



## Woodgrange Infant School Partnership with Parents Policy

We believe that the role of parents is crucial to children's achievement and wellbeing at school. We believe that the partnership between home and school must be close and positive in order to support children in achieving their best. We believe that children achieve more if parents understand what goes on in school and know how to support their child.

In our relationships with parents we endeavour always to:

- Be welcoming
- Be accessible
- Be polite
- Keep parents informed so there are no surprises
- Explain decisions
- Use clear language
- Listen to Parents' views
- Share as much information as we can
- Maintain confidentiality- and if we cannot share information explain why

### **Aims of this policy**

- Establish a positive and productive relationship with parents and carers
- Help parents understand about their child's learning and their role in supporting them at home
- Set out how we communicate with parents

### **How we communicate**

- Daily contact at the classroom door or in the playground before school  
Teachers are available for a quick word at the start or end of the day.

- In the playground

The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher are in the playground or at the gate most days and many concerns or queries can be dealt with at this time.

If the matter is confidential or sensitive or a longer conversation is required appointments can be made to meet with the class teacher or a member of school leadership.

Appointments can be made directly with the teacher or through the school office.

If we cannot see a parent immediately we will suggest a more convenient time for both parties. If an issue is very urgent it will be referred to a senior member of staff or the headteacher- giving them an outline of the issue in advance. We will be consistent in this approach.

### **Meetings**

During the year there are a number of meetings for parents

### **Induction**

New or prospective parents are able to visit the school by appointment. They will be shown around by a member of the leadership team and have the opportunity to ask questions.

New parents are invited to an induction meeting in May/ June or at the point of admission if mid-year.

### **Home visits**

The Nursery team visit all families in early September to share information with new parents get to know the children. For the same reason the Reception team visit children who are joining our school for the first time.

A meet the teacher meeting is offered at the start of the school year to explain the routines and expectations for each year group/ class and to give parents the opportunity to ask any questions.

### **Progress meetings**

This is followed later in the term by a progress meeting (Parents' Evening) at which teachers meet with individual parents to discuss their child's progress and their next steps in learning and development. There may also be individually planned meetings to discuss particular issues- at either parent or teacher request.

### **Ongoing communication**

We keep parents informed about school developments and "news" through a variety of channels

- Weekly newsletters from the Headteacher
- Learning newsletters from class teachers
- Phone conversations and emails as required
- Noticeboards internal and external- there are noticeboards near the school entrances and all classrooms post notices on their windows
- Specific letters about issues and events such as educational visits
- The school website includes an outline of each term's learning and a gallery of photos that show the learning in action
- Workshops on particular aspects of school
- celebration or showcase events

### **Communicating about learning**

Parents' evenings are held twice a year. At these meetings a verbal progress report is given, parents have the opportunity to ask questions and teachers share the current areas the child needs to improve or concentrate on, together with ways in which parents can support this at home.

Parents receive written reports at the end of the school year.

Successes as well as difficulties are shared. Close communication is particularly important for children experiencing difficulties of any kind either at home or at school.

Regular contact regarding special educational needs or behaviour issues is maintained.

## **Home School Agreement**

Our Home School Agreement is a document that explains the school's aims and values and our responsibilities towards the children. It sets out our expectations of parents and the children. We ask parents and children to sign this agreement when the children start school.

This agreement is reviewed each year by the Governing Body.

### **Consulting parents**

Parents have many ways in which to voice their opinion:

- annual surveys about their view of school
- Ofsted's Parent View online survey- available via [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) or via a link on the school website
- Focused questionnaires ask for feedback on issues or aspects of learning or school life
- -Our active PTA canvases opinion on fundraising and on how to use available funds
- -Our open door policy to encourage open and honest dialogue

The Governing Body seeks to consult parents via informal coffee mornings held throughout the year and keep parents informed of their work through an annual report to parents.

### **Reaching parents**

We endeavour to reach all parents through this policy. Additional strategies include

- Offering verbal translations of written documents where staff are able
- Giving as much advance notice as we can
- holding meetings at different times of day
- using text messages only for essential or emergency communications such as school closure
- personal phone calls or letters
- additional copies of reports or letters for parents who live separately (upon request)
- the school website and the MLE- these are updated at regular intervals throughout the year. Important letters and the newsletter will be available (from 2015)

## **Maintaining positive relationships between home and school**

The partnership between home and school is an essential part of our work. Positive relationships build trust and ensure children are happy to be at school and are ready to learn.

Positive relationships are also essential for the health and wellbeing of staff pupils and parents.

This guidance is intended to support all staff to maintain positive relationships with parents and carers.

Where relationships become strained there are common themes

- communication between home and school
- expectations of what constitutes reasonable behaviour
- expectations of what staff or the school can provide

When relationships become strained it has a negative impact on all concerned and leads to stress and anxiety, particularly when the situation is not dealt with in a timely way.

### **How do we maintain positive partnerships?**

We ensure we communicate effectively and in a timely way

- We speak face to face with parents about important and immediate issues such as a head injury, poor behaviour or Safeguarding concerns
- We deal privately with delicate issues
- We are factual and specific in what we tell parents
- We share good news
- We are honest and do not gloss over concerns or issues related to behaviour, attendance or achievement. We do not surprise parents with serious concerns.
- We share information in writing through weekly newsletters or specific letters by email or a paper copy if requested

There are times when parents make requests that staff or the school find hard to respond to

These may include asking for

- support that the school cannot provide such as 1:1 support for a child, an EHCP, additional home learning, a specific programme of support
- additional meetings
- information at short notice such as form filling or reports
- a term time holiday

In responding to such requests reasons for refusal are justified clearly.

We follow policy and procedure in order to be consistent, transparent and fair

It is important that we do not allow parents to intimidate us as individual members of staff or as an organisation.

If at any point a member of staff feels that a parents has made an unreasonable request they should seek the support of a senior member of staff who, with the support of the Governing Board will respond appropriately.

### **Dealing with conflict**

#### **Managing situations that may prove difficult**

##### **1.Planned meetings**

If you have a scheduled meeting with a parent/ carer who you know can be difficult you should consider the following:

- Is it safe to meet this person alone?
  - If not arrange for a colleague to be in the room or within ear shot.
  - pre set Head's phone number onto your mobile so you can immediately dial.
- Where is the best place to sit?
  - Have a clear route out of the room.
- Keep the meeting official- with the person's agreement take notes – in a book rather than on a piece of paper which might get lost.
- ALWAYS TELL THE HEADTEACHER IF YOU HAVE SUCH A MEETING SCHEDULED

If a parent comes in angry and unannounced it may be better to delay meeting them until the following day when they may have calmed down and when it is possible to have a (briefed) member of senior staff attend the meeting- this is a judgement call based on what you know of the person and the situation.

If this is not possible call for assistance immediately.

When meeting someone who is or becomes clearly angry or frustrated

- Keep the person talking- ask open questions and encourage them to explain how they see the problem, maintain eye contact, nod and agree. This should help use up frustration and energy.
- Listen to their point of view and the unsaid things.
- Hear them out
- Resist arguing
- Reflect on what they are saying and repeat back to them what you feel the key issues are- break down the issue (s) if complicated, dealing with the simplest first so you set a positive atmosphere
- Acknowledge their point of view- you don't have to agree with it.
- Give your point of view using clear, plain language
- Suggest a realistic course of action- don't make promises you can't keep! Offer alternatives or a choice of action if possible.
- Set out what you will do- write it down
- Set out what the parent will do- write it down
- Buy yourself time if needed e.g. I will need to talk to.../ investigate... etc. Agree a new date for a follow up meeting or a phone call and stick to it

If you feel threatened at any time **STOP THE MEETING**

If the situation cannot be resolved then you should refer the parent/ carer on to a member of the leadership team. Where possible a date and time for a meeting should be set and the senior member of staff fully briefed before the meeting.

We will not automatically apologise for a misunderstanding but will always actively seek a positive outcome or resolution.

We will protect staff and if necessary seek a banning order to prevent a person entering the school premises if their presence threatens staff safety.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The impact of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the school leadership and the Governing Body through reviewing feedback, responses to parent surveys- general or specific, and examining any complaints from parents.

The outcomes of this will be considered in reviewing public documents, policy and procedure and in organising staff training as appropriate.

Review date 2020.