



**COTMANHAY INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**  
**PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**Philosophy**

*"Most children have two main educators in their lives – their parents and their teachers. While both have crucial roles to play, it's important that the influence of the parent as an educator doesn't end when the child is in formal education. Schools can help parents develop this role by building meaningful school-home relationships and encouraging ongoing parental involvement."*

(Groupcall 2016)

**School Vision**

At Cotmanhay Infant & Nursery School our vision is to build on the solid foundations of existing home-school links and communications with parents and carers, by developing our Parental Engagement Strategy to further support our children in their education and personal development, whilst continuing to strengthen relationships between school, home and children. All new staff complete 'Parental Partnership' induction training which emphasises treating parents and carers with respect and greeting them in a positive, happy manner with eye contact. We want to foster an ethos of partnership where parents and carers:

- \* are welcomed, respected and valued as partners, by the school community, in their child's learning and development.
- \* have a full range of choices and opportunities to enable them to be involved and support pupil progress.
- \* are engaged through on-going communication and dialogue to support a positive learning environment at home and at school.
- \* are supported with the tools which enable them to participate in school life.

The benefits of such a strategy are far-reaching and include:

- \* Increased pupil achievement, attainment and progress.
- \* Increased pupil attendance
- \* Better rate of homework completion
- \* Positive attitude and behaviour
- \* Improved pupil- teacher relationships
- \* Improved pupil- parent/carer relationships
- \* Improved understanding of pupils' needs
- \* Shared understanding of pupils' strengths and areas for development
- \* Clearer ability to help and support parents and therefore meet children's needs.

**Parental and Carer Communication.**

We communicate with parents and carers in a range of ways, these are listed below:

SLT / HT/ FRW and the nursery team meet and greet parents each morning at the beginning of the school day to discuss any concerns and offer support.

**Reporting to parents and carers:**

Parents and carers receive reports on pupil progress at the end of the academic year. And just after the child finishes their first term in our 2 Year Cubs nursery.

**Direct contact – telephone:**

Parents and carers can be contacted by telephone when issues arise throughout the school day.

Telephone calls are made immediately to parents and carers with regard to medical issues, if a child has been taken poorly or if clarification is required with regard to an important matter. A telephone call would also be made immediately if exclusion was required with immediate effect.

Calls are also made as soon as possible to verify school absence when parents have not reported these.

**Home-school reading-diary:**

Staff members will also communicate via the Home-School Reading Diary. Guidance is given on the child's next reading target. Each child has a diary and parents and carers are encouraged to use this to record their reading progress.

**School letters:**

All letters and weekly newsletters are shared on the Class DoJo app. School information is often given to parents and carers in the form of a letter.

Each class and Nursery send out a termly Topic Newsletter which includes information about what topics their child will be learning, what the next steps are in Maths and English, important dates and links to websites which can be used to support a child's learning development.

Each child has a number of letters and leaflets relating to how children can be helped to reach their next step of learning in maths and reading which are kept in the child's reading bag.

**Text service:**

This service is utilised when we want to send a short message or reminder of a school event. Texts are useful in reinforcing information and are received immediately by parents and carers and to celebrate things like good attendance.

**Email service:**

Any documents can be emailed to parents on request.

**School website:**

Our website contains a wealth of information for parents and carers, including current news and events, curriculum information, policies and online safety, links about how to help their child in every area of learning and lots of links to websites which the school use to support children's progress. We encourage parents and carers to contact school directly with any issues they have about information on our website.

**Social Media:**

The school has a **Twitter and a Facebook** account and regularly posts information about events in and out of school.

Class DoJo is used to share observations and photographs to celebrate children's experiences between school and parents.

**Visits to school:**

We hold many events throughout the school year and we actively encourage parents and carers to attend. These events provide a great opportunity to talk and strengthen relationships between staff and parents and carers.

**Targets:**

Children's targets/ next steps in Maths / MD and English / CLL for the following term are shared during parental consultations, the previous targets are reviewed.

**Parents' Consultation meetings**

Held three times a year, these meetings are an opportunity for teachers and parents and carers to discuss pupils' progress, SSP targets, behaviour, attainment and to offer further advice and resources about how to help their child's progress at home.

### **PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRES**

Questionnaires are given out at the end of every term which contain a number of questions about the school provision and safeguarding issues. Parents are actively encouraged to tell the school any ideas about how to improve the provision.

### **SEND:**

Our SENDCO is always available to meet parents at any time and also arranges regular review meetings for any children who receive additional funding, support or children with a HCP. More formal review meetings are also organised.

The Headteacher and SENDCO will meet parents to discuss any changes in provision or timetables.

### **Family Support Worker**

Our school FSW offers continual advice and support to any parent who need it which we hope will give the parents the skills, knowledge and tools to support and nurture their children in reaching their full potential and to meet all their personal, social, emotional, physical and psychological needs.

### **Meetings with Headteacher or other teaching staff:**

Parents and carers meet with the Headteacher or other members of staff, at a mutually convenient time, to discuss a range of issues. These meetings can be convened by staff or parents and carers.

### **Parent Meetings:**

We aim to deliver a number of meetings for parents throughout the year to offer advice, guidance and ideas about how to support their child at home, these will be dependent on current COVID levels. If meetings aren't delivered the information is still shared with parents on our school website:

- 2 Year Cubs Parent Induction Meeting
- 3 Year Cubs Parent Induction Meeting
- Reception Parent Induction Meeting
- Reception Curriculum/ Assessment Meeting
- Year One Parent Phonics meeting
- SATS Parent Meeting
- Online Safety Meeting

### **Fulfilling the vision of Parental Engagement**

Parental engagement needs to be much more than communication and so we have identified strategies to enable us to fully engage with parents and carers and support them as partners so that they have the opportunity, skills, knowledge and tools to engage in a partnership which supports and nurtures our pupils in reaching their full potential.

### **Strategies for Success:**

Strategy 1:

School climate. Foster and sustain a positive, welcoming school climate in which all parents' and carers' perspectives are encouraged, valued, heard and addressed

Strategy 2:

Eliminating barriers. (see Appendix 1- Overcoming barriers to parental engagement.) Identify and remove barriers to parent engagement that may prevent some parents and carers from fully participating in their child's learning and to reflect the diversity of our young people and communities.

Strategy 3:

Tools and supports for parents and carers Helping parents and carers support their child's learning at home and at school

Strategy 4:

Parent outreach Review and expand communication and outreach strategies such as local workshops, presentations, tools and resources, to share information and strategies to support learning at home and parent engagement in schools

### **Parent Engagement action plan**

Fulfilling the school's vision of parent engagement requires commitment and action by all of our partners at every level of the education system.

### **Foundations for Parent Engagement:**

Parents' engagement matters.

Parents care about their children and want to be involved: they want their children to succeed in school and are willing to help in as many ways as possible.

Commitment to our pupils' well-being is the driving force behind everything we do in education.

Everyone-parents, families, administrators, teachers, support workers and the local authority- shares this firm commitment.

A true partnership takes sustained and intentional efforts on the part of all partners with commitment and action by all at every level of the education system. While parents can find it challenging to play an active role in their children's education, it is important to meet this challenge so that pupils at Cotmanhay Infant School have the support they need to be successful in school and later in life.

The Parent Engagement policy seeks to identify and break down barriers to parent and carer involvement and proactively reach out to them. With work schedules, outside commitments and individual preference- it helps parents and carers to have choices on how they want to be involved. Strategies need to be flexible recognising the diversity of our parents and their contributions.

### **School Actions:**

- \* Establish and sustain a positive learning culture and welcoming climate where parental input is welcomed, respected and valued.
- \* Implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by pupils, parents and carers and our wider school community.
- \* Actively explore and utilise opportunities to further engage parents and carers at school and at home to support pupil achievement.
- \* Inform pupils, parents and carers about learning expectations and their child's progress and provide support to parents and carers in understanding this.
- \* Actively encourage and support our parents and carers to share their ideas for improving pupil achievement to help inform school improvement planning.
- \* Support opportunities for parents and carers and pupils to develop or strengthen skills and knowledge.
- \* Monitor school environment – Governors and Subject leaders are encouraged to complete environment audits which identify strengths and weaknesses to help support parents view/ access to the school.
- \* Establish a process on monitoring and review to determine the effectiveness of the parent engagement strategies.

**Written by:**

**Miss Foster EYFS Leader**

**K. Latchford - Headteacher**

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**Review date: April 2023**

## **APPENDIX 1**

(Taken from "*Overcoming 10 common barriers to parental engagement.*" By Creative Education, 2016.)

### **Unpleasant memories of school**

Many parents can be reluctant to engage with their child's school because they have such difficult memories of their own time at school. They may be only a few years out of school and still consider it to be quite a daunting place. Open, honest friendly staff who communicate positively with parents can help to break down these barriers, though it can be hard to encourage the first step. Sometimes holding informal, fun events aimed at bringing parents into school can help to bridge the gap. Just make sure you make them feel really welcome when they get there.

### **Only get involved if there's a problem**

Many parents wouldn't dream of contacting the school unless there was an issue with their child. Again, this barrier can only be broken down by trying to address the ethos of home-school communications. Parents need to be helped to understand that even when their child is doing very well, they can be instrumental in driving that achievement further.

### **Infrequent communication from the school**

Many parents hear only very infrequently from the school – they might get sent home the occasional newsletter but in terms of actually hearing information about their child, it may be limited to one report and one parents evening a year. That's not a useful dialogue. Think about how you can usefully increase the frequency of your communications with parents – and how you can make it a two way conversation.

### **Can't get into school**

Many parents work long hours and just aren't available to get into school during school hours. Whilst they might be able to attend the occasional parents evening, this is unlikely to sufficiently engage them. You can get around this by allowing parents virtual access to your school; a regularly updated school website.

### **Language barrier**

An increasing number of parents do not speak English as a first language so they are unable to understand communications from the school. This can be a real issue and you should assess whether you are in a position to address this. Contact the LA or other parents from that community to act as an interpreter.

### **Jargon**

Even those parents who are fluent in English can have trouble understanding some communications from the school. Think carefully when communicating with parents and ensure that you don't use the jargon you might use with your colleagues.