

A2. Family partnership working policy

Introduction and rationale

An important dimension of effective schooling for children is family involvement. Families are an essential resource in children's learning. Research indicates conclusively that family involvement at home in supporting their children's learning improves their achievement and attitude towards learning.

The term 'family' refers to any adult who assumes responsibility for nurturing and caring for children, including parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, foster parents, step-parents.

Family partnership working in this school is everyone's responsibility, and professional development for teachers and support staff in this aspect of the school's work is given a high priority.

The school has a designated senior member of staff (the pastoral deputy head teacher) who takes lead responsibility for family partnership working. They are the first point of contact if families wish to raise any concerns or queries relating to how the school works in partnership with them.

Principles of family partnership working

- Families are the prime educators of their children.
- The school welcomes and acknowledges the valuable contributions that families make in helping their children to learn and be happy.
- The extent of family involvement in a child's education is more important to a pupil's success than family income or education.
- Family support for a child's learning is most effective when it is long-lasting and well planned.
- Families are viewed as equal partners in the education of their children.
- A child's education is a shared responsibility between their family and the school.
- Families, like the school, want the best for their children and for them to be successful.

The aims of family partnership working

The school aims to develop strong and effective family partnership working in order to:

- help families develop good parenting skills and the confidence to support their child through periods of change in their school life;
- promote two-way communication between home and school;
- keep families informed about their children's progress and achievements;
- involve families in appropriate family learning opportunities and other positive family activities;
- provide families with practical strategies and approaches in order to enable them to support their children's learning, behaviour and well-being at home;
- encourage families to participate actively and to contribute to school decision-making and develop their leadership skills in governance and advocacy;
- provide families with the information and skills in order to access community activities, events and family support services.

Provision to foster and promote productive family partnership working

- The school has a well-established Family Council that provides a forum where families can raise concerns and issues as well as share good practice.
- The school encourages and empowers families to take a lead in informing the school of improvement priorities that relate to helping children achieve more.
- The school consults with families on all issues that will affect their role in supporting their children's learning, behaviour and well-being at home.
- Families are invited to complete an annual family survey and questionnaire, which informs the school's decision-making in relation to ensuring that the activities and events offered to families are what they want and need.
- The school provides a Family Room where families can enjoy social networking with other families in an informal area, as well as meeting with external agencies and school staff who provide support for families.
- The school keeps families informed about their children's progress and achievements through class progress review meetings, parents' evenings and pupil reports.

- The school provides family-friendly information on its website, in addition to offering a confidential text messaging service for families and an electronic family chatroom.
- The school offers families a good range of appropriate and relevant family learning opportunities, including enjoyable family social, cultural and recreational events and activities on the school site.
- The school provides training and support to family members who opt to be volunteers, Family Champions, Family Ambassadors, family mentors and family coaches.
- The head teacher attends the monthly family coffee mornings to listen to any family concerns, issues and good news.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing family partnership working

The pastoral deputy head teacher is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing family partnership working within the school on an annual basis.

The head teacher, the governing body and the Family Council receive termly reports and updates on the effectiveness and impact of family partnership policy and practice.

This policy is reviewed and updated each year.

It is available to download and view from the school's website.