

# Special Education Meetings in the 2021-22 School Year

During the 2021-2022 school year, special education meetings with parents should continue to be held remotely, either by phone or using a DOE-approved virtual conferencing platform.

At parent request, special education meetings can be held in person. If the meeting is held in-person, all [School Year 2021-22 policies](#) regarding health and safety must be complied with, including the [COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement](#) currently in effect for visitors. Special education meetings do not constitute “emergency circumstances” under which a visitor who is unable or unwilling to show proof of vaccination upon sign-in may enter the building. In such a case, the meeting should be held remotely.

Meetings may be held remotely by telephone or using a DOE-approved virtual conferencing platform. Review the guidance regarding [How to Choose a Virtual Conferencing Platform](#) for Parent-Teacher Conferences for more guidance in selecting a platform and getting started using the platform.

Follow all [Special Education Standard Operating Procedures Manual \(SOPM\) guidance](#)([Open external link](#)) with respect to holding the special education meeting (including but not limited to IEP, social history, and manifestation determination review (MDR) meetings; meetings to develop behavioral intervention plans (BIPs); meetings to discuss initial referrals or requests for initial referrals; and meetings to develop Suspension Plans). In addition, the following guidance must be followed if the special education meeting is being held remotely:

- Contact the parent to identify a mutually agreeable time and means of conducting the special education meeting (i.e., on a remote conferencing platform, by telephone, or in-person). During this call, the case manager must:
  - Discuss a mutually agreeable time to schedule the meeting

- Determine any special accommodations, including interpretation, that are needed by the parent
- Ensure that the parent understands how the remote meeting will be taking place (i.e., on what type of video-conferencing platform or by telephone)
- Ensure that the parent understands that while video participation in the meeting may be possible, the parent has the right to choose to participate by audio only and DOE participants may also need to participate by audio only
- Discuss a back-up plan in case there are technology issues in holding the meeting remotely
- Enter efforts and method used to contact parent in SESIS Events Log
- Ensure that any accommodations needed by the parent, including interpretation, are arranged
  - See SOPM at page 7 for more information on arranging interpretation. Visit the [Translation and Interpretation Unit](#) for more support in arranging interpretation for conference calls and for online-remote interpretation.
- Ensure that parents and DOE meeting participants have access to the content to be discussed in the meeting. Follow the [Guidance for Sharing Student Records with Families during Remote Learning](#)([Open external link](#)) for more information on securely sending student records to families.
- At least 2 school days before the meeting, the parent should be contacted, using over-the-phone interpretation as needed, to confirm their attendance and walk through any logistical issues (e.g., that parents can use the dial-in phone number and PIN or have access to the technology needed to participate in on a remote conferencing platform, such as a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer with microphone and speakers and a webcam, should video be used). Record all outreach in SESIS Events Log.

For IEP meetings, the following steps must also be taken if the meeting is being held remotely or by telephone:

- Ensure that all required members of the IEP team (or other required participants in the special education meeting) have been informed and are available to participate for the entire meeting at the suggested time
- Ensure that non-participating related service providers receive 15 days advance notice of the need to provide a progress report
- Ensure that non-required provider(s) input is included and reflected in the draft IEP to be discussed at the meeting
- Ensure that the Notice of IEP Meeting and copies of assessments and reports and any other documents to be reviewed at the meeting have been sent to the parent at least 7 calendar days prior to the meeting. If the meeting will be held by conference call or on a remote conferencing platform, the Notice of IEP Meeting must include the conference call phone number and dial-in information or information on the remote conferencing platform.
- A student age 14 or older must be invited to participate in the IEP meeting. The student should be provided with a student-appropriate invitation including information on how they can participate if the meeting is being held remotely. This invitation must be uploaded into SESIS and the event should be recorded in the SESIS Events Log. If the parent has indicated that they would like the IEP meeting to be held remotely and the student is attending school in-person, the school should arrange a private space where the student can participate in the IEP meeting with the IEP team district representative. All health/safety requirements with respect to, but not limited to, physical distancing and face coverings, must be met.
- Send any assessment data, progress reports, or other documents to be discussed during the meeting to parents electronically at least 7 days prior to the IEP meeting. Follow the [Guidance for Sharing Student Records with Families during Remote Learning](#)(Open external link) for more information on securely sending student records to families. (Open external link)
- Indicate IEP meeting participation of participants by phone in the SESIS attendance page. Confirm that the IEP meeting participants

who were automatically populated from the finalized Notice of IEP Meeting are correct. Indicate all participants in the IEP meeting in the attendance page, checking "Participated by Telephone" as applicable.

- Confirm how the parent will get a copy of the Program and Services page of the IEP, the finalized IEP, and the PWN.
  - To send the materials by email, ask for a valid email address and seek the parent's Consent for Use of Electronic Mail. At the conclusion of the IEP meeting, if the IEP cannot be immediately finalized and sent to the parent, the DOE members of the IEP team are to provide the parent with a copy of the Recommended Special Education Programs and Services page of the draft IEP from SESIS. This should be emailed to the parent if they have the parent's agreement to do so.

When holding remote special education meetings, including IEP meetings, the following are best practices:

- School staff should share and update Outlook calendars daily to determine availability to facilitate the planning and organization of IEP meetings.
- Test out the technology in advance, and make sure all devices are charged.
- Have a back-up plan in case technology issues arise.
- Join the meeting early to trouble-shoot any technology issues.
- Ensure that all participants can see and/or hear all other participants. Ask participants to indicate if they are having any difficulties with their video and/or audio at the start of the meeting.
- Start the meeting by allowing all IEP meeting participants to take turns introducing themselves by name and title. Participants may also choose to edit their display name to include their name, title, and pronouns.
- Ask participants to mute their microphones if their location has background noise and when not speaking. Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and Zoom support the use of computer audio.

- Start the meetings by presenting an overview of topics to be covered and planned outcomes. Confirm that all DOE participants and parents have received and have access to any pertinent documentation that will be considered during the meeting.
- When conducting the meeting using Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, or Zoom, it is best practice to display the IEP or other documents being discussed.
- Turn off notifications on your computer – they may show up on others' screens.
- Engage and encourage parent participation and contribution to the discussion, and check for understanding and alignment during the meeting.
- Listen closely and monitor participant's turn-taking during the meeting to ensure engagement and contribution of all participants.
- At the end of the meeting, if a follow-up meeting appears necessary, schedule that follow-up meeting.

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