



Villa Real School
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Guidance for all Staff on Structured Conversations Policy

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GUIDANCE FOR ALL STAFF ON STRUCTURED CONVERSATIONS

PLANNING

Before having any conversations or discussions with parents/carers, it is important to plan first to ensure your safety and security and to be prepared for the parental/carer response.

In the planning stage, consider the following:

- Where are you going to meet? (is it a safe, neutral place with easy access to enter and exit) Will it be on TEAMS? (Safeguarding precaution)
- When are you going to meet? (convenient to both parties and at a time that is going to get the best out of you both e.g. not after a very long or difficult day at work!)
- How are you going to communicate? (email, letter, verbally but ensure you both know how you are able to contact one another)
- What are you going to say? (bullet point the main issues and consider the responses you may get from parents/carers so you are prepared)
- How are you going to manage the situation if parents/carers become angry, anxious or upset? (what is the back-up plan e.g. another member of staff supports)

THE STRUCTURED CONVERSATION

More information is available from the below link:

- National Strategy from 2009 in 'Achievement for All'
- Available via web link

<http://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/23.3-Structured-Conversation-Handbook.pdf>

- Used particularly for SEND but can be applied to any type of engagement with parents/carers

Four main elements of the structured conversation:

- **Explore** – attending (using the right body language) and paraphrasing (rephrasing what the parent/carers says so that they are listened to and understood)
- **Focussing** – summarising the topics of discussion and use of effective questions e.g. the miracle question. E.g. if I could wave a magic wand what would that mean for your child in school?
- **Planning** – setting goals (what do we want to achieve) and giving information (sharing of information to achieve goals)
- **Reviewing** – summarising and recording what happened

Then **Reflect** on how effective it was.

KEY POINTS

- Have a safety plan / risk assess the situation (don't be alone)
- Use clear and non jargonistic language
- Ensure opportunities to highlight the positives
- Have a clear agenda
- Make actions for both parties
- Be prepared for questions
- Summarise and agree a time to meet again

CONCLUSION

Ensure that both you and the parents/carers leave with a clear understanding of what has been shared (the issues) what both parties' views are of the situation and what both parties' tasks are. It is often useful to have a written agenda so parents/carers can make any notes on their tasks to complete. It is so important that you agree a time and a date to review, either another formal meeting or verbal feedback. This is so that parents/carers get a chance to reflect and reconsider and ultimately have a deadline/goal in which the change can be achieved either by the pupil or student, themselves, or the response from the School or all three. It is also necessary that parents/carers have a means of contacting you to discuss the issues at any point in the meantime before the review.