

Do you want to tell your teachers about your CF? (for secondary students)

You may want to leave it to your family to let your school know you have CF or perhaps you would prefer to decide yourself what information is known and shared about you. Here are some ideas about different ways about how you might talk to your teachers.

Possible advantages

- You know so much about CF as you live with it every day - but many teachers will know little or nothing about it or what they know might be out of date. You can make sure they know the information that is relevant to YOU.
- If teachers have more understanding about your CF and how it affects you, then they are in a much better position to help and support you in the most effective way they can.
- You can let them know how you want them to support and help you, for example when you have a coughing fit or need to go regularly to the bathroom.
- It makes it easier for you to plan and together work out ways for you to do your work and keep in touch if you are away from school.

What you might like them to know

As CF affects everyone differently, you want to make sure that your school and the teachers know how CF affects YOU and how they can help. What do you want them to know about you?

- What organs in your body are affected? Do you have CF related Diabetes (CFRD)? Are there other ways CF affects you like needing to go to the toilet at short notice?
- That you have times when you don't get much sleep due to coughing?
- Why you might eat different food from other students and need to take enzymes?
- Whether you need to take any medications at school?
- Why you may be away from school for clinic visits and potential hospital admissions? Why you may have a legitimate reasons for requesting extensions if you are unwell?
- Whether you are well enough to take part in regular PE? If you need Ventolin, Atrovent, salt tablets, extra water, or if you need to take time out for a breather - tell them.





Useful ideas and resources

- Ask your teachers to watch a video such as Helping Kids With Cystic Fibrosis Succeed in School
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EASUbdXnHrI>
- Charly talks to her teacher about having CF and how it affects her time in school. It may give you some ideas about how to talk with your teacher.
- Give your teachers some general CF information such as the booklet for high School teachers on the CFsmart website
<https://cfsmart.org/teachers/teacher-information-resources/high-school/>
- Write them a letter or email and tell them all the information you would like them to know about you. They can keep a copy of this and refer back to it. If you want, it can also be given to other teachers or relief teachers taking your classes.
- Make a time to meet and talk with your teachers.

Thoughts about telling your teachers

- Do you want your parents to be involved or you want to do it on your own
- Do you want to tell all of them or just a few or even only one?
- Would you prefer to tell just one teacher and then let them pass on the information to the others?
- Will you tell them at the start of the year or wait until you are feeling unwell or needing extra treatment?
- Remember there is no right or wrong way to proceed - just do what feels right for you.

If your school has a school nurse

- It would be very useful for the school nurse to know who you are, how your CF impacts on your school day and all the ways they can help you if you feel unwell during the day.

www.cfsmart.org

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