

SEND Tribunal Survival Guide

A quick guide for parent carers

Remember

- ✓ The tribunal is independent***
- ✓ You do not need to know the law***
- ✓ The tribunal will guide the discussion***
- ✓ You are the expert in your child***

Your experiences and examples are important evidence.

The tribunal panel is separate from the local authority.

Their role is to make a fair decision based on law and evidence.

The panel usually includes:

A judge

An education specialist

Sometimes a disability specialist

Before the Hearing

- ✓ Read through the evidence bundle***
- ✓ Highlight key pages you may want to refer to***
- ✓ Write a short list of 3–5 key points you want the panel to understand***
- ✓ Prepare real examples of your child's difficulties***
- ✓ Have water, notes and page numbers ready***

During the Tribunal

Take your time

You can:

Pause before answering

Ask for a question to be repeated

Ask the judge to clarify something

Use real-life examples

Explain what things actually look like for your child, for example:

What happens during lessons

What happens at break times

What happens after school at home

Examples help the panel understand the impact of needs.

Focus on needs and support

Tribunals decide cases based on:

Your child's needs

The support (provision) required

Whether the current support is enough

Try to keep your answers linked to these points.

Be honest about difficulties

Parents often minimise problems.

The tribunal needs to understand the full picture.

It is okay to talk about:

Struggles

Anxiety

Behaviour linked to unmet needs

The impact on family life

Helpful Things to Bring



- Your notes
- Important page numbers in the evidence bundle
- A pen and paper
- Water or tissues if needed

You are allowed to refer to your notes during the hearing.

SEND ASSIST