



**COMMUNICATION: PARENTS & STAFF**

# IDENTIFY THE ISSUE

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- × **Academic** – one class? Multiple classes? Learning issues? History of poor performance?
- × **Behavioral** – history? Isolated incident? Environmental factors?
- × **Emotional** – How does it manifest? When does it arise? What are the signs?
  
- × **Contact teacher?**
- × **Contact all teachers?**
- × **Contact guidance counselor?**
- × **Contact administration?**

# BEFORE CONTACT

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## Investigate the class

- ✘ Know the teacher policies & procedures, grade categories, expectations, etc. (**see syllabus**)
- ✘ **Family Access**
  - + Give adequate time to see grades (multiple essays take longer than mc Gradecam quizzes)
  - + Updating varies but only mandated 2x a trimester
  - + Asterisk is NOT missing or 0%; simply not entered yet
  - + AB = absent & awaiting update
  - + MS or 0% = not submitted
  - + Scores: know the overall amount, not just the %
    - ✘ Is it 3/5 or 30/50



# PROACTIVE BEATS REACTIVE

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## Teacher contact information

- + in phones, email, on refrigerators, etc.

## Bookmark websites

## Check in with your child

- + **Regular communication** about current curriculum & planning
- + **Basic studying methods**
  - × flashcards still work!
  - × Don't procrastinate
  - × Grades after quizzes/tests/projects = done
- + **THEY demonstrate**
  - × Checking the website
  - × Organized binder
  - × Regular use of planners
  - × Specific studying area

# TIME TO ACT

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Don't ignore your Spidy sense and model communication methods

- × Email first
- × Appointment to meet
- × Follow up communication
  - + Show your child how appropriately and get them involved.
  - + Child should always attend meetings.
    - × (Less loopholes, more empowerment.)

# AGENDA & OBJECTIVES

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## Have specific goals for your meeting.

- + Now that the problem is targeted, what is the goal?

## Give time for us to prepare our information

- + Ask the teacher what they've seen/heard in class (If behavior, ask for specifics & how they differ from others; if academic, ask to compare to expectation).
- + Ask for **evidence** to support teacher observations.

## Bring your information

- + Explain what you see or have heard.
- + Show **evidence** if you have it available.
- + Tell us what you would like to see or what you need help with.
- + Ask for strategies or tips. OFFER what works at home.

## Respect the time

- + If it's more than an email, **ask** when a good time to talk/meet is – drop-ins are very difficult for us.



# PLANNING IS KEY

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- × **Goals must be reasonable, realistic, specific & measurable.**
- × **Create a plan for class**
- × **Create a plan for home**
- × **everyone knows how this will be monitored outside of class (key to kids being involved in the process).**
- × **Make a communication plan with child**
  - + to check in on those goals.
  - + Encourage growth & hold them accountable.
- × **Continue communication - Agree to follow up with teacher when & how**

# SOMETIMES IT'S HOW YOU SAY IT

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- × **Assume best intent** (We may have a different method than you would use but our goals are for your child's success.)
- × **Stay calm.** Yelling, insulting, accusing, patronizing, etc. are immediate turn-offs. After the meeting your child needs to be with that teacher for the rest of the year.
- × **Ask for a mediator** – Please communicate with us first but if you don't feel like things are not progressing, ask for help through Guidance Counselors or Administration.



# ALSO GOOD TO KNOW GOING IN -

- ✘ Assessments/assignments show understanding of previous content, not constructed as a *response* to student performance on the previous one.
- ✘ Honors is self-select – be prepared to do more faster.
- ✘ Special Education/ELL/504 plans - Know your student's accommodations & make sure you & they know what those look like.
- ✘ Extra credit is unlikely; **focus on work available.**
- ✘ Packets while on an impromptu **vacation** are very unlikely (and often unproductive anyway).
- ✘ **Extracurricular activities** are optional, not mandatory. If they interfere with academics either re-evaluate the involvement or create a strict plan to do both well.
- ✘ **Attendance is key.**

# ARTICLES TO EXTEND THINKING

- × [The Smart Way to Talk to Teachers](#)
- × <http://www.parents.com/kids/education/back-to-school/how-to-talk-to-teachers/> – Parents.com
  - + Situations and suggestions for responding
  
- × [Conversation Starters to Use With Your Child's Teachers](#) –
- × <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/partnering-with-childs-school/working-with-childs-teacher/conversation-starters-to-use-with-your-childs-teachers>
- × **Understood.org**
  - + Everything from behavioral issues to academic concerns
  
- × [10 Things You Should Never Say to Your Kids' Teacher](#)
- × <http://www.womansday.com/relationships/family-friends/g695/never-say-childs-teacher/>
- × – **Woman's Day**
  - + Of the 10, I have experienced all of them and more. Notice how quick fixes can change all of these easily to be more positive & productive.



# DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF THE OBJECTIVE

