatives discussed in the policy/regulation. Explain how the policy negatively affects your child/family. Provide any information about circumstances affecting your child/family for the staff member to consider, any alternative decisions /consequences you be open to discussing, and any follow up you are doing with your child relating to the policy/regulation. Request any available exceptions or alternatives that work for your child and family.
- **Appeal the Decision/Policy and Contact Your School District's Foster Care Liaison/Department.** Ask school staff how you can appeal the policy/decision. Work with your child's EDM, Caseworker, and Education Team to follow any Appeal Process. Make sure to note any timelines/deadlines for the appeal and follow/make sure they take place. Contact the School District Foster Care Department/Liaison for possible assistance and to make sure your child's rights are being followed. Ask your child's school who their School District's Foster Care Department or Liaison is. *For children in the Clark County School District, the Foster Care Department can be reached at 702-799-1196 and at fostercaretransrequest@nv.ccsd.net*
- **Meet with Top School/School District Administrators.** Ask to meet with administrator who has the authority to amend the policy/regulation if there is no formal appeal process or if the appeal process doesn't solve the issue for your child/family.

Tips for When You Disagree with a School Staff Member

- **Try to work it out with the school staff member directly.** It is best practice to talk the person directly and is often necessary step before you can speak to an administrator who supervises them. Ask the school staff why or how they are making their decision. Try to get an understanding of their perspective or reason for the decision. Explain how the school staff member's approach or decision affected your child and family and why it is important to you/them.
- **Talk with the School's Foster Care Advocate/Liaison and Social Worker.** Ask the school's principal's office who the School's Foster Care Advocate/Liaison and/or Social Worker is. Explain the situation to the Advocate/Liaison/Social Worker and see if they are willing to talk with the school staff member, mediate a meeting with you and the staff member, or intervene especially if the issue involves or related to the child being in foster care/having trauma-related issues. Ask them if they are willing to attend any school meetings with you to help explain any foster care/trauma-related effects on your child pertaining ot the issue with school staff.
- **Talk with School District Administrators and File a Complaint if Necessary.** Work with your child's EDM, Caseworker, and Education Team to call the school office and request to meet with the administrator the school staff reports to (usually an assistant principal) or ask who the school district staff reports to and set up a meeting with their supervisor. Explain the issue you are having/had with school staff and how the staff's decision/handing affected you or your child. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, you can ask to have your child or family work with an alternate staff member who teaches the same subject or another administrator who serves the same position as the administrator you disagree with. Meet with the principal for final decisions at the school level. Ask for any Formal Complaint Processes you can file if necessary. Look for timelines on when you have to file a complaint and when you will be contacted about the resolution of your complaint. Contact the School District Superintendent and then the School District Board to meet/discuss with them your issue with the school district staff member. After talking/meeting with them, ask when and how you will be contacted about any decisions they will be making.