

Want to get the **MOST** out of your TEACHER INTERACTIONS?



Teachers are in the profession because they love to help and because they love the subject matter. Tired, harried or stressed teachers might not always put their best face forward, but do not assume they do not like your child or are "being difficult" on purpose. Trust us, they need your support and want your child to succeed!

1. Write your thoughts on paper and then work to condense your beautiful prose into:

- A statement of empathy or gratitude for the teacher's work, or some other positive
- Making sure your tone sounds curious and respectful (as opposed to didactic or directive).
- Condensing the action items you'd like the teacher to complete into 2-3 bullet points.
- Making sure you're not asking for information that you could find on the teacher's website or blog.

2. After you're done, ask yourself "Could this email be written/sent by my child?"

Teachers truly love hearing from their students, and requests for help from a student will have a much higher response rate (plus catch the teacher's attention). Emails/communications from parents are definitely read/respected, but if it's an issue your child could handle (perhaps with your help), definitely consider that route.

3. Once you have the perfect email written, don't send it. Have someone else look it over and say "If I sent this to you, would you want to help me or ignore me?"

- Revise as necessary
- Send the email
- If this is an ongoing issue and/or your teacher hasn't replied to you the past two times, you **MIGHT** consider CCing the high school counselor. Please only do that if you feel completely stuck.

4. After you have sent the email, give the teacher time to respond.

Teachers have a very short window of time to meet with students, grade, plan, attend meetings, coach athletics, etc... and you should give the teacher at **LEAST 24 hours** to get back to you.

5. After 24 hours, if you haven't heard from the teacher, call the teacher's voice line.

"Oh, hi, Mr. Walker. This is Sally Brown, Bobby's mom. I sent you an email yesterday asking for some information about make-up work. Sorry to bother you as I know you're busy, but I'm hoping to hear back from you today. If I don't hear from you this afternoon I'll resend the email just in case it didn't get through. Thank you!"

EXAMPLES OF

Communications with your Child's Teacher

- Subject line should be clear and specific
- Be brief and respectful
- Do not blame your child's problems on the teacher's ability or style
- Be positive/collaborative. Ask for help.
- Be specific about what you want (use bullet points or numbers)
- Allow time for a response



SITUATION 1:

Student is turning in homework, but performing poorly on quizzes/tests

Dear Mrs. Bennet,

Thank you for everything you do for your students, including my son, John Smith. Recently I noticed that John has not been doing well in Math. He has been able to complete and turn in his homework for full points, but quizzes and tests continue to be a challenge. John has struggled in Math for the past few years and we are worried that this year will be more than he can handle.

- Do you have any insight into what the trouble might be?
- In addition to coming to you for extra help during your office hours, do you have any suggestions on how John can best prepare for the chapter tests?
- Are there any online resources or other opportunities out there that he could reference?

Thank you in advance for your help. I know you're busy and we really appreciate your time.

Sincerely,
Jane Smith

SITUATION 2:

Student has missed school and needs help

Dear Mrs. Bennett,

I hope you're having a good week!

Unfortunately, John has been quite ill lately and won't be in school again today. We are worried that he has fallen behind, especially since it will likely be a few more days before he returns. I've looked at your online blog and really appreciate your notes there.

- Can you help by sending me assignments and any electronic copies of further notes for this unit?
- Is it possible to reduce/modify the homework in any way in light of the circumstances?
- Can you let us know specific due dates if John manages to go to school by Friday?

John is eager to get back to school and back to the norm, so thank you in advance for your help!

Sincerely,
Jane Smith

SITUATION 3:

Student will be working with a tutor

Dear Mrs. Bennett,

Recently you and I discussed options for John and we really appreciate your time and ideas. In addition to coming in for extra help, my husband and I have decided to hire a tutor. It will be only once a week and just a drop in the bucket, but it's a start.

Before our first session with the tutor on Thursday, could you:

1. Let me know what chapter you're in (page numbers, if possible)
2. Send me the (approximate) date of the next test
3. Send me any information you think the tutor should know to make the session as efficient as possible. Of particular interest: the types of mistakes John makes on his test and any learning style differences you've noticed.

Thank you so much for your time and I look forward to hearing from you before 4pm on Thursday (when they have their first session!).

Sincerely,
Jane Smith

SITUATION 4:

Student is having trouble with another student

Dear Mrs. Bennet,

Thank you for all the work you do for your students. You've really made a difference in John's life and his interest in Biology.

Last night John admitted that he was having a problem with another student in the classroom. It sounds like he's feeling bullied and it happens when the attention in the room is away from their section. We've talked to John about how to handle it, but I wanted to let you know about it, too.

- Is there a possibility of reassigning John's seat away from the student who sits to his left?
- If the bullying continues, I'd probably contact the administration, but that sounds like a drastic jump at this point. What do you suggest?

Thank you advance and I hope this is just a normal teenager issue that will go away once they are separated or dealt with.

Sincerely,
Jane Smith