

WHEN SCHOOL DOESN'T SEE WHAT YOU SEE AT HOME

It's common for children to behave differently at school than at home. Many parents describe their child bottling up anxiety all day, only to release it at home—sometimes known as 'masking'. This can be frustrating, especially if school staff don't recognise your child's struggles.

There are many reasons this happens:

- Masking anxiety or stress to fit in with peers.
- Sensory overload that leads to emotional outbursts at home.
- Appearing engaged in class without truly understanding the work.
- Seeming to have friends but actually struggling with social connections.

AT HOME, WHERE THEY FEEL SAFE, CHILDREN MAY FINALLY RELEASE THEIR EMOTIONS—BUT THIS DOESN'T MEAN THEY DON'T NEED SUPPORT AT SCHOOL.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Keep a Record

- Log incidents, meltdowns, or concerns at home with dates & details.
- Track patterns—what triggers difficulties?
- Note how your child describes their school experience.

Request a Meeting with School

Arrange a meeting with your child's teacher or SENCo.

Prepare in advance:

- ✓ Talk to your child – What do they find difficult? What would help?
- ✓ Write down concerns in bullet points.
- ✓ List questions for school (e.g. How are they monitoring progress?)
- ✓ Bring supporting reports (e.g. GP, CAMHS, or other professionals).





WHAT CAN SCHOOL DO?

Depending on your child's needs, schools can put small but effective strategies in place:

- ✓ **One Page Profile** – A summary of what helps your child, created with them.
 - ✓ **Identifying a trusted staff member** – A go-to person for daily check-ins.
 - ✓ **Safe Space** – A quiet area if your child feels overwhelmed.
 - ✓ **Support at break/lunchtime** – Alternative spaces or clubs to join.
 - ✓ **Social skills support** – Small group sessions to develop friendships.
 - ✓ **Observations** – Staff watching for signs of distress or disengagement.
 - ✓ **Home-School Communication** – A simple diary or email check-in.
 - ✓ **Anxiety support programmes** – E.g. Lego Therapy, Art Therapy, or 'No Worries' programme.
- Most of these adjustments are part of 'Universal Provision'—support available to all learners, not just those with SEN.**

HOW TO GET THE BEST FROM THE MEETING

Agree on a contact person – Who will update you? How often?

Write down agreed actions – Ensure all attendees receive a copy.

Set a review date – Usually one term later to check progress.

KEY RESOURCES

Shropshire SEND Local Offer: www.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/

Shropshire's Provision for SEND – A Guide for Mainstream Schools

Autism West Midlands: www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk

