



Home School Policy

Revised – November 2017

Parents, in the context of this policy, can be taken to mean biological parents, adoptive parents, long term foster parents or other carers who have full parental responsibility for a child.

This policy was reviewed informally with a Parent governor.

This policy works to fulfil the following aims of Woodlawn School:

- Empower families
- Communicate effectively
- Nurture core values of respect and friendship
- Ensure inspiring positive partnerships

Work with parents is crucial to the success of the children.

Principles

- The ability to parent reflects each individual's level of self confidence and self worth.
- All parents/carers need help and support at different times and in different ways.
- Parenting/caring is a continuous process and school recognises that parents are the adults that are most likely to be continuously involved with the child.
- Parent/carer education should be relevant to boys as well as girls and men as well as women. Cultural diversities must be respected.
- Greater openness and trust between parties should ensure that we engage in honest discussion. Support should be a mutual sharing of the difficulties parents face and celebration of pupils' progress and achievement.
- Parents/carers are an information resource; they know about their child's background and history. They alone have the knowledge of their child's normal context.
- Liaison with parents is seen as essential to gain a more complete picture of the child.
- Each Department in school will support home/school policies whilst taking into account the different age ranges of their pupils/students and the range of concerns/issues/knowledge for which parents will need more focused support as their child moves through school.
- Links to maintain parent involvement will need to be modified throughout the pupil's school life.
- Parenting/caring has to be seen in the widest social context.
- All involved in parenting need to see their role as part of the wider network of support.
- Parents are recognised as educators at home; they therefore require access to approaches which will develop their skills, knowledge and confidence.
- Staff should be innovative and flexible when developing approaches to extend pupil learning within the family situation.
- The extended family of a pupil may have a great influence on the support offered to parents and their child and may therefore require access to the same skills and information as parents.
- School recognises that all pupils have a voice which communicates between home and school.

GUIDELINES

- The Home-School agreement sets out the expectations of school, parents and the pupil.
- Parents are welcome in school and will be encouraged by all staff to feel part of the school community.
- A Governor will offer to meet new parents and inform them of the network of support available to them in school.
- All prospective and new parents will be given the name and contact details of an existing parent who is willing to chat with them informally about the school and its work.
- All parents receive a welcome letter and are given the opportunity to inform the school about their child through the school's admission process.
- Parents/carers are given the opportunity to comment and contribute to their child's Annual Review.
- Pupils are invited to contribute to their Annual Reviews/ Education, Health and Care Plans in Secondary and Post 16.
- Teachers may need to consider and arrange mutually agreed times to discuss the pupil's annual review with working parents.
- Staff may offer practical help, reassurance and guidance when needed: they can also act as a link communicator to alert the a member of the Senior Leadership team to other parent concerns and issues.
- Staff (including members of the Multi disciplinary team) may offer specialist support groups (e.g. PECS, Makaton, Sex Education) and training opportunities such as the Toilet Training course and specialist courses for young people with ASC.
- All pupils in school have home-school books which enable parents and classroom teams to keep up to date with child's progress, to be forewarned of events and to provide news from home such as weekend events. Parents value this form of daily communication whilst understanding that it is often difficult for very busy classroom staff to find time to give written messages every day. However messages from parents should always be responded to promptly.
- Increasing text messaging and emails are used to communicate between home and school but these will not yet replace the Home/School Book. Text messages are used as reminders or congratulations and also in an emergency such as the closure of the school. E Mails are used to consult parents and to send congratulations for issues such as 100% attendance. Class teachers will also send whole class texts to parents about activities in the coming week.
- All parents will have direct access to the Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers through personal email.
- The Woodlawn Parents & Friends Association (WPFA) is a group of parents and friends of school who work together to support school and arrange social and fund-raising events.
- School and the Multi-Disciplinary Team will inform and act as a link to gaining parent access to a range of other services and facilities provided by the Local Authority and Charity Groups. These may include Respite services, Holiday Play schemes, and Leisure and Companion schemes.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in the school governance procedure.
- The school website is under continuous development to make sure it has the appropriate information for parents and other interested people. The school would welcome suggestions of issues or information to include.

- Parents receive copies of a termly curriculum overview and IEP's for their child. They are offered the opportunity to come to school to discuss this with class staff.
- Parents receive an evaluation of their child's IEP on a termly basis. They are offered the opportunity to come to school to discuss this with class staff.
- Parents receive assessment information on a yearly basis through teacher assessment and PIVAT's.
- Twice yearly Parental consultations are held. Pupils are included in the consultations where appropriate.
- Yearly evaluations are carried out on the Review procedures which include questionnaires sent to parents. The information collected is reported back to parents.
- The School Newsletter will inform parents of past and future events, celebrate the work of pupils in the school, provide useful information and offer suggestions for home-learning.
- Parents have e-mail access to school.
- An annual survey of all parents asks them their opinion about how well the school meets the Home/School Agreement. This is an anonymous survey and details of the results are shared with parents through the newsletter. The school also takes action on the issues raised.
- Parents are welcomed into school to support the work of classes. This may be in their child's own class but is also in other classes if this is felt to be more appropriate. The school is always grateful for this support.
- Woodlawn School has Facebook and Twitter accounts which share with families and the wider community the young peoples work and successes, reminders and invitation about activities and other information we hope families find helpful. Parents do respond to this platform and comment and share other information.
- A school website informs parents and friends and family about the work of the school and displays children's' work.
- If parents have difficult issues which cannot be easily resolved the school is happy, with the support of the Local Authority, to seek formal mediation in an effort to improve relations for the sake of the children.
- A set of standards has been agreed in relation to the induction of parents of new children into school. These set out the discussions and information a parent is able to expect.
- Woodlawn School is aware of how terminology can inadvertently separate pupils families with disabilities from other families and will work to reduce this wherever possible.
- A formal complaints procedure is in place and complaints are reported termly to Governors. Parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Class Teacher, Head and/or Deputy.