

*Connects parents and teachers by video call for virtual parents' consultations*



### **What will be discussed during online Parents' Consultations?**

These are the main areas that will be discussed:

- What is working well for your child
- What areas of knowledge and/or skills need to be improved
- Advice outlining how to make those improvements
- Any concerns with behaviour or engagement in class or learning in general

### **Will I get the same amount of time to speak to my child's teachers?**

Yes, the previous face-to-face parents' consultations were 5 minute appointments also. In fact, parents are reporting back to us that they find the new system much more effective as it is more focussed.

### **Which teachers should I book to see?**

Depending on the year group, your child may have up to 20 different teachers, across their 14 different subjects. Each one of those teachers may have more than one class. This is certainly the case for: Art, Music, Drama, Computing, DT, PE, and RE/PSHE.

In Years 7-11, you should be able to see most of your child's teachers but there probably will not be the capacity for you to see them all. With Sixth Form, you will be able to see all your child's teachers.

Parents' consultation is not the only opportunity you have to talk to your child's teacher. If you have concerns you can always contact school using [office@arden.solihull.sch.uk](mailto:office@arden.solihull.sch.uk) or call the main school number. Likewise if your child's teacher or Head of Year has concerns they will contact you. Edulink is a great way to monitor the type of work your child is set during remote learning and you can also see the achievement points they have been awarded. You can also ask your child to show you the work they are completing on Google Classroom, this often includes feedback provided by teachers.

## Why can't you extend Parents Consultations to enable me to see all my child's teachers?

We are often asked why can we not make parent consultations longer or add in extra parent consultation days. All year groups have at least one consultation, years 7, 11 and 12 have two. This brings the total to 10 sessions throughout the year for each member of staff. On those days the working day is extended to 6:30pm, and as staff do not get a respite on the following day it is not possible for us to add in more or longer parent consultations.

## Can teachers book appointments to see me?

Some teachers may have already booked in a time slot to meet with you. You are able to change the time or cancel the meeting if you wish to do so. Teachers will book a slot if there is something in particular that they wish to discuss with you, for example, this may be a concern with progress or attainment, or it may be that your child is doing particularly well in their subject area.

## Can I book an appointment with my child's form tutor?

Appointments are not available for your child's form tutor. This is because they will have appointments as a teacher of other classes. If necessary, the Head of Year may book in advance to meet with you. The Head of Year will make those appointments, they will not be able to meet the parents of all students in your child's year group.

## Can parents dial in separately on two different devices?

Yes they can. This facility has only just been set up by SchoolCloud and was not available for parents last year. There is only one appointment per subject per child, two adults who have parental responsibility can both attend that meeting on separate devices if needed. This might make it easier if parents are separated or scheduling around work commitments. The system does not allow for us to invite both parents to parents' consultations. Instead, one parent must invite the other – this link explains how to do this: <https://support.parenteveningsystem.co.uk/article/801-video-parents-how-to-attend-appointments-over-video-call>

## How can I make the most of Parents' Consultation meetings?

- Your **child should attend** the meetings. It may be helpful to position yourselves so you can all be seen on the web camera.
- The SchoolCloud system allows you to **ask questions in advance**. This will allow your child's teachers to prepare a response. The meeting will then be more focused and you will feel more informed about your child's progress and areas for development.
- Please have a **pen and paper** ready to take notes
- You can book back-to-back meetings without a break in between. Whilst this means you get through the process quicker, it is NOT recommended as it will not give you a chance to break or discuss the outcome of each consultation with your child.

## How are the meetings different to normal?

These meetings are obviously different to a 'traditional' face to face format. With the experiences that we have had so far, I would like to share this important information with you.

- The sessions will occur within a **fixed timeframe**. Towards the end of the meeting a **timer** will appear on screen and count down the final few seconds. *The teacher has no control over the timer.*
- The teacher's next session will be booked to follow immediately afterwards, so it is not possible for them to delay starting the next meeting.
- The meetings may feel more focused and direct than face-to-face contact.
- Teachers and the pastoral team are also able to book to see you. You may receive an email with these appointment details before the booking platform is open.
- You will **not be able to meet with a teacher unless you have an appointment** with them. They will be in a meeting with other parents.
- If you are **late or miss an appointment** we will not be able to move your appointment to a later time. Please ignore phone calls or door bells, the teacher will not be able to pause the conversation as the next appointment will be waiting.

Each appointment lasts for 5 minutes, which is the same duration as previous face-to-face meetings, enabling us to see as many parents as possible. A Parents' Consultation session lasts for 3 hours 45 minutes, giving a maximum of 45 back-to-back appointments per teacher.

## How do I book appointments and attend the meetings?

The system we are using for online Parents' Consultations is fairly straightforward. To help you with the process there are a number of resources which we have linked on this section of the website.

It may be that you do not need to read or watch all of these in order to understand the process, however they are here to refer to if needed. It is recommended that you watch the first video as it explains the entire process and includes some answers to frequently asked questions.

You can log into the system anytime to check that you are able to access the website - <https://ardenacademy.schoolcloud.co.uk/> However, you can only book appointments during the dates given.

You will not need specific logins or a phone app to use the system. It is all hosted through the internet, using your name and your **child's name and date of birth** to access the web site. **Follow the instructions on the first video or the parent guide if you are unsure.**

If you having difficulties accessing the system and none of the support material helps resolve the problem, please contact school using [office@arden.solihull.sch.uk](mailto:office@arden.solihull.sch.uk)

## What do I do if I'm having technical problems?

You will need a device that has a microphone and a camera. This could be a mobile phone, laptop or a desktop computer. If you use a desktop you will need to make sure it has a camera and microphone.

It is suggested you use the following web browsers:

- **iPhone/iPad:** Safari
- **Android:** Chrome or Firefox
- **Windows:** Chrome, Firefox, or Edge (latest version only)
- **Mac:** Safari, Chrome, or Firefox

Some phones might default to a different browser. A computer may auto disable a camera. To help with this the system opens an hour before appointments start allowing plenty of time to run the inbuilt sound and visual test and if needed time to resolve problems.

Connectivity can still be an issue, especially if you are moving around on a phone it will cut out. So I recommend you remain in one location for the consultations.

When you are at home the connection is unfortunately only as stable as your home internet connection. So make as much bandwidth available as you can. You can increase bandwidth by asking other users to remain offline during the meetings.

If you are connecting using Wi-Fi at work, or even at home using a work laptop via a remote dial in, your employer's firewall may prevent connections. We have had to whitelist all the servers used by the company, it is unlikely that your employer will wish to do that. You could talk to your IT department first or use a personal device

Please remember the teacher is not being rude when the call ends. They have no control over this. The system will be automatically connecting them to their next call.

If you are having login issues please use your child's name to log in **as it appears on Edulink.**