

# Heaton St. Barnabas' C of E (V.A.) Primary School

## Policy for Parent Partnership February 2014

***'Schools need the support of Parents to be truly ambitious and excellent.'***  
**(Peter Peacock, ex Minister for Education and Young People)**

### **Introduction**

Children do better at school when parents, carers and other family members are involved in their education. Parents know a great deal about their children; they have particular insights about their strengths, skills, interests, preferences, aspirations, anxieties and difficulties. Parents are a major resource to support learning and as a school we endeavour to provide a range of opportunities to encourage a three-way partnership with parents, children and teachers. The importance of meaningful and positive communications between teachers and parents is fundamental, and forms the foundational principle of our policy.

### **Aims**

It is important for **parents**:

- To feel welcomed, valued and involved in school life
- To understand the curriculum and ethos of our school
- To be fully informed about their child's education and learning
- To have opportunities to engage in learning with their child and further their own learning
- To feel able and encouraged to approach school with their views on their child's education
- To have confidence that their views will be listened to
- To actively support school policies e.g. behaviour, homework, school uniform
- To attend parents evenings, assemblies, open afternoons and any other events to be involved in their child's school life
- To tell staff of any concerns or difficulties, interests or aspirations, that are either specific to, or that are seriously affecting their child's education.
- To keep the school informed about changes in a child's circumstances (*it is vital that the school has accurate addresses, telephone numbers, medical condition info. etc in order that the child can be looked after properly while in school.*)
- To read the school newsletter
- To check the homework diary daily and sign weekly
- To support the Positive Parents Group and share ideas and suggestions

It is important for **children** to:

- have a positive attitude to school and enjoy learning
- know that their parents have positive attitudes about learning and about the school
- achieve their very best in school and be well prepared for their next school
- realise that education is important as they see their parent/s working together with school
- feel secure about the good relationships between their parents and staff.

It is important for **school staff and governors** to:

- promote and encourage a fruitful partnership with parents and carers
- encourage and support parents to play an active part in school life, fostering an ethos where all parents feel welcomed and valued
- provide accessible information about opportunities to be involved e.g. offer bilingual support staff, interpreters or translators if necessary

- provide opportunities for parents to share their own skills, knowledge and interests with other parents e.g. through coffee mornings
- 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.
- be clear, straightforward, appropriately friendly, and not patronizing
- pay attention to appropriate forms of address for families of different cultures and circumstances to avoid or embarrassment or feelings of exclusion
- Support and encourage learning at home – helping parents to build upon the things their child learns throughout their school life
- seek parents' views and opinions to find out what works best for them, and act upon them
- be as sensitive as possible, to the needs, worries, and circumstances of parents and children in all communications
- give accessible advice and information at the right time, so that parents feel confident and knowledgeable in supporting their children's learning e.g. half termly forecasts
- have informative induction systems for parents of children starting school, including a school prospectus, and transition for children leaving school
- keep parents informed of pupil progress through a range of opportunities, e.g: parents evenings, open days, written reports, newsletters and texting service.
- ensure all parents know how to find out information, make suggestions or complaints.
- Try to ensure all parents are included – e.g. develop strategies for involving fathers, parents who work or live apart from their children, encouraging apprehensive parents to visit school, etc.
- gain approval from the Senior Management Team for all 'original' letters before they are sent and ensure a copy of any (non-confidential) letters home are stored in the file in general office
- provide a pastoral team to provide support and encouragement for families suffering difficulties/crises, or barriers to involvement
- inform parents about relevant courses, workshops and training available for them, using weekly newsletters, school website and targeted invitations from mentors
- consult with parents about the times of meetings to ease access
- provide opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum we offer and about children's learning, at school and at home
- work with parents to promote positive behaviour at home and at school.

### **Positive Parents**

Our 'positive parents' group consists mainly of parents/carers, as all parents/carers with a child in school are automatically a member. There is also representation from staff and governors and on occasion the local community. All these groups and individuals are actively invited to meetings

Its aims are to:

- support school staff and families to ensure that the provision offered by the school is directed to develop the full potential of all our children including of personality, talents and intellectual and physical abilities
- promote and develop a strong partnership between school staff and parents, collectively and individually
- promote links between the school and its wider community
- communicate effectively with parents, children, governors and staff e.g. through letters and availability of agendas and minutes of meetings
- encourage parents to be involved in, and help with school events and functions

- organize regular school/community events which support and celebrate varied ethnic and religious groups within school
- fund raise for major school projects

## **Home –School Communication**

At the heart of a successful home-school relationship is good communication. Below are some of the ways in which the school will try to keep parents fully informed.

### **School Handbook**

This is given to every parent when their child starts school. Copies are available on request.

### **Information Evenings/ annual report**

School organizes induction events for new parents, and advice and information events for parents of children about to choose their secondary school.

Parents' evenings each term provide the opportunity for parents to talk directly to teachers.

A full written report given in the spring so that parents get information early enough and can work together with staff to support their child to make good progress. At the end of the year a written summary report is sent to all parents.

### **Special Educational Needs/Case Conferences**

Sometimes it is necessary to arrange a meeting of specialist staff, from both in/out the school, to discuss the difficulties a particular pupil is facing. Parents will be invited to such meetings.

### **Texting Service**

School uses a texting service which can quickly inform all (or specific groups of) parents via SMS e.g. winter weather conditions affecting opening, reminder of cancellation of after school club, etc.

### **Behaviour and Discipline**

Behaviour management is based on 'Restorative Practices'. Our policy is available to parents and details how any issues will be dealt with restoratively.

### **Newsletters**

A Parents' Newsletter is issued weekly (currently Tuesday).

### **Website**

Information including key policies and articles are available on the site at [www.hstb.co.uk](http://www.hstb.co.uk)

### **Systems for approaching school staff**

The school is always pleased to speak with parents about their children. In most cases the support will be provided by the child's class teacher. Parents are asked to make an appointment with the class teacher in the first instance.

### **School Trips**

When a child begins school, parents will be asked to give general approval for their child to participate in school trips within the school day. Parents will always be provided with details of departure and return times, the mode of transport and the reason for the visit. If a trip is not fully within the school day, parents will be asked to sign a consent form. No child will be taken on a trip without the signed consent of the parent (either the 'blanket coverage' or a specific signed permission).

### **Parents helping in school**

We welcome and encourage parents to come and help in school on a regular basis where possible and/or to share any special talents or interests with the children

### **Appendix 1**

**As an appendix to this policy there is a separate document - 'Code of practice for people volunteering to help in school'**

Before anyone is able to volunteer in school they meet the deputy head, look round school, discuss availability and sign a copy of the code of practice to show that they have read and understood the requirements. Before they begin school must have received back a clear DBS (was CRB). All volunteer names are then held on a central register kept by the business manager.