

# St Catherine's C of E Primary

## Parental Engagement and Partnership Policy

### What we mean by 'parents'

Parents matter, but so do others who look after children, from foster carers to older siblings and grandparents. We have used the term 'parents' in this policy as shorthand for all these different carers. 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 a part in their lives.

### Background

Parents play a vital role in education. When parents are engaged and involved, everyone benefits: children, parents, families, teachers, schools and communities, and our school is enriched as a positive place to teach, learn and grow.

Research shows that where parents know what their children are learning and support that at home, children will do much better at school.

The work of Professor Charles Desforges tells us that at the age of seven, parental influence on children's learning is six times that of the school, and by the age of eleven, it is still a third greater. Working effectively with parents and carers to help them to support their children's learning and development is crucial, right through from Nursery to Year 6.

### Vision

Our vision is that parents:

- are welcomed, respected and valued by the school community as partners in their children's learning and development
- are seen as the experts regarding their own children, and are listened to.

### Aims

Our aims are to:

- foster and sustain a positive, welcoming school climate in which all parent perspectives are encouraged, valued and heard
- create clear and positive communication links with parents, where they know they can approach the school with a problem and it will be positively and promptly acted upon
- communicate with parents using the media with which they are most comfortable
- provide useful information about the curriculum and practical advice that will enable parents to support their children's learning and development
- provide parents with a range of opportunities that enable them to be involved with their child's learning
- share with parents responsibilities for implementing school policies, e.g. promoting positive behaviour, healthy snacking, homework and school uniform
- identify and remove barriers to parent engagement that may prevent some parents from fully participating in their children's learning.

### Objectives

Our objectives are to:

- establish mechanisms such as questionnaires, a suggestion box and discussions for seeking parents' views on a regular basis
- provide rich opportunities for children and parents to enjoy learning together, at home and at school
- offer workshops and courses to support parents in the often challenging task of bringing up children
- support parents, where appropriate, in acquiring skills that will enable them to help their child, such as literacy, numeracy and ICT
- offer parents regular and frequent opportunities to talk to staff about their child's progress, at times that fit with their work schedules, outside commitments and individual preferences
- provide staff with the means to set interactive homework (use of our VLE – Moodle) and make parent-teacher meetings effective

- carefully evaluate the impact of what we do to support parents' engagement with their children's learning.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The key factor in the home-school partnership is the relationship between the teacher and the parent. All teaching staff are expected to:

- forge strong and positive relationships with the parents of children they teach
- listen to parents and draw on their expert knowledge of their child when planning how best to support the child's learning and development
- share with parents information about what children are learning and about their progress
- provide opportunities for children and parents to enjoy learning together at home and at school.

School leaders will support staff and parents by:

- making themselves accessible to parents, and modelling respectful partnership
- providing professional development opportunities on parental engagement for staff, and a dedicated budget on which staff can draw in order to put in place specific parental engagement activities
- making parental engagement part of what our teachers do
- providing the right conditions for teachers and parents to work together, such as time for them to have meaningful and private discussions
- ensuring that staff and parents can communicate easily through a range of accessible media
- ensuring that a range of workshops, courses and support systems for parents are available.

The governing body will support parental engagement by:

- monitoring the implementation of this parental engagement policy
- reporting annually to parents on the steps taken to increase parental engagement, and their impact.

## **Reports and information**

This will be published on our school website – [www.stcatherinescofe.co.uk](http://www.stcatherinescofe.co.uk)

**This policy will be reviewed annually.**

## **We will know this policy is working if:**

- parent surveys and focus groups tell us that parents feel welcomed, respected and valued as partners in their children's learning and development
- parent surveys and focus groups tell us that parents feel well informed about what their child is learning and how they can help
- children make good progress in their learning
- children of families who have in the past found it hard to engage with the school make progress at least as good as that of children whose families are more confident in engaging.

Agreed at the governing body meeting dated: