

## Home School Policy -

### 5.11

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.

As some students now live at Heatherfield Mews this policy also refers to links with this provision. One of Beacon Hill's Deputy Heads responsible for ASD meets with the Manager of Heatherfield Mews on a monthly basis.

This policy fulfils the following aims of Beacon Hill school:

- All partners include, involve and inform each other.
- That actively develops parental partnerships for the benefit of the pupils.
- That values communication and provides the time and opportunity to make it effective.
- That establishes an atmosphere of security, trust and respect for all.

Work with parents is crucial to the success of the children. This area has been the subject of a whole school progress plan action plan in 2010/11 and following an Ofsted recommendation will have another plan in 2011/12.

#### 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.
- All new parents will be made aware of their ownership of the 'Parents/family' room and ideas to improve its successful use are always useful. They should be made aware that its provision is intended to support the school in maintaining its 'open door' policy by providing privacy and a comfortable environment to assist partnership.
- A Governor will offer to meet new parents and inform them of the network of support available to them in school.
- All parents receive a welcome letter and are given the opportunity to inform the school about their child through the schools Welcome booklet.
- Parents/carers are given the opportunity to comment and contribute to their child's Annual Review. This is particularly so in Person Centred Reviews where the less formal setting allows more opportunity for parental views.
- Pupils are invited to contribute to their Annual Reviews in Secondary and Post 16 and to act as advocates for their peers with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties.
- 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 Head Teacher or Home/school Co-ordinator 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 'Speakeasy' course and Learn through Play.
- All Primary pupils in school have home-school books and Secondary students and Post 16 have 'planners' 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 may also send whole class emails to parents about activities in the coming week.
- All parents will have direct access to the Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers through personal email and mobile phone numbers.
- The 'Friends of Beacon Hill' association 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.
- A Parents group will be invited into school half termly to discuss relevant issues with school staff or an outside speaker. This will be held on a Friday and will be an informal occasions to encourage parental attendance.
- Parents are welcomed into classrooms and are encouraged to work with children in other classes not just their own child's.
- Parents receive copies of a termly curriculum overview and IEP's for their child.
- Parents receive an evaluation of their child's IEP on a termly basis.
- Parents receive assessment information on a yearly basis through teacher assessment and PIVAT's.
- Twice yearly Parental consultations are held. One is an afternoon and one is after school to try to accommodate the majority of parents. 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. A specific 6<sup>th</sup> Form newsletter is also circulated.
- Parents have e-mail access to class teachers and 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.
- A parent's noticeboard has been set up in the entrance hall and includes items of especial interest to parents.
- A set of standards has been agreed with parents, staff and members of the multi disciplinary team. This sets out and records ways in which we aim to make meetings more fruitful and positive for parents and therefore for the children.
- A school website informs parents and friends and family about the work of the school and displays children's' work on the World Wide Web.
- 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.
- 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.

Helen Jones Headteacher.

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