



PARENTS & FAMILIES / FREE RESOURCE

Supporting Your CODA at School

Building positive partnerships between families and education settings.

FOR: Parents, carers, teachers and school staff

Schools can recognise a child's family and communication needs without stereotyping, singling them out or asking them to interpret.

Every family is different. Every CODA story matters.

A welcoming school environment

Focus on inclusion, relationships and ordinary good communication.

Start with the family's preferences

Ask the parent or carer how they prefer to receive information: an accessible written message, sign-language interpretation, video relay or another suitable method. Do not assume that written English alone is always accessible, or that every Deaf person uses the same sign language.

Understand the child as an individual

Children with Deaf parents have different languages, strengths and needs. A child should not be treated as an interpreter, and should not be singled out as a class example of Deaf culture without their agreement.

- Use inclusive examples of Deaf and hearing families in school materials.
- Check that meetings, performances and family events are accessible to parents.
- Ask the child privately if there are school experiences they want adults to understand.

What families can share

It may help to explain preferred contact methods, any language or accessibility arrangements, and how the school should arrange interpreting for important conversations. Families choose what is appropriate to disclose.

Access arrangements are the responsibility of the relevant adults and organisations, not the child.

When situations come up

Practical examples for a thoughtful response.

Parents' evenings and meetings

Plan communication access in advance. If professional interpreting is needed, arrange it appropriately rather than relying on the pupil or a sibling.

Questions or unkind comments from peers

Respond to teasing, stereotypes or bullying using the school's normal safeguarding and anti-bullying arrangements. Allow the child to decide whether to share personal information with peers.

If a pupil appears to carry too much responsibility

Speak sensitively with the family and follow school safeguarding procedures where concerns arise. Do not assume responsibilities are present simply because the parents are Deaf.

What a good plan includes

- Named staff contact for parents.
- Agreed accessible communication methods for routine and urgent matters.
- Arrangements for meetings, consent and important information.
- A private way for the pupil to raise concerns.

Your notes or next steps

How would the family like the school to communicate?

What would help the child feel included without unwanted attention?

Shareable family-school planning sheet

Complete together, only if it is helpful.

Family communication preferences

- Preferred contact method: _____
- Language and accessibility requests: _____
- Staff contact person: _____

Child's own preferences

- What helps me feel comfortable at school?
- Is there anything I prefer not to be asked to explain?
- Who can I speak to if I have a concern?

Review the plan

Agree what information is necessary, who may see it, and when it should be reviewed. This guide is general information, not a substitute for a school's statutory duties, professional interpreting arrangements or safeguarding procedures.