

10.4 Parental Involvement

Policy Statement

We believe that children benefit most from early years education and care when parents and settings work together in partnership.

Our aim is to support parents as their children's first and most important educators by involving them in their children's education and in the full life of the setting. We also aim to support parents in their own continuing education and personal development.

Some parents are less well represented in early years settings; these include fathers, parents who live apart from their children, but who still play a part in their lives, as well as working parents. In carrying out the following procedures, we will ensure that all parents are included.

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. 'Parents' also includes same sex parents, as well as foster parents.

The Children Act (1989) defines *parental responsibility* as '*all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property.*'

Procedures

- We have a means to ensure all parents are included- that may mean we have different strategies for involving fathers, or parents who work or live apart from their children.
- We consult with all parents to find out what works best for them.
- We ensure ongoing dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children to support their families.
- We inform all parents about how the setting is run and its policies, through access to written information and through regular informal communication. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them.
- We inform all parents on a regular basis about their children's progress.
- We involve parents in the shared record keeping about their children- either formally or informally-and ensure parents have access to their children's written developmental records.
- We provide opportunities for parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the setting.
- We inform parents about relevant conferences, workshops and training.
- We consult with parents about the times of meetings to avoid excluding anyone.
- We provide information about opportunities to be involved in the setting in ways that are accessible to parents with basic skills needs, or those whom English is an additional language.
- We hold meetings/ fun days in venues that are accessible and appropriate for all.

- We welcome the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take.
- We inform all parents of the systems for complaints and all parents have access to our written complaint procedure.
- We provide opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum offered in the setting and about young children's learning, in the setting and at home.
- We provide parent questionnaires annually to allow parents to give feedback anonymously.

In compliance with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements, the following documentation is in place:

- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Record of Complaints
- Developmental records of children