

# Talking to Schools About FND

Conversations with schools about Functional Neurological Disorder can feel challenging. Families and students may need to explain symptoms, request support, or clarify needs in environments that prioritize structure, schedules, and standardized expectations.

This toolkit focuses on how to approach conversations with schools in ways that support clarity, collaboration, and realistic planning.

## **Clarifying the Purpose of the Conversation**

Before speaking with school staff, it can help to clarify what the conversation is about.

You may want to:

- share information about FND
- explain how symptoms affect school participation
- discuss accommodations or adjustments
- address a specific concern or change

A single clear purpose is enough. Not every conversation needs to cover everything.

## **Framing FND in School-Appropriate Language**

Schools often respond best to information that focuses on function and access.

Helpful framing may include:

- describing how symptoms affect attendance, stamina, or participation
- explaining that symptoms are real and involuntary
- emphasizing variability rather than constant limitation

You do not need to provide medical explanations beyond what is relevant to school support.

## **Deciding What Information to Share**

You are not required to share more than is necessary.

It may help to:

- focus on information that affects learning or safety
- avoid sharing personal or medical details that are not relevant
- decide in advance what you are comfortable discussing

Boundaries around information help protect privacy and clarity.

## **Identifying Support Needs Clearly**

Clear requests support clearer responses.

You may want to:

- describe what helps during symptom increases
- explain what is difficult or unsafe
- focus on practical adjustments rather than ideal outcomes

Support requests are about access, not special treatment.

## **Navigating Questions and Misunderstanding**

Because FND may be unfamiliar, questions or confusion may arise.

When this happens, it can help to:

- restate key points calmly
- redirect to functional impact
- provide written summaries when helpful

Misunderstanding does not always reflect resistance. It often reflects unfamiliarity.

## **Following Up After Conversations**

School conversations may require follow-up.

It can help to:

- summarize what was discussed in writing
- clarify next steps or responsibilities
- allow time for staff to review information

Follow-up supports shared understanding and continuity.

## **Knowing When to Pause or Revisit**

Not all conversations need immediate resolution.

It is appropriate to:

- pause discussions if they become overwhelming
- revisit topics later as needs change
- ask for another meeting if clarity is lacking

Timing and pacing matter in school communication.

## **Supporting Clear and Respectful School Communication**

Talking to schools about FND involves balancing clarity, boundaries, and collaboration. When conversations focus on function, access, and realistic support, they are more likely to lead to understanding and workable solutions.

This toolkit is intended to support steady, respectful communication with educational systems over time.