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## 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; 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 apart in their lives. 'Parents' also includes same sex parents, as well as 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**

- Parents are made to feel welcome in our setting; they are greeted appropriately, 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.
- 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. e.g. contacting both sets of parents to offer paperwork/ photos of children.
- We ensure ongoing dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children and to support their families. e.g. our questionnaires about opening times, key worker chats, staff welcomes all children at the start of a session and is available at the end of each session for informal discussions with the parents.
- 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.
- Information about a child and his or her family is kept confidential within our setting. We provide you with a privacy notice that details how and why we process your personal information.
- When questionnaires are sent out we value Parents comments and views.
- Parents are actively encouraged to participate in decision making processes according to the structure in place within our setting to play an active part in the governance and management of the setting, by becoming a committee member
- As far as possible our Pre-School provides a flexible way to meet the needs of parents without compromising the needs of children.
- We encourage parents to become involved in the social and cultural life of the setting and actively contribute to it.
- We encourage and support parents, we inform all parents on a regular basis about their children's progress. We have key-person chats and share with them their child's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) progress check and learning & development summery.

For new children a settling in review meeting is offered to the parents with the child's key-person or manager approximately after 4-6 weeks attendance.

- We involve parents in the shared record keeping about their children - either formally or informally – and ensure parents have access to their child/children's developmental records.
- We provide sufficient opportunity for parents to share necessary information with us and this is recorded and stored to protect confidentiality.
- Where applicable, our key persons work with parents to carry out an agreed plan to support special educational needs.
- Where applicable, our key persons work with parents to carry out any agreed tasks where a Protection Plan is in place for a child.
- 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.
- We consult with parents about the times of meetings to avoid excluding anyone.
- We hold meetings in venues that are accessible and appropriate for all.
- We welcome the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take.
- We inform all parents of the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions and we check to ensure these are understood. All parents have access to our written 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.
- There are opportunities for parents to take active roles in supporting their child's learning in the setting: informally through helping out or taking part in activities with their child.

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

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

**Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- Complaint Investigation Record (2015)
- Engaging Mothers & Fathers (2010)
- Safeguarding Children (2013)
- The First and Foremost Series (2008)
- Play cards for the Home Environment (2016)