

## **Tayside Mediation Leaflet**

### **1. About Tayside Mediation Service**

The aim of the Tayside Mediation Service is to resolve any disagreements or issues between education services and parents/carers of children or young people with additional support needs in the Tayside area. These issues could be related to related coordinated support plans, specific assessment requests, additional needs not being met and placing requests. The service aims to bring both parties together to resolve any issues respectfully and constructively, ensuring the best outcome for the child or young person. The service is independent and serves the purpose to find common ground between everyone involved within the mediation process. The service is free, it is of no charge to you.

### **2. What are Additional Support Needs?**

All children and young people need support to help them learn. Some children and young people will require additional or different support from that received by children or young people of the same age. Additional support needs can be both long and short-term or can simply refer to the help a child or young person needs in getting through a difficult period. Additional support needs can be due to:

- disability or health
- learning environment
- family circumstances
- social and emotional factors<sup>1</sup>

### **3. When should I consider mediation?**

If you disagree with anything about your child's education, you should first raise your concerns with your child's teacher. The next step is to speak to the head teacher or education officer. If you are still unable to resolve the problem, you should consider mediation as soon as possible. Mediation will have a staged approach and the mediator will seek to ensure that you are given the opportunity to discuss things in a neutral environment.

Any disagreement about the education of children with additional support needs can be referred to the Tayside Mediation Service.



### **4. What is ASL Mediation?**

Sometimes, despite everyone's best efforts, situations can arise which cause disagreements or conflict.

Misunderstandings, lack of shared information and different perceptions can be addressed through mediation. Sacro mediators can help parents and education staff to talk and listen effectively and directly with one another.

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<sup>1</sup> Education Scotland, <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/additional-support/what-are-additional-support-needs/#>

Mediation brings people together to work with each other to resolve a disagreement. Everyone has an opportunity to express concerns and negotiate solutions. Everyone is involved in the decision making and the focus is always on the best outcome for the child or young person. The aim of mediation is to ease the resolution of disputes, avoiding the breakdown of the relationship between parents/carers or young people and the school or Education Authorities to prevent disagreements from escalating.

### **What are the benefits of Mediation?**



Mediation offers an opportunity for a full and respectful airing of differences.

It has been proven that people who negotiate their own solutions have more control over the outcome of their dispute. In addition, people are generally more satisfied with solutions that have been mutually agreed upon, as opposed to solutions that are imposed.

Furthermore, a mediated settlement that addresses all people's interests can often preserve a good working relationship.

### **What is the role of Sacro?**

Sacro are an independent and impartial third sector organisation, they have no links to education services or social work. They are neutral and non-judgemental.

Every Sacro worker is fully trained and accredited in providing mediation. Additionally, each worker has extensive knowledge of the locality with an understanding and links to education services and schools in Tayside.

Prior to mediation, the Sacro worker will explore with each person, any fears, anxieties, or concerns that they may have and, where appropriate, reassure them of the safety and benefits of the mediation process.

Sacro mediators will create a safe, welcoming environment. They do not make decisions or recommend solutions. Instead, they are impartial and independent, assisting people to communicate their concerns. They do not take sides and are unbiased.

Mediators will help clarify points of contention or confusion. They can produce a written statement of outcomes and agreements.

Scottish Mediation Network Accredited Mediators will be operating within this service and this can be viewed on the SMN website.

### **I'm interested in pursuing mediation, what happens next?**

To be referred into the Tayside Mediation Service you must request your local authority education provider to do so. They will then complete a referral form with your information will be sent through it securely through to Sacro. Once this has been received by Sacro the following steps will take place:



1. Appointment letter sent out

Once a referral is made Sacro will send an appointment letter to the young person and their parent/guardian describing the service. This letter will include information on what to expect from the initial visit. You can call in to the service to arrange an appointment that is suitable for you once you have received your appointment letter if it is not suitable.

2. Person centred needs assessment

Sacro will undertake a person-centred needs assessment with all parties. This will determine what support each individual will require to enable them to engage fully in the process so that everyone can articulate their needs/wants from the process. Sacro will then develop a bespoke action plan to address those needs through the function of mediation or liaison with education.

3. Identifying a suitable meeting space

Sacro will identify an impartial and safe meeting space so that all parties can feel comfortable enough to share ideas and discussion.

4. Facilitation

The mediator will establish a positive and constructive atmosphere, setting ground rules and guidance for respectful and productive interaction. All meetings will have a facilitator to ensure that there is someone available if one of the parties needs a break. The mediator will help all parties identify and explore their choices whilst remaining independent and impartial throughout. Mediators will facilitate communication and motivate everyone to find a way to work co-operatively towards finding a mutually acceptable solution.



**Due to COVID -19, the service will be operating with a non-face to face approach until it is safe to do so through Scottish Government advice. Therefore, all interactions will take place via telephone or via video calling. Sacro is currently utilising Zoom and Microsoft Teams platforms. Therefore you can take advantage of this if you have equipment at home that is capable of utilising these video conferencing tools, we would be more than happy to have face to face video conferencing with you over them.**

**How do I learn more?**

For further information phone ... or email...

Or visit our website <https://www.sacro.org.uk/services/mediation/mediation-in-schools>