

# Questions to ask when your child starts school or returns to school after a stroke

## Stroke in childhood

Here are some questions that other parents found helpful to ask teachers and other staff members before their child returned to school. They may not all be relevant to your family, but you may find many of them useful.

### Planning meetings and involving appropriate staff

- 1 Can we arrange a planning meeting with all the staff involved in my child's care before he/she returns to school? When will this be?

- 2 The stroke may have an impact on my child's learning. Who is the special educational needs coordinator and can they come to the planning meeting?

- 3 Who is in charge of welfare and pastoral care at the school? Who is the school nurse? Who are the first aiders in school? How can they all be informed of my child's stroke and involved in his/her care planning?

- 4 Is there anything you need to know from the medical professionals and therapists who have been working with my family? What information would you find helpful?

- 5 Can we arrange review meetings every three to six months? Can we agree the dates now?

## Documentation and information sharing

- 6 Do you document whether a child has been given specific advice relating to their medical condition (for example keeping hydrated, being allowed more frequent toilet breaks, avoiding specific activities)? How do you ensure that all members of staff are aware of this advice and are frequently updated?

- 7 How will you document how my child is getting on when he/she returns? How often will we get feedback on his/her academic progress? Will an educational psychologist be available to assess my child's educational needs?

- 8 Every member of staff who will be supporting my child needs to be aware of what has happened. How will you ensure they have the information they need?

- 9 How will this information be passed on each academic year to new members of staff who will be supporting my child?

## Training needs

- 10** Do staff know how to spot symptoms of stroke or seizures? Do they know what to do if they see any? Please notify us immediately if... (provide examples as guided by medical staff: for example 'if my child hits his/her head')

- 11** Do staff know how to store and administer medicines properly? Who provides this training and how is the use of medicines documented? Will someone else be trained in the event of their absence?

- 12** Does this school have any previous experience of working with a child who has been affected by stroke or an acquired brain injury?

- 13** Do staff need training in stroke and acquired brain injury? Do they know about organisations that provide resources and ideas to support children in school settings?

- 14** My child will need to use aids and equipment (such as splints or orthotics). Can we arrange for staff to be trained on how to support my child to use these?

## Support needs

- 15 Could we set up a gradual return to school to slowly build up how much time my child attends? How can we arrange this?

- 16 The stroke may have an impact on my child's energy levels and concentration. Can we talk about how to identify when my child might need a break and how you can support this (for example, letting the teacher know, being able to use a quiet space, having access to snacks that we provide)?

- 17 Do you have a quiet area where my child can go to if they are feeling tired or overwhelmed (but are not unwell)?

- 18 It may be difficult for my child to transfer quickly between lessons (this may be due to balance difficulties or tiredness, or difficulty managing in crowds). Can they be allowed to leave lessons five minutes early? How can we make sure that all members of staff are aware of this arrangement?

- 19 It may be difficult for my child to carry books and resources between classes. How can you help with this (for example, a buddy to help them, changing where their locker is located, keeping certain resources for them in set lessons)? Is it possible to look at the timetable and reduce his/her walking distances between lessons?

- 20 It may be more difficult for my child to manage their school uniform. Can we make modifications (for example, to zips, buttons or shoes)? Can you make sure that my child has enough time to change between classes if needed?

**21** Can we talk about the subjects my child does in school (including PE) and discuss the concerns we have about specific topics or activities? We would like to discuss how rehabilitation exercises or strategies from therapists can be incorporated in to lessons like PE or other subjects.

**22** Who is responsible for securing any additional resources to help my child (for example, writing slopes, cushions for their seat, technology)?

**23** What arrangements can be made regarding seating and space in the classroom and during playtime, lunchtime and assemblies?

**24** What support will my child be given to make sure they are included in school activities like sports day and school trips? Can you make sure that we are given time to plan ahead and modify activities if we need to, to make sure my child is included?

**25** Who will have responsibility for my child's emotional wellbeing while at school? Can they have a named person to speak to? If we are worried about issues like their mood or bullying who do we speak to? Do you have a school counsellor or a link to psychological support services?

## Timetabling, workload and exams

**26** My child may need to start with a smaller number of subjects. Can we look at the subjects my child is studying, and discuss whether any of them can be changed or studied over a longer period? Can we schedule rest breaks and catch up sessions in to their timetable?

**27** My child may need longer to complete exams or other support (such as someone to write for them, or toilet or rest breaks). How do we inform examiners and make sure this is in place?

**28** My child may have varied attendance due to appointments, illness and fatigue. How can he/she be supported to catch up with missed school work?

## Communication

**29** Does your school have its own therapy team (for example physiotherapy or speech and language therapy)? How will they liaise with the other therapists that are working with my child?

**30** Can we set up a communication system (such as a diary or notebook) that staff can use to update me on how things are going and we can use to make sure staff are aware of any issues or concerns?

**31** What have classmates been told about my child's absence and medical history? If my child would like to talk to their classmates about what has happened, or if other children would like to ask questions about what has happened, how can the school support these conversations? Our preference is...

**32** Who should I contact if I am concerned about how my child is managing being back at school? What is the best way to get in touch?

**33** Do you have up-to-date emergency contact details for our family?

## Additional Notes

