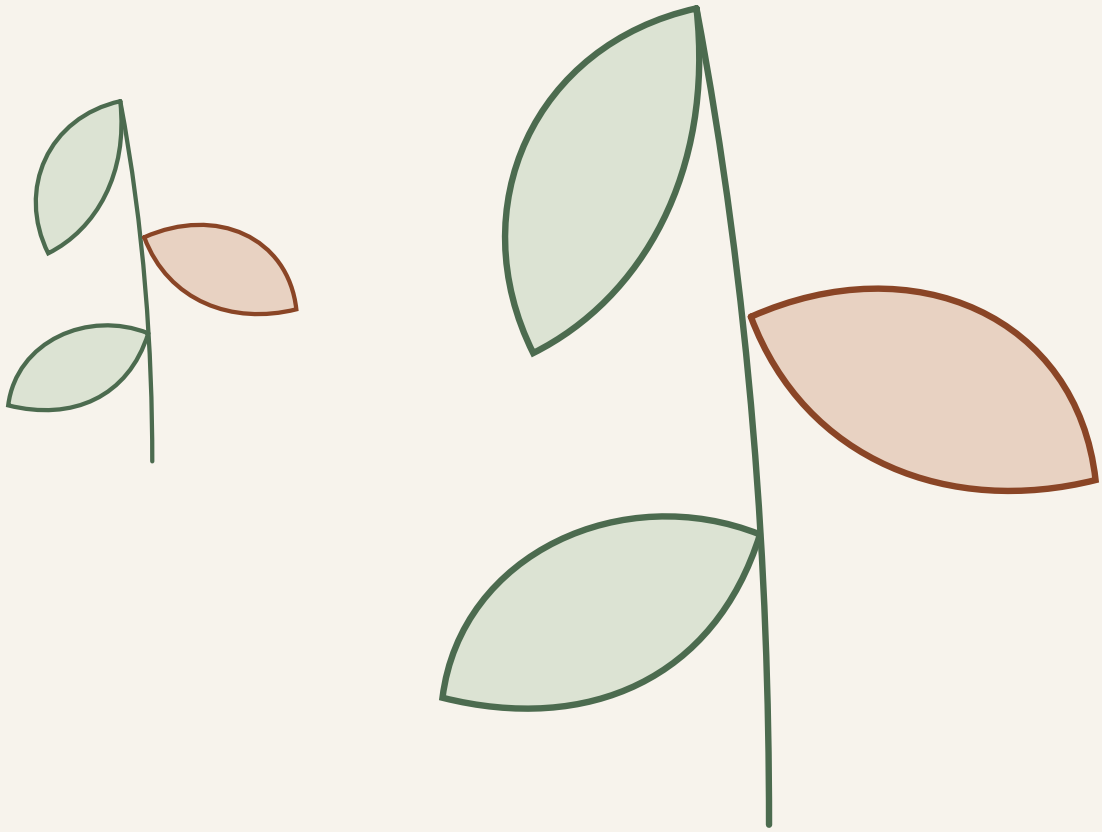
UNDERSTORY SUPPORT



School Meeting Pack

Before, during and after · Government schools edition

A calm, practical guide for parents and carers of children who need extra support at school. Plan what to say, keep track of what's agreed, and know what to do next.

Understory Support
Calm, clear support for complex families · Adelaide

SCHOOL MEETING PACK

How to use this pack

You don't need to fill everything in. Use the parts that help, skip the rest.

Meeting in the next few days? Go straight to page 3. It's the shortcut.

What's in here

- **Before the meeting** Pages 2–8
  Work out what you want, gather what you need, ask for the meeting, and look after yourself.
- **During the meeting** Pages 9–11
  A one-page sheet to bring in, phrases for when you freeze, and a table for what gets agreed.
- **After the meeting** Pages 12–16
  The follow-up email, checking things happen, what to do if they don't, and after a hard meeting.
- **Keeping a record** Page 17
  A meeting log for the whole year.

A few things to know

- You can type into the boxes on screen, or print it and write by hand.
- Use one copy per child, per meeting. Save a blank copy first.
- You're allowed to bring a support person to any school meeting.
- You don't have to agree to anything on the spot. It's fine to take time to think.
- Your child's strengths matter as much as their challenges. Say both.

This pack is general information for families in South Australia. It isn't legal advice. Contact details and processes were checked in October 2026 and can change.

BEFORE THE MEETING

What's this meeting for?

Knowing why you're meeting helps you decide what to bring and what to ask for.

This meeting is about (tick any that fit)

- ☐ Setting up a new plan for my child
- ☐ Reviewing my child's current plan
- ☐ A problem that's come up
- ☐ Behaviour, suspension or being sent home
- ☐ Starting school or changing schools
- ☐ Moving to a new year level or teacher
- ☐ Something else:

What I want to walk out with (three things at most)

1

2

3

About your child's plan. In SA government schools, children with disability usually have a **One Plan**: a personalised learning plan written with families, reviewed during the year. There's a separate edition of this pack for Catholic schools. Whatever it's called, you can ask for a copy before any meeting.

BEFORE THE MEETING

If the meeting is in the next few days

No time for the whole pack? Do these five things and you'll be well prepared.

1. **Write your top three concerns.**
   Short and specific. What's happening, and how often?

2. **Gather the most recent report or plan.**
   One Plan, therapy report, or the last school report. Which one?

3. **Ask who will be there.**
   Names and roles, so there are no surprises.

4. **Bring someone with you.**
   A partner, friend, family member or advocate. Who?

5. **Write one sentence about your child's strengths.**
   Start the meeting here. It sets the tone.

Then go to page 9 and copy these onto your one-page meeting sheet.

BEFORE THE MEETING

My child right now

A quick picture of how things are. Keep it short. Dot points are fine.

What's going well

What's hard at the moment

What's changed lately

At school, at home, in health, sleep, friendships, family.

What my child says about school

Use their own words if you can. If they can't tell you, what do you notice?

BEFORE THE MEETING

What's already been tried

This stops the meeting going back over old ground, and shows you've already been working on it.

What I've tried at home

What the school has tried

What helped

What didn't help, or made it worse

If you're not sure what the school has tried, that's a good question to ask in the meeting: *"What's been done so far, and has it made a difference?"*

BEFORE THE MEETING

What to bring

Tick what you have. Anything you're waiting on, note when you asked for it.

Document	Have it	Requested	Date asked	Notes
Current One Plan or learning plan	☐	☐		
Last school report	☐	☐		
Therapy reports (OT, speech, psychology)	☐	☐		
GP or paediatrician letters	☐	☐		
NDIS or Thriving Kids documents	☐	☐		
Incident, behaviour or suspension notes	☐	☐		
Emails with the school	☐	☐		
My notes on what's happening at home	☐	☐		
Samples of schoolwork	☐	☐		
Other:	☐	☐		
Other:	☐	☐		

Tip: you don't have to hand everything over. Bring it so you can check facts or show something if you need to. Take copies, not originals.

BEFORE THE MEETING

Asking for the meeting

You're allowed to ask for a meeting at any time. You don't need a crisis to ask.

EMAIL TEMPLATE

Subject: Meeting request – [child's name], [year level/class]

Hi [teacher or leader's name],

I'd like to set up a meeting to talk about how [child's name] is going at school.

The main things I'd like to talk about are:

- [concern 1]
- [concern 2]
- [concern 3]

Could you please let me know:

- a few times that suit you
- who will be at the meeting
- whether you can send me a copy of [child's name]'s current One Plan (or learning plan) before we meet

I'll be bringing a support person with me.

Thanks,
[Your name]
[Phone]

Tips

- Keep it short. Save the detail for the meeting.
- If your child has a One Plan, ask for it first so you're not seeing it for the first time in the room.
- You can bring a support person. It helps to let the school know someone is coming.

Date sent	Meeting date and time	Who's attending

BEFORE THE MEETING

Looking after yourself

School meetings can be hard, especially when you've been worried for a while. A bit of planning helps.

On the day

- Eat something beforehand, even if it's small.
- Arrive a few minutes early. Park somewhere easy.
- Bring water, your notes, and this pack.
- Decide with your support person who will speak first, and what their job is (taking notes, keeping you on track, speaking up if you get stuck).
- Sit where you're comfortable. You can ask to move.
- It's okay to ask for a break, or to stop and come back another day.
- It's okay to get upset. It shows how much you care. Take a breath and keep going when you're ready.

My support person is

Their job in the meeting

One thing that helps me stay steady

A phrase, a breath, a photo on your phone, a plan for afterwards.

What I'll do for myself afterwards

DURING THE MEETING

My meeting sheet

The page you bring into the room. Everything important, on one page.

Date

Who's there

To start: my child's strengths

My top three concerns

1

2

3

My questions

What was agreed

Write it down before you leave, or ask someone else to.

Next meeting

DURING THE MEETING

Things you can say

It's normal to freeze, get teary or lose your words. Tick two or three to keep in mind, and bring this page in.

To slow things down

- [ ] "Can we slow down for a minute?"
- [ ] "I need a short break."
- [ ] "Can you say that again another way?"

To get clear answers

- [ ] "What would that look like on a normal school day?"
- [ ] "Who will do that, and by when?"
- [ ] "How will we know if it's working?"
- [ ] "What happens if it doesn't work?"

When you're not sure

- [ ] "I'd like some time to think about that before I agree."
- [ ] "I'm not comfortable with that yet. Can we look at other options?"
- [ ] "Can you put that in writing for me?"

To keep your child at the centre

- [ ] "What does [child's name] say about this?"
- [ ] "What's going well for them right now?"

To close the meeting well

- [ ] "Can we go over what we've agreed before we finish?"
- [ ] "When will we meet again to check how it's going?"

Your support person can have a copy too. If you get stuck, they can point to a phrase.

DURING THE MEETING

What we agreed

Fill this in during the meeting or straight after. Every action needs a person and a date.

What will happen	Who	By when	How we'll know it's working

If something is vague, like "we'll keep an eye on it", ask: "Who will do that, and how will we know?" If there's no answer, write that down too.

AFTER THE MEETING

The same-day follow-up email

The most important page in the pack. Send it the same day, or the next day at the latest, while everyone still remembers. It becomes your record of what was agreed.

EMAIL TEMPLATE

Subject: Thank you – summary of today's meeting about [child's name]

Hi [name],

Thanks for meeting with me today. Here's what I understood we agreed. Please let me know by [day] if anything is different from your notes.

Agreed actions

1. [What] – [who] – by [when]
2. [What] – [who] – by [when]
3. [What] – [who] – by [when]

Next meeting: [date], or [time frame, e.g. week 5 of this term]

[Optional: One thing I'd still like to follow up is ...]

Thanks again,
[Your name]

Tips

- Keep it friendly and factual. No blame, no emotion. That makes it hard to argue with later.
- Copy the actions straight from page 11.
- If they don't reply to correct it, it stands as the record.
- Save a copy in one folder with all your other school emails.

Sent to

Date sent

☐ They replied and confirmed, or corrected it

Anything they changed or added

AFTER THE MEETING

Checking it's happening

Check in at two, four and six weeks. Write done, partly, or not yet.

Action	2 weeks	4 weeks	6 weeks

What I've noticed in my child since the meeting

If things aren't happening by six weeks, turn to page 14.

AFTER THE MEETING

When things aren't happening

Most things get sorted at the school. Go one step at a time, and give each step a fair chance before moving to the next.

1 A friendly reminder

Email the person responsible. Keep it light. Give it about a week.

EMAIL TEMPLATE

Hi [name], just checking in on [action] from our meeting on [date]. Could you let me know where that's up to? Thanks, [your name]

2 Ask for a review meeting

If it's still not happening, ask for a meeting to review the plan. Use the email on page 7 and bring your actions table from page 11.

3 Go to a school leader

If the teacher can't sort it, go to the principal or deputy principal. The school must have the chance to respond before the Department gets involved.

EMAIL TEMPLATE

Subject: Request to meet – [child's name]

Hi [principal's name],

I'm writing about [child's name] in [year/class]. On [date] we agreed [actions]. As of today, [what has or hasn't happened].

I'd like to meet to talk about how we can get this back on track. I've attached the summary email from our meeting.

Thanks,
[Your name]

AFTER THE MEETING

When things aren't happening (continued)

4 **Department Customer Feedback (government schools)**

If a school leader has had the chance and it's still not resolved, contact the Department for Education's Customer Feedback team on **1800 677 435** (free call), or use their online feedback and complaints form.

5 **Ombudsman SA**

If you're still not satisfied after the Department, you can contact Ombudsman SA. They'll usually ask whether you've been through the school and the Department first.

Free help along the way. You don't have to do this alone. DACSSA (Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of SA) offers free, independent advocacy for SA families, including education issues: **08 7122 6030**.

Catholic and independent schools have their own complaint processes. Ask the school for a copy.

Keep a record at every step

Date	Who I contacted	What they said or did

AFTER THE MEETING

After a hard meeting

Not every meeting goes well. If you walked out upset, confused or angry, that's normal.

- You don't have to decide anything today.
- Write down what happened while it's fresh. Just the facts is fine.
- Talk it through with someone you trust.
- Rest before you reply to anything.
- Come back to page 14 when you're ready to take the next step.

What happened

What was said that worried me

What I want to happen next (decide later, not today)

If you're feeling overwhelmed and need to talk to someone, you can call Lifeline on **13 11 14** any time, day or night.

Meeting log

A record of every school meeting this year. Handy when things change or you need to look back.

Date	Who attended	Main outcome	Next meeting

About Understory Support

Understory Support helps families with complex needs get through school, health and disability systems, calmly and clearly.

I'm a support coordinator, advocate and neurodivergent parent with more than 20 years' experience in disability, community support and complex family situations. My work is trauma-informed, neurodiversity-affirming, and paced so it's manageable for you.

If you'd like someone with you next time

- Meeting preparation: we work out what you want and plan the meeting together.
- Coming to the meeting with you, and writing the follow-up for you.
- Help when things aren't happening, or when several services are involved at once.

Contact

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Thank you for using this pack. I hope the next meeting feels a little easier.

