

## Issues at school

Parents might find out about their child's misbehaviour through a phone call home if they're at secondary, or if they're at primary, the class teacher might mention something. A letter might come home and hopefully it wouldn't get to this point before the parent found out, but there might be a fixed-term exclusion.

### What do I do if my child is in trouble?

So the first thing parents need to do is to find out why it's happening. Now, parents can't do that on their own and the most useful way of sorting out behaviour issues at school is for everyone to work together. That's the school, the child and the parent.

### TOP TIP Find out the facts

I'd obviously try and speak to them to get to the bottom of the problem and then see what solutions we can find. Speak to the people at school, the teachers, whoever else is upsetting them or whatever the problem is.

### What kind of trouble could it be?

Low level disruptive behaviour are things like shouting out, not doing your work, talking to others in the classroom. That might sound in itself quite small and actually you could be thinking, well, the teacher's job is to teach and the teacher's job is to sort that out. And absolutely right, the teacher's job is to teach and can you imagine how hard it would be to be doing your job when someone is actively trying to stop you from doing it? If a child feels that they've got a particular issue with a teacher, obviously, that's quite a tricky situation to move forward, because what you don't want to do is to set yourself up against the school. What you want to do is for everybody to have a conversation where everyone feels that they're supporting each other.

### Listen to your child and the school.

As parents, we say to both children, irrespective of what school they're in, you know, if you have issues at school, first of all, you should address those with your local teacher and your head of year. If they don't feel that they're getting the response that they need, that makes them feel comfortable in the environment of the school, then obviously we'd ask them to come and talk to us and then, as parents, we would take that up on their

behalf.

I think one of the important things for parents, particularly when you're stressed and you've had a phone call from school, is to think about how you're going to play this. Who are you going to talk to in the school? If you set up a meeting, who do you want to be there? It would be important to find out exactly what behaviour is happening, so maybe start by asking what are the school concerned about. The more specific everyone can be, the better chance there is of actually doing something about it.

What we're looking for is some great problem solving with a really practical action plan where everybody's got a role to play in changing this behaviour over the next few weeks and months.

Outside of the home, the teacher is someone that they would gain respect for, so when they see some form of rapport between the child's parents - that's my daddy and my teacher - it helps them to grow with confidence.

### **How do I talk to my child if they are in trouble?**

What you want to do is to hear their side of it. You're not going to hear their side of it if you shut them down by being really aggressive or angry or upset. Take time to listen and to show that you really believe that they want to behave at school and there might just be some issues which are stopping that from happening.

### **Find out what the school is concerned about.**

### **Everyone needs to work together to solve problems.**

Family Lives is a charity which aims to support families living in the UK. You can read the full article on their website:

<http://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/holidays/holidays-for-separated-parents/>

