

Family School Partnership Policy

Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic School



Approved by:	Maureen Gordon	Date: February 2019
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Last reviewed on:	February 2019
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Next review due by:	February 2021
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Family School Partnership Policy

Rationale

Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Primary School is striving to become exemplar in developing and maintaining strong parental engagement between home and school. Research shows that at primary level schooling 'family influences have a powerful effect on children's attainment and progress'. (Oxford School Improvement).

We are therefore committed to ongoing dialogue with parents/carers to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children in supporting each child to reach their full potential. Only when school and home work closely together can we achieve the best for our children.

Terminology

For the purposes of this policy the term 'parent/carer' is used to indicate any adult who plays a significant role in a child's life (such a birth or adoptive parent, foster carer or other significant adult who acts in loco-parentis beyond the school setting).

The term 'family' refers to those who share responsibility for the wellbeing of the child.

Aims

At Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Primary School, we encourage and support parents and families to be involved in the life of the school and their child's development by:

- Promoting consistent attitudes towards learning and behaviour at school and at home.
- Enabling parents to support the learning in school through formal and informal communication, workshops and curriculum evenings, to help their child make the best progress possible.
- Ensuring that maximum use is made of all adults' skills to enrich learning opportunities
- Raising awareness of the types of activity going on in the school

Objectives of the Policy

This policy is organised into five key themes. These explain in detail what Our Lady of the Visitation believes is good parental partnership between home and school (ethos), what we currently have in place and how we achieve this.

1. Fostering Effective Family-School Partnerships

Ethos	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone in school believes that children will achieve more when we work closely with families and communities. 	
What we currently do	How we do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are welcoming to parents, greet them in a friendly way and acknowledge the presence of all visitors. All school staff actively work to build relationships and engage with parents and families. Our school environment is welcoming, clean, easy to navigate, and engaging for parents. Safe, locked entries have a clear way for parents to gain access and a secure sign in process. Members of the Senior Leadership Team are visible and available to parents at the beginning or the end of the school day (Headteacher – Miss Coll or Deputy Headteacher – Miss Paul). Our school has regular opportunities for parents to attend celebration events, and for children to share their learning with their parents and families. Our school holds regular community and fundraising events which bring people together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Staff are expected to greet parents in a welcoming fashion.</i> ➤ <i>We regularly update displays and consider the décor and fabric of the school to ensure it is welcoming.</i> ➤ <i>Signage is clear. The systems for signing in and out are established.</i> ➤ <i>SLT do gate duty daily, and are available for parents to talk to.</i> ➤ <i>We run shows, concerts for celebrations, alongside Stay and Play, project exhibitions and annual class assemblies where parents can share in their child's learning.</i> ➤ <i>Cake sales and coffee mornings are run regularly by the school and a wide range of community events take place each year through the PTA.</i>

2. Communicating and Consulting Effectively

Ethos	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We believe that parents and school staff should engage in regular two-way communication. The school should keep the parents informed of important issues and events and make it easy for parents to communicate with teachers and SLT. 	
What we currently do	How we do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our school has a regular newsletter which is available to all parents. A timetable of termly events is published to parents. Senior Leaders and teachers communicate frequently with parents using a variety of means (letters, email, newsletters, in-person, by telephone and text). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>A weekly newsletter is distributed to parents via the website with a text alert. Printed copies are also available from the school office and on display outside of the school.</i> ➤ <i>The newsletter provides a timetable each term with weekly reminders of events.</i> ➤ <i>Letters and texts are regularly distributed as necessary, and personal communications takes place as appropriate and possible to the situation.</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clear processes for parents to voice concerns or complaints, and a prompt response is always provided. • Our school provides parents with pupil and school performance data and support to understand it. • The Home-School Agreement between school and each parent clarifies expectations for how everyone will support pupil progress. • Parent Consultation Evenings are held two times annually with follow-up meetings as necessary at a time mutually convenient to the parent and the teacher. • Our school conducts regular surveys of parents, the results of which are shared with all stakeholders, including agreed actions. • Where parental responsibility is shared, all communications are sent to both parents. • Translation facilities can be arranged as necessary. • Our school takes health and medical needs very seriously. Keeping children safe and healthy is of the highest priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>This is conducted in accordance with the Complaints Policy. Complaints can be verbal, emailed, by telephone or letter.</i> ➤ <i>These are included in the newsletter, with regular updates.</i> ➤ <i>These are included in the newsletter, with regular updates, and during parent curriculum events.</i> ➤ <i>The home school agreement goes out each year, and each family is expected to sign it.</i> ➤ <i>Parent’s Evenings take place twice annually. There are other opportunities to speak with teachers about a child development both formally and informally.</i> ➤ <i>Regular pupil, parent and staff questionnaires are held, with results and actions shared via the newsletter.</i> ➤ <i>Where shared communication has been requested, the school always sends out information to both parents.</i> ➤ <i>Through parent or teacher request, translators can usually be found for the main home languages used in our community.</i> ➤ <i>Every parent is encouraged to inform the school of all relevant health information. We engage in regular communication and encourage parents to update the school with changes through any health notices.</i>
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3. Enabling Parental Engagement in Learning	
Ethos	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our school believes that all of our parents have the capacity to support their children’s learning. 	
What we currently do	How we do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parents are given information each year on the content of the curriculum relevant to their child/ren. • All parents are given information each year on home learning and homework expectations. • All parents are given information each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>A Curriculum Evening is held for each year group every September, with handouts for all parents.</i> ➤ <i>This takes place during Curriculum Evenings for each year group every September.</i> ➤ <i>This is through the Curriculum Evening</i>

<p>year on activities which can support learning at home (such as homework tasks).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parents are given regular information on other ways they can support their children (such as regular sleep, a balanced nutritious diet, suitable time and space to do homework etc.) • There are opportunities for parents to engage in workshops and activities which help them understand and practise the skills needed to support learning and development at home. 	<p><i>for each year group every September, in the Newsletter, year group curriculum maps are also available to parents on the web-site.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Termly curriculum Newsletters are available to all parents on the school website.</i> ➤ <i>Induction Evenings contain this information, in addition to reminders in the weekly newsletter and through our Healthy Schools communications.</i> ➤ <i>Workshops may include, for example: Reading, Writing, Maths and Phonics; Online safety, Healthy Lifestyles; Relationship and Sex Education as well as a range of workshops for EYFS.</i>
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4. Empowering Parents to Develop Their Own Skills

Ethos	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our school believes that building parents' knowledge and skills is important to supporting children's achievement. 	
What we currently do	How we do this
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are regular opportunities for parents to volunteer in school such as helping to improve the school environment, supporting in the classroom, accompanying classes on trips. • The school supports NVQ and pre-teacher training placements for parents, liaising with colleges to enable parents to gain qualifications. • Our school has systems for ensuring all parents have the opportunity to volunteer if they want to and selection processes are fair. • Our school has an active PTA which is accessible, actively recruiting new members and welcoming new families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Annual parent and community volunteer induction including support to apply for a DBS check. Volunteers do a range of things according to needs, interests and talents. Age group of children, teacher and need of the volunteer are matched with care with a verbal policy for parents not to help in their own child's class. Many volunteers are NVQ students looking for placements. Many of our own parents have gained qualifications this way and some have gone on to work in the school.</i> ➤ <i>All parents and community volunteers are accepted subject to DBS checks. Any arising issues are dealt with by the volunteer co-ordinator.</i> ➤ <i>Our Lady of the Visitation has an excellent, active FOTV group who raise approx £5,000 per annum. FOTV tea/coffee morning parties and welcome events are very important and they have a high profile at Induction Events.</i>

5. Supporting Successful Transitions

Ethos

- We believe that transition into school is an integral part of the school, supporting and encouraging parents to be positively engaged from the outset, and contributes to parents continuing to be engaged through the child's schooling.

What we currently do

- Our school provides opportunities for parents to come into school both before and after children have been offered a place.
- Home visits or individual family meetings are carried out to all children at point of entry to the school or Nursery.

- Our school provides information through Induction Evenings and Workshops for parents to support their child's transition into school.
- Our school provides opportunities for parents to share information about their child entering Nursery and Reception early in the academic year.

- Our school provides information and support to parents to enable successful transitions between Key Stages and year groups.
- Our school provides advice and information for parents whose children are transferring to high school, offering additional assistance and support to families who may need this.

- Our school welcomes all new pupils that start during the school year and tailored support is provided.

How we do this

- *Visits to the school with tours by SLT are scheduled. After places are offered, drop ins and revisits are welcomed.*

- *All new Nursery families and those new to the school in Reception have home visits. Alternative meetings can be arranged. This is a very important opportunity for children to get to know and feel comfortable with new staff. Parents have the choice to ask for another Home Visit when children transition from Nursery to Reception.*
- *Every summer term, new pupils starting school and existing pupils have a 'Meet the Teacher' day where they can visit their new classroom, meet their new teacher and classmates.*

- *Transition meetings and Induction Evenings run for Nursery, Reception, and supporting materials and information for High School are shared.*
- *Every parent is encouraged to inform the school of any safeguarding information as and when it occurs. EYFS parents are encouraged to share information during home visits.*
- *Induction Evenings, key information by letter, alongside curriculum evenings and home visits all support this process.*
- *Information is provided by letter, with reminders and checks for applications. The school offers support for parents who may need computer access or ICT support to make their application upon request.*
- *New pupils that start during the school year are welcomed into the school. On their first day, the family have the opportunity to meet the Headteacher, visit the classroom and teacher.*

Monitoring and Review

This Family School Partnership policy will be reviewed by the headteacher and full governing body every two years. At each review, the policy will be approved by the headteacher.