

Tips for difficult conversations with parents

From the new book: [How to build communication success in your school](#)



Stay calm and composed

Speak in a calm voice and ensure your body language is assertive but not aggressive



Stay safe

Ensure you have space to move out of the situation if it could escalate. You may want someone else in the room with you.



Acknowledge that you've heard them

Let them have their say and demonstrate you have heard them. Play back key points to clarify.



Take it offline

If in a larger group and the issue is specific to the individual then ask to speak to them separately.



Ask the right questions

Understand their concerns, including what they are not saying. There could be a bigger context.



Be prepared

Have the facts. Do your research wherever possible. Share the approach with a trusted colleague.



Know the boundaries

If it feels uncomfortable and inappropriate, say that their behaviour is not acceptable on school grounds. Defer the meeting if emotions are flying.



Don't take it personally

Avoid reacting to personal comments. Steer the conversation back to the facts and a positive outcome.



Confirm it in writing

Confirm what you discussed factually in writing. When people are emotional, the facts can be confused.

