

SECTION 1: Parent and Pupil Engagement

What the SEND Code of Practice says

The main changes from the Code of Practice (2001) reflect the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014. In relation to Parent and Pupil Engagement the main change is:

“There is a clearer focus on the participation of children and young people and parents in decision making at individual and strategic levels”

Children and Families Act 2014

Section 19 of the Act makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN), **must** have regard to:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child’s parents
- the importance of the child or young person, and the child’s parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- the need to support the child or young person, and the child’s parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood

These principles are designed to support the participation of children, their parents and young people in decision making.

The expectation is that schools too should consider all the requirements above.

An Evidence based approach

The focus on Parental and Pupil Engagement in the Legislation and the new code is because of evidence gathered through the Lamb Enquiry and the subsequent Achievement for All Programme. These showed that where parents and pupils are fully informed and engaged with the school, parents are more confident in the provision being made and the outcomes for pupils are improved.

Research evidence shows that parental engagement has a large and positive impact on children’s learning. This was the single most important finding from a recent and authoritative review of the evidence:

Parental involvement in the form of ‘at-home good parenting’ has a significant positive effect on children’s achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation. In the primary age range the impact caused by different levels of parental involvement is much bigger than differences associated with variations in the quality of schools. The scale of the impact is evident across all social classes and all ethnic groups. (Desforges 2003).

In relation to pupils there is also clear evidence that involving pupils in their learning can have a major impact on their progress that this is evidenced through the Education Endowment Trust Toolkit that shows clear evidence that Meta-cognitive and self-regulation strategies (sometimes known as 'learning to learn' strategies). Overall these strategies involve being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses as a learner, such as by developing self-assessment skills, and being able to set and monitor goals. They also include having a repertoire of strategies to choose from or switch to during learning activities.

Meta-cognitive and self-regulation approaches have consistently high levels of impact with meta-analyses reporting between seven and nine months additional progress on average. It is usually more effective in small groups so learners can support each other and make their thinking explicit through discussion. For further information <http://teachertools.londongt.org/?page=thinkingSkills>

Encouragingly the evidence suggests that teaching meta-cognitive and self-regulation strategies tend to be particularly effective with lower achieving pupils, as well as with older students. Most studies have looked at the impact on English or mathematics, though there is some evidence from other areas such as science, suggesting benefits are likely to be widely applicable.

So there is clear evidence that good parent and pupil engagement has a positive effect on pupil outcomes.

Whole school approach and school leadership issues

A parent and pupil engagement strategy, should be integrated into a whole school approach to parent and pupil engagement as it is very unlikely to be successful if it is a 'bolt-on' to mainstream activities. School based family and parent support activities should have the improvement of children's learning as a clear and consistent goal.

Parents have statutory rights to contribute to the decision making process about their child's education including in relation to assessments of SEN, provision for SEN, and the way that support is provided for SEN. Young people over 16 also have these rights.

Children have a right to be involved in making decisions and exercising choices. They have a right to receive and impart information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. Their views should be given due weight according to their age, maturity and capability

Enabling parents to share their knowledge about their child and engage in positive discussion helps to give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon. At times, parents, teachers and others may have differing expectations of how a child's needs are best met. Sometimes these discussions can be challenging but it is in the child's best interests for a positive dialogue between parents, teachers and others to be maintained, to work through points of difference and agree outcomes.

It is very important to engage directly with children and young people to discuss their needs, and plan how they can achieve the best outcomes. This should be integral to all planning for children and young people with SEN throughout their lives.

Questions for the school leadership team:

- Is your school environment welcoming to parents?
- Are there opportunities for frequent, informal contact with parents?

- Have you asked parents what you can do for them, as well as told them what they can do for you?
- Have you asked parents when and how they want information?
- Are parents seen as real partners or is there a ‘them and us’ mentality among staff?
- Do you have a vision that conveys the transformative power of parental engagement for the achievement and wellbeing of children in your school?
- Do you personally model the values and attitudes you want to see throughout the staff team?
- Do you have systems in place to communicate effectively with parents, carers and pupils with English as an Additional Language?
- Have you and the staff undertaken training in carry out constructive conversations with parents?
- Have you clearly signposted to parents who they should contact if they have concerns about their child’s progress?
- Have you involved parents and pupils in developing the school’s SEN Information report
- Do you signpost the school’s SEN Information report and the Local Authority’s Local offer
- Do you signpost parents to Parent View?

Questions for Parents

How welcome do you feel in the school?

Do you know who to go to if you have concerns about your child’s progress?

What information and advice would like the school to provide?

Questions for Pupils?

Do you feel that you can talk about your work and how the teachers help you?

Do you know who to go to if you have any worries about your work?

It is helpful to think at what level schools, parents and children and young people are engaging.

The Code of Practice has an expectation that schools will do more than inform parents and children and young people about SEND, there needs to be genuine engagement. It may be helpful for schools to think about different ways of working with parents and children and young people. Listed below are five levels of engagement and for different aspects of schools work different levels of engagement will be appropriate. There is, however, a clear expectation that where a child or young person has SEND there should be genuine collaboration in discussions about meeting needs. The aim is to fully empower parents and children and young people.

Informing	How does the school inform parents and pupils about progress and other important information about how pupils' needs are being met?
Consulting:	Do parents and pupils get regularly consulted about pupils' learning and how they might best be supported? Do they get regular feedback? Where consultation does take place how do schools show they have acted on that? Do they demonstrate "you said" "we did?"
Involving:	Are parents and pupils actively involved in deciding on the level of need and what might be put in place to meet that need? How does the school show that it values and responds to parent and pupils input?
Collaborating:	Do parents and pupils actively collaborate in setting targets planning learning and reviewing outcomes? Have parents and pupils been part of the development of the school's SEN Information?
Empowering	Are parents and pupils fully empowered to understand their rights and responsibilities? Are parents and pupils given clear information that is accessible and easy to understand?

Time to talk

Is time set aside for conversations with parents and pupils and have staff been trained to give participants real opportunities to talk and be listened to and have their thoughts and concerns addressed?

What parents and pupils should expect at each stage of the SEN process?

Initial Concerns

If the parent, pupil or school has some concerns then these concerns must be discussed between the class or subject teacher and the parent and pupil. They must discuss the concerns and agree what should be done next. It is important that every one is clear that the teaching in the class is good enough to meet the needs of the pupil before thinking about whether or not the pupil has special educational needs. Parent and pupil concerns should be taken seriously there should be opportunity for a full discussion about those concerns and time given to gather evidence and then meet to decide what to do next.

In deciding whether to make special educational provision, the teacher and SENCO should consider all of the information gathered from within the school about the pupil's progress, and whether it is in line with other pupils of that age. The pupils need to be carefully assessed. Where there are more complex needs the schools should have arrangements in place to draw on more specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals.

This information gathering should include an early discussion with the pupil and their parents. These early discussions with parents should be structured in such a way that they develop a good understanding of the pupil's areas of strength and difficulty, the parents' concerns, the agreed outcomes sought for the child and the next steps. A short note of these early discussions should be added to the pupil's record on the school information system and given to the parents. Schools should also tell parents and young people about the local authority's information, advice and support service

If it is agreed that the pupil has special educational needs then SEN Support should be put in place.

SEN Support

See SEN support section. It is important to note that where it is decided to provide a pupil with SEN Support the parents **must** be formally notified, although parents should have already been involved in forming the assessment of needs.

Education Health and Care Plans

If it is decided to move on to requesting an Education Health and Care plan then the parents and where appropriate the pupil must be involved in that decision and it should follow on from significant involvement in the SEN Support that the school has been offering.

If it is decided that an EHC Plan is needed then parents and where appropriate the pupil should be involved in creating the plan with all the relevant agencies involved.

See further sections on Person Centred Planning and Personalisation.

Who in the school should be working to support pupils with SEND and their families and what should they be doing?

The class, or subject teacher

- Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils have support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.
- High quality teaching, planned to meet the needs of pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN.
- Class and Subject teachers may ask teaching assistants to support groups of pupils but the responsibility for the teaching and learning lays with the teacher.

The Special educational Needs Coordinator - SENCO

- The SENCO has an important role to play with the headteacher and governing body, in determining the strategic development of SEN policy and provision in the school. They will be most effective in that role if they are part of the school leadership team.
- The SENCO has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of SEN policy and co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have Education Health and Care Plans. (EHC plans)
- The SENCO provides professional guidance to colleagues and will work closely with staff, parents and other agencies. **The SENCO should be aware of the provision in the Local Offer and be able to work with professionals providing a support role to families to ensure that pupils with SEN receive appropriate support and high quality teaching.**

Headteacher

- Should take overall responsibility for implementing the SEND in the school.
- Ensure that the SENCO is able to influence strategic decisions about SEN.
- Ensure the wider school community understands the implications of meeting the needs of SEND pupils through school improvement (from governors to classroom teachers and teaching assistants).
- **Put in place arrangements to ensure parents are regularly engaged in discussions about the progress of their child (at least three times a year).**
- **Ensure a process is in place for involving parents and young people in reviewing provision and planning for those currently on school action/plus and any newly identified pupils with SEN.**
- Develop relationship with post 16 providers and explore how you will support pupils with SEN with their transition to post 16 education.

Governors

- Must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice and should oversee the implementation of the reform and provide strategic support to the head teacher
- Must publish information on the school's websites about the implementation of the governing body's or the proprietor's policy for pupils with SEN.
- Must ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO.
- Must cooperate generally with the local authority including in developing the local offer and when the school is being named in an EHC plan.
- Must ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Must also publish information about the arrangements for the admission of disabled children, the steps taken to prevent disabled children being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access of disabled children, and their accessibility plans.

How to ensure everyone is included

Not all parents find linking with the school easy, it is important that schools think about how best to communicate with parents before any issues occur. A helpful strategy may be to ask all parents to complete a "passport" saying how they prefer to be communicated with. See attached template

Schools which most successfully engage parents seek to understand the differences in how people respond to schools and match the way they communicate to the needs of the parents pupils and families.

Where a family that does not speak English the Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service may be able to offer help in supporting communication with them. This is non chargeable for maintained schools.

Does the school:

- use a range of strategies to communicate?
- start with activities that parents want and in which they can engage confidently?
- have strategies to build bridges between home and school?

- have specific strategies to communicate with parents who have literacy difficulties?
- have strategies to communicate with parents of children learning English as an additional language?
- offer parents language, literacy and numeracy courses and workshops which have evidence of impact?
- offer support to parents with their child's social and emotional development?

Resources and templates

Appendix contains:

1. AIMS and OBJECTIVES for a Policy for Parental Involvement
2. Examples of Parent Engagement strategies from a Secondary school
3. Examples of Parent Engagement strategies from a Primary school
4. Family communication passport

Useful links

Pupils

Youthoria

A website for 11 – 19 year olds in Cambridgeshire

www.youthoria.org/

Coram Voice

An organisation which enables and equips children and young people to hold to account the services that are responsible for their care. They uphold the rights of children and young people to actively participate in shaping their own lives.

<http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/contact-us>

Voiceability

VoiceAbility supports people who face disadvantage or discrimination to have a voice that counts.

http://www.voiceability.org/in_your_area/cambridgeshire

Parents

SEN and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) (Formerly Parent Partnership). pps@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

We provide impartial advice, support and training about SEND and education, health and social care to parents and carers of children and young people with SEND as well as to young people and children with SEND themselves. Through representing parents and supporting parents to become directly involved we inform local authority policy and practice around SEND

Pinpoint

Pinpoint is an independent information, support and involvement network for parents in Cambridgeshire.

<http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk/>

CREDS Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service (CREDS) works in partnership with schools, settings, families and communities to raise the achievement and improve participation of black, minority ethnic (BME), Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, young people and families, including those who have English as an additional language (EAL).

Early Support Programme

The Early Support Programme is for parents and carers of disabled children and young people from birth to adulthood. This includes coordinating support for:

- health
- education
- social care

How to join

To find out if the Early Support Programme is running in your area, contact your local council.

If it's not yet running where you live, ask when it will be introduced.

Once you've joined the programme, a key worker will be assigned to help you.

Resources to help you

The Early Support Programme has a range of materials to help families with a disabled child. These include:

- a family pack with information about services available
- booklets on a range of disabilities
- training courses for families and carers

<https://www.gov.uk/help-for-disabled-child/early-support-programme>

APPENDIX for Parent and Pupil Engagement

AIMS and OBJECTIVES for a Policy for Parental Involvement

AIMS and OBJECTIVES for a POLICY FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

AIM

- To promote parental partnership and involvement in children's learning and the life of the school.

(parent(s) is used throughout this document to mean those people who are the primary carers of children in our school and could include grandparents, foster carers and others)

OBJECTIVES

- To foster an ethos and atmosphere where all parents feel welcome and valued.
- To maintain an 'open door' approach so that parents are able to communicate with staff on a regular basis, both formally and informally.
- To provide as much information as possible in timely, specific, targeted and accessible ways so that parents feel confident and knowledgeable in supporting their children's learning.
- To seek parents' views and opinions and act upon them.
- To provide support and encouragement for families suffering difficulties/crises, or barriers to involvement.
- To work with parents in promoting positive behaviour at home and at school.
- To seek to provide a range of activities, courses and workshops, to promote parental involvement in children's learning, and also 'lifelong learning' for both children and adults.

Examples of Parent Engagement strategies from Secondary school

Secondary School

POLICY TITLE: Parental Involvement Policy

STATUS Non-statutory

REVIEWED BY: Resources Committee

DATE of REVIEW: Spring 2012 (approved by Governors: 29 February 2012)

BACKGROUND AIMS OF THE POLICY

Research has shown the following:

- Parental involvement has a significant effect on pupil achievement throughout the years of schooling¹.
- Most parents believe that the responsibility for their child's education is shared between parents and the school².
- Many parents want to be involved in their children's education. In a study in England published in 2002, 72% of parents said that they wanted more involvement³ with their child's school.

In the local area many parents have particular professional skills and background that can be of immense use to the school and pupils. Some initial ideas include:

- I. Parents providing career advice during career events offering pupils the opportunity to talk to people actively involved in a profession providing insight into possible career choices for pupils;
- II. Parents supporting teaching staff by arranging school visits to their place of work such as scientists working at Rothamsted arranging for school visits.
- III. Parents providing expert help to the school, say in designing or offering advice on services. For example in getting involved in the design of a new school facility.

1. Desforges, C., (2003) The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment, DfES Research report 433
2. Williams, B., Williams, J. and Ullman, A. (2002) Parental Involvement in Education, DfES Research Report 332
3. ibid

POLICY STATEMENT

The School recognises the need to protect pupils coming into contact with non-family adults [parents] as a result of this policy.

At all times the opinion and direction of School staff will over-ride that of any participating parent as far as the well being and safety of pupils is concerned.

Written parental consent must be provided prior to partaking in any work shadowing programme away from the school premises together with an assessment of risk.

The school will ensure that equal opportunities are adhered to, including monitoring those who participate in schemes arising from this policy. Details will remain confidential, used only for monitoring purposes.

Students will be supervised by school teaching staff at all times.

The school will not undertake a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check because students are supervised as all times and the risk assessments undertaken by schools are considered adequate. The School may however seek a reference from participating organisations before arranging a school visit

RESPONSIBILITY

Overall responsibility of this policy rests with the Governing Body.

It is the responsibility of all Governors and staff to ensure that this procedure is implemented effectively.



Equalities impact assessment considered

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: Spring 2014

5. Examples of Parent Engagement strategies from a Primary School

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Parental Involvement Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 All parents and carers are equally valued as part of our school community. Children's learning is improved when we work in partnership with their parents or carers, and their wider family. We therefore believe in close cooperation with all families, and in regular consultation between the home and the school.

2 Aims

2.1 Our aims through parental involvement are:

- to enhance the learning experiences of all pupils;
- to encourage parents and carers to be involved in the children's learning;
- to provide a partnership between home and school, seeking to ensure that families feel welcome and valued;
- to ensure that maximum use is made of all these adults' skills to enrich learning opportunities.
- To encourage parents and carers to develop and extend their own learning.

3 Involvement in the life of the school

3.1 School is open to parents and carers at all reasonable times.

3.2 Families are invited to regular events, activities and celebrations that are organised by the school. These occasions provide an opportunity to celebrate success, and a viewing public for a lot of the pupils' work.

3.3 Regular newsletters are sent home, and each family should receive a copy of the school prospectus.

3.4 Parents can view much of this written information on the school website.

4 Involvement in children's learning

4.1 Parents and carers can talk with teachers before and after school on an informal basis on most days.

4.2 Appointments to see a teacher or the headteacher can be made through the school office, and can be set up for as soon as required in most instances.

4.3 There are opportunities for parents to have a formal discussion with their child(ren)'s teacher at the following times during the year, during the Autumn and Spring Term. Teachers value these opportunities to celebrate successes, review learning targets and listen to parental views.

- 4.4 An annual report on each child's academic and personal development is made available in the summer term. An acknowledgement slip is attached, and parents may request a meeting with the teacher to discuss the contents of the report.
- 4.5 Regular curriculum workshops will be organised to assist parents and carers in supporting their child(ren)'s learning.
- 4.6 Policy documents, schemes of work and National Curriculum guidance are readily available for parents and carers to view.
- 4.7 Curriculum letters are sent to each family at the start of each term, detailing the aspects of learning each child will undertake, and how families might support that learning, for example by visiting museums, galleries, websites, etc.
- 4.8 Home-school log books detail daily requirements for specific children.
- 4.9 Homework is given on a weekly basis. We value parental support regarding the completion of these tasks, many of which contain guidance for helpers.
- 4.10 National Curriculum assessments as well as records of progress and achievement are also readily available, as appropriate, to each child.
- 4.11 Parents and carers can expect to be spoken to in a quiet, private area if there are any concerns regarding their child.

5 Types of help at school

- 5.1 Each term, through a letter from the headteacher, we invite parents and carers to help in school.
- 5.2 Parents and carers are invited to help on a half-termly basis with groups and activities in class (e.g. listening to children read, or helping with practical activities).
- 5.3 Parents and carers offer valued support when they respond to invitations to accompany school groups on educational visits, including, in some instances, assisting with transport arrangements.
- 5.4 Parents and carers are invited, where possible, to visit classes and groups of children to give talks or demonstrations on areas of interest in which they are experts.
- 5.5 Occasionally the governors will seek parents, elected by other parents, to serve on the governing body. Parent governors represent the views of parents, for example when they feel that their children's special needs are not being recognised by the school.
- 5.6 We value the work of the The Friends of Calverton. This body of parents and school staff works voluntarily to raise money for the school and provide a forum for discussion of issues related to the school.
- 5.7 Parents and carers are invited to participate in workshops and short courses on different curriculum areas to develop their own learning

6 Organisational arrangements

- 6.1** It is necessary to organise a personal background check with the CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) on any person who will be working with children in school, prior to that person's involvement.
- 6.2** Insurance cover will be organised regarding parents' and carers' work at school, but those involved in transporting children in private vehicles will have to check their own insurance arrangements in this regard.
- 6.3** All helpers are asked to sign in and sign out of school when visiting, for security reasons.
- 6.4** All helpers working with children in class are asked to check the purpose and details of the activity, before commencement, by talking with the teacher.
- 6.5** All helpers are asked to inform the school, in advance if possible, should they be unable to attend school at a prearranged time.
- 6.6** All helpers will be reminded of the confidential nature of their work in school.

7 Consultation

- 7.1** Our some-school agreement, signed by pupils, parents and the school, details the responsibilities and expectations of all parties.
- 7.2** The school will make every effort to consult parents and carers, both formally and informally, about their views on school life, children's learning and new initiatives.
- 7.3** Parents or carers of a child with a disability are asked to keep the school fully informed about any relevant issues, so that the school can make all reasonable efforts to meet the requirements of that child.
- 7.4** The school values regular feedback, and will make every effort to act on parents' and carers' views, wherever possible.
- 7.5** Teachers (including the headteacher) can be approached informally before and after school, and will always take careful account of any information forwarded to them.
- 7.6** Periodically the school will seek parental views more formally, through an annual survey, or a questionnaire on a particular theme.
- 7.7** The governing body produces a School Profile, which is updated yearly and is available on-line.
- 7.8** Also, if desired by a sufficient numbers of families, the governing body will hold an annual meeting at which issues of interest and concern can be raised by parents and carers.
- 7.9** After an Ofsted inspection parents and carers will receive a summary of the findings, and later on they will be sent a summary of the action plan written in response to the report.

8 References

8.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the relevant passages in:

- the *School Standards and Framework Act* (1998), regarding adults working in school;
- the *Human Rights Act* (October 2000);
- the School Development Plan;
- the Equal Opportunities Policy;
- the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- the school's evaluation procedures.

9 Monitoring and review

9.1 The headteacher and deputy headteacher will monitor the implementation of this policy, and will submit periodic evaluation reports on its effectiveness to the governing body.

9.2 This policy will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.

Signed:

Date:

Our family passport

Family name

My child is...

What is the best way to communicate with us? We prefer text, email, face to face, other.

Who are the important people in the family?

What's important to us as a family?