

10.5 Parental involvement

Policy statement

We believe that children benefit most from early years education and care when parents and settings work together in partnership.

Our aim is to support parents as their children's first and most important educators by involving them in their children's education and in the full life of the setting. We also aim to support parents in their own continuing education and personal development.

Some parents are less well represented in early years settings; these include fathers, parents who live apart from their children, but who still play a part in their lives, as well as working parents. In carrying out the following procedures, we will ensure that all parents are included.

When we refer to 'parents' we mean both mothers and fathers or same sex parents; these include both natural or birth parents, as well as step-parents and parents who do not live with their children, but have contact with them and play a part in their lives. 'Parents' also includes foster parents.

The Children Act (1989) defines *parental responsibility* as '*all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property*'. (For a full explanation of who has parental responsibility, refer to the Pre-school Learning Alliance publication *Safeguarding Children*.)

Procedures

- We have a means to ensure all parents are included - that may mean we have different strategies for involving fathers, or parents who work or live apart from their children if necessary.
- We make every effort to accommodate parents who have a disability or impairment.
- We consult with all parents to find out what works best for them.
- We ensure ongoing dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children and to support their families.
- We inform all parents about how the setting is run and its policies, through access to written information, including our *Safeguarding Children and Child Protection* policy and our responsibilities under the Prevent

Duty, and through regular informal communication. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them if necessary.

- We inform all parents on a regular basis about their children's progress.
- Information about a child and his or her family is kept confidential within our setting. Our privacy notice that details how and why we process your personal information is available from our website or by request. The exception to this is where there is cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where there are concerns regarding child's development that need to be shared with another agency. We will seek parental permission unless there are reasons not to in order to protect the safety of the child. Reference is made to our Information Sharing Policy on seeking consent for disclosure.
- We specifically seek parental consent to administer medication, take a child for emergency treatment, take a child on an outing and take photographs for the purposes of record keeping.
- We involve parents in the shared record keeping about their children - either formally or informally – and ensure parents have access to their children's written developmental records.
- We provide opportunities for parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the setting.
- We provide information about opportunities to be involved in the setting in ways that are accessible to parents with basic skills needs, or those for whom English is an additional language if required.
- Where applicable, we work with parents to carry out an agreed plan to support special educational needs.
- Where applicable, we work with parents to carry out any agreed tasks where a Protection Plan is in place for a child.
- We hold meetings in venues that are accessible and appropriate for all.
- We welcome the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take.
- All parents have access to our complaints procedure.
- We provide opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum offered in the setting and about young children's learning, in the setting and at home.

In compliance with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements, the following documentation is in place:

- Admissions Policy.
- Complaints procedure.
- Record of complaints.
- Developmental records of children.

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