

In brief

How does our school conduct cooperative assessment meetings?

We would like all our pupils to be able to develop well both academically and as individuals. To achieve this goal, it can be meaningful for teachers and parents – perhaps together with additional persons in contact with the child at school – to conduct a cooperative assessment meeting.

At our school these meetings follow a standardized procedure. This procedure is helpful in identifying important topics, exchange observations and cooperatively ascertain improvements in the present situation.

This information sheet describes the relevant steps of this procedure. If further information is desired, please consult the Guide to the «Schulische Standortgespräche». It can be borrowed from the school.

When does a cooperative assessment meeting conducted?

A cooperative assessment meeting should take place

- as a regular meeting between teacher and parents in the course of the year
- when the pupil has difficulties at school which should be looked at more closely and discussed («What are the reasons for the difficulties? What can those involved do to improve the situation? Which strengths can we build on?»), or
- when the pupil is already receiving additional support («Have goals previously agreed-upon been achieved? Is the special support still necessary? Does the child need something else?»).

An initial cooperative assessment meeting can be requested by everyone involved – for example by the teacher or the parents.

If the pupil receives additional support, cooperative assessment meetings take place regularly (normally twice a year, but at least once a year).

Who participates in a cooperative assessment meeting?

Everyone who can play an important role in clarifying the situation should participate in the meeting. The teacher and parents or guardians (father and/or mother) should always be present. The participation of the child depends on the situation.

In addition, the following professionals may take part in the meeting: the special needs teacher, therapists, the educational psychologist, the principal – or anyone else who can make an important contribution in the circumstances.

With the invitation it is announced as to who will participate in the meeting.

How long does the meeting last?

As a general rule the assessment lasts about an hour.

Who chairs the cooperative assessment meeting?

The meeting is usually chaired by a specially qualified professional (e.g. by the special needs teacher) or the child's teacher. It might also be chaired by the principal or the educational psychologist.

Who sends out the invitation to a cooperative assessment meeting?	As a general rule the person who chairs the meeting issues the invitations.
How can you prepare for the meeting?	Everyone participating prepares him-/herself for the discussions by completing the «Individual Preparation for a Cooperative Assessment Meeting» form. The preparation form helps to efficiently identify important points to be discussed. Parents can complete the form alone or together with their child.
How is the preparation form completed?	You can write down a description of the current situation from your perspective: What is the difficulty at the moment, what is special? What is the most important problem? Perhaps it is also important to write something about the pupil's feelings. For example, it is important to know if happy or fearful feelings are prevalent. Subsequently go through the form and consider all domains and activities listed whether you perceive strengths or rather problems in relation to the child. A domain is «Handling tasks and demands» for instance. If, according to your assessment, you consider the child to be comparable to other pupils of the same age, mark the box in the middle with a cross. Sometimes it is difficult to just place one cross. In such a case it is possible to put a cross in more than one box. There is space on the right for any further comments. This preparation form remains in your possession. It is taken back after the meeting.
Approximately how much time does it take to complete?	Don't take more time than 5 to 10 minutes to complete this form. It serves as a rough evaluation that contributes to the discussion.
Do you have to complete all parts?	No. If you think «I cannot assess this domain» or «I would rather not make a comment», then just leave the space empty.
What is the procedure of the meeting?	During the first part of the discussions, the different evaluations on the preparation form are compared. («Where has everyone made the same assessment? Are there any domains where opinions differ substantially?») Subsequently, everyone decides together which domains (two to three) should be discussed in-depth. All participants can bring in their observations. As for the final stage of the discussions, the following question is the centre of attention: «What precisely can we do to improve the situation?»
Are the minutes kept for the meeting?	Yes, minutes are written up using the protocol form. The content will be kept confidential. Goals to be jointly pursued as well as measures to be taken or applied for are written down on the last page of the protocol form. Everyone participating in the meeting receives a copy of this last page.
What can I do if I still have questions?	If anything is unclear, contact the person who has invited you to the meeting. Should you require more detailed information: In the school there is a copy of the Guide to the «Schulische Standortgespräche». This guide gives a detailed description of the proceedings.