

Parental Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

All parents and carers are equally valued as part of our school community. Children's learning is improved when we work in partnership with their parents or carers, and their wider family. We therefore believe in close cooperation with all families, and in regular consultation between the home and the school.

This policy has been produced in order to provide a framework in which all parents can engage meaningfully in the education of their child and the life of the school, express their views and have these taken in to consideration on matters affecting the education of their child.

NB: The term parent used throughout this document applies equally to parents, carers and family members who care for children.

2. Aims

- to enhance the learning experiences of all pupils.
- to encourage parents and carers to be involved in the children's learning.
- to provide a partnership between home and school, seeking to ensure that families feel welcome and valued.
- to ensure that maximum use is made of parents and carers skills to enrich learning opportunities.

3. Objectives

- To foster an ethos and atmosphere where all parents feel welcome and valued.
- To maintain an 'open door' approach so that parents are able to communicate with staff on a regular basis, both formally and informally.
- To provide as much information as possible in timely, specific, targeted and accessible ways so that parents feel confident and knowledgeable in supporting their children's learning.
- To ensure clear channels of communication are established.
- To seek parents' views and opinions and act upon them where possible.
- To provide support and encouragement for families suffering difficulties/crises, or barriers to involvement.
- To work with parents in promoting positive behaviour at home and at school.
- To seek to provide a range of activities, courses and workshops, to promote parental involvement in children's learning, and also 'lifelong learning' for both children and adults.

4. Promoting Parental involvement

National research demonstrates that children do better at school and achieve more in life when parents and schools work together. Only 15% of a child's life is spent at school and so it is clear that parents have the most influential role in a child's education. It is important to recognise that each of us has a role to play and by working together with parents we aim to ensure that every child does the best they can at school and beyond.

5. Levels of engagement

Different levels of engagement can be categorised in to the following headings:-

1. Supporting Learning at Home
2. Home/ School partnerships
3. Parental representation
4. Community engagement

6. Supporting Learning at Home

Parents and carers are the first and ongoing educators of their child and play a vital role in their child's learning and development. Parents can expect to receive information on what their child is learning at school and how they can best be supported. Effective communication and a sense of shared responsibility are key to getting this right.

Examples of how we can assist parents to support their child's learning include;

- *Developing a policy on homework that will give parents, pupils and staff a shared understanding of what is required;*
- *Exploring ways to hold 'homework' sessions for parents to learn how to support their children with homework;*
- *Providing guidance on activities that parents can do at home to support their child's development;*
- *Providing information and advice for parents on new developments and policies in education for example curriculum developments and Assessment for Learning;*
- *Giving parents advice and support on how children can revise and prepare for exams;*

7. Supporting Home/School Partnerships

Effective home/school partnerships are essential to ensure that children get the most out of their school and their education. Working in partnership will allow the school to identify potential difficulties and opportunities and address at an early stage.

Schools and The Local Authority should create opportunities for parents to be more actively involved in their child's learning and education and to develop communications in order to improve the information schools provide to parents.

Examples of the ways we can work together include:

- *Issuing regular newsletters with holiday dates, information on school trips, extra curricular activities and events, test dates and best sources for revision advice;*
- *Offering a range of opportunities for parents to participate in school e.g. class assemblies, helping in class, World Food Day, Welcome week meetings*
- *Establishing formal and informal times when teachers and parents can meet*
- *Arranging fun social events that create opportunities for building relationships with parents and the wider community- which can at the same time raise funds for the school e.g. Eid celebration, concerts, plays*
- *Consulting parents on school improvement plans;*
- *Ensuring that school improvement plans include proposals to improve parents' involvement in their child's learning;*

Giving Advice and Information

The type of advice and information required by parents about their child will vary but all communication must be accurate and confidential and respect the privacy of other children and staff.

Examples of how and when we can provide support and advice are;

- *At key transition stages such as starting nursery, mid-year admissions, starting primary or secondary school*
- *When additional support needs including special educational needs (SEN) have been identified*
- *When parents and/or school have attendance concerns*
- *If a referral is made and support and advice from external agencies is required;*

Other Types of Parental Engagement

- Parenting courses; professional workshops, training opportunities, and other ideas to assist families in parenting and assisting their child.

- Communicating; annual learning conferences, reports on academic progress, parents' consultation meetings and other verbal communication with parents about their child.
- Volunteering; through supporting school events, involvement with classroom activities, and other community opportunities for students and parents.
- Decision Making; through attendance at school meetings, participation in addressing concerns, responding to questionnaires and by helping other parents.
- Collaborating with the community; utilising community resources, involvement of community groups in schools, and community/school mentoring programmes.

8. Removing Barriers

There are a variety of reasons why some parents and carers have little or no contact with school. This can create barriers which stop parents and carers from getting involved or supporting a child's education and learning. Barriers may include; previous personal experience; additional support needs; the isolation of lone parents; shifts (or long) working hours; lack of childcare facilities; language differences.

Cultural, faith, ethnic and lifestyle choices within our communities also need to be considered. Practical ways forward to support parents/ carers and pupils need to be identified.

Examples of how we can work together to tackle some of these issues include;

- *Being flexible in the timing of events to discuss a child's progress with parents;*
- *Accessing translation and interpretation services*
- *Supporting learning for **all** pupils;*
- *Making information about adult learning opportunities, parenting skills and community involvement easily accessible;*
- *Supporting the parents of looked after children to play their part in parental involvement;*

9. Parent Consultation

The school will make every effort to consult parents and carers, both formally and informally, about their views on school life, children's learning and new initiatives e.g. through formal and informal meetings and questionnaires.

Parents and carers of children with a disability or additional needs are asked to keep the school fully informed about any relevant issues so that the school can make every effort to meet the needs of the child.

The school values feedback from parents' and carers' and will make every effort to act on parents and carers views, wherever possible.

Periodically, the school will seek the views of parents and carers in a survey or questionnaire and through 'Parent View'.

10. Curricular and Extra-curricular Activities for Children

The school provides a range of curricular and extra- curricular activities for pupils. Parents may wish to contribute to various aspects of the curriculum. This might be in the form of providing an extra pair of hands relating to an area of work such as art and craft, science or technology. Other ways that parents could support the school include;

- Volunteering to run an after school club
- Helping in the classroom
- Volunteering to listen to children read

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

This Policy reflects the school's commitment to work in partnership with parents to promote their involvement in supporting their child's learning and the life of the school. The ultimate success is that children are both happy at school and achieving their full potential.

Ways in which we can evaluate the effectiveness of our partnership with parents include;

- Attendance at parents evenings/ consultations/ open days
- Feedback from parent surveys
- OfSTED on-line parent forum (Parent View)
- Attendance at school events and performances, e.g. sports day
- Sign up for parent courses