

HOW TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH YOUR MP

Contacting and arranging a meeting with your MP can seem like a daunting challenge at first. These are the people who run the country, voted for by thousands of constituents and paid £60,000 a year to do it all, but it's something that has to be done if you want to do a good job as an MYP.

While it might seem a bit scary, contacting your MP is really quite easy. Normally they'll be delighted to hear from you and will do their best to be helpful and to work with you. They don't normally get many young people contacting them, and it's good publicity for them and is part of their job to help the young people in their constituency if they can.

FIND OUT WHO YOUR MP IS

The first step is to find out exactly who your MP is. You might already know this, but if you don't then there are several easy ways of finding out. The easiest way is probably to use the official Parliament website. First go www.parliament.uk and then click on the link which says 'Find your MP'. Then enter your postcode and details of your MP will be displayed.

CONTACTING YOUR MP

Once you have found the details of your MP from the Parliament website, you can get into contact with them. This can be done in three ways. You can write them a letter, send them an e-mail or phone their parliamentary office.

While all of these methods should work, the best way is probably to write them a letter. E-mails are easy to forget or ignore, and it's unlikely that the MP's secretary or researcher will want to arrange



MYPs question Hazel Blears MP at the 2005 Annual Sitting

a meeting over the phone without some warning.

When you write a letter to your MP, try to keep it short and to the point. Explain who you are and what the UK Youth Parliament is. Then say that you would like to meet with him or her so that you can discuss the issues affecting young people in your constituency.

If you want, you could also mention any issues that you think are particularly important. Most important of all, make sure you leave your contact details: address, e-mail and phone number! Hopefully, your MP will contact you about the meeting within a couple of weeks.

When you contact your MP, always remember to use their London address or phone number rather than their local constituency one.

Often MPs will provide their constituency office details on their website, but it's their London office which sorts out their schedules, so when you phone them, make sure it's their London number and if you write to them, make sure it's their House of Commons address. Both of these can be found on the Parliament website.



Kevin Holder MYP talks to Andy Burnham MP at the 2005 Annual Sitting

ARRANGING A MEETING

Normally MPs will only be able to meet with you on a Friday as the rest of the week they are generally working in London. Sometimes you might have to take time off school for the meeting, but if you ask permission from your school then there should be no problem.

You can also ask your MP to have the meeting after school hours and he or she should be willing to do so.

Once you've written to your MP asking for a meeting, and they've replied back to you, you should be able to schedule the meeting over the phone with their secretary. If you tell them what times you're available, they will then schedule a date and check with you that you can make it too.

The meeting with the MP will normally take place in their constituency office (you can find the address on the Parliament website, or phone up their office and ask).

If you don't have access to the internet, then you can just use the following to get into contact with your MP:

Address:

[Name of your MP]
 House of Commons
 London
 SW1A 0AA

Telephone:

Call the House of Commons switchboard on 020 7219 3000 and then ask for the office of your MP - obviously you need to know their name for this!