

The role of the child/student in ASN mediation

Scotland Case Study 3: 'The teacher is bullying my child!'

Robert (8 years old) attends his local mainstream school. He is an only child and lives with his mother and father in a small town. Robert has no specific diagnosis, but Robert's mother has raised concerns about his anxiety issues and low self esteem with school staff and her doctor. She describes Robert as being an 'over-sensitive' child.

Robert repeatedly tells his mother that he doesn't like his class teacher and she doesn't like him. He says the teacher picks on him and makes him feel awkward on front of his peers. Robert's parents have a meeting with the Head Teacher about their concerns. However they feel that their concerns were brushed off by the Head Teacher who said: 'Mrs X is an outstanding class teacher - I have full confidence in her abilities.' Because they didn't feel listened to, Robert's parents then raised their concerns with the education authorities. This has greatly annoyed the Head Teacher, and the relationship between the parents and the school is now strained. For various reasons it's neither practical nor desirable to move Robert to another school.

Faced with 2 very different versions of events, the local education officer suggests independent mediation.

Questions:

- 1. is this situation mediatable?**
- 2. what are the potential benefits of including the child/student in the mediation meeting?**
- 3. what are the potential challenges of including the child/student in the mediation meeting?**
- 4. what support may the child/student need to be able to fully participate?**