

Securing and maintaining effective working partnerships with parents and carers

Written by Julie Jeanes January 2008,
Revised March 2011, March 2014, March 2017 (SJ, TB, TMG, AW), March 2020

- At Linwood we have a commitment to work cooperatively with parents and carers
- We believe that working together will have long lasting and beneficial effects on the children's learning and their well-being. This partnership will help raise standards, improve outcomes and support children to achieve their potential
- We aim to develop effective links with parents, carers and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect and which promote the sharing of information and knowledge for the benefit of the children in our care.
- Effective communication enables us to share our aims and values through keeping parents/carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the crucial role that parents/carers play in supporting the school in educating their children.
- We communicate through a range of different strategies. Some of our communications are a result of a statutory requirements, others reflect what we believe is important to our school. This will mean that parents and carers are informed about what is being taught and the specific progress which is being made.
- We seek to ensure that parents also have information about all aspects of school life through a variety of means, including the school website, newsletters and emails
- We ensure that all employed staff, volunteers and students are aware of this policy and the procedures followed

Disability Equality

Linwood is committed to achieving disability equality and tackling discrimination. Parents/Carers, particularly those who may be considered disabled, will be encouraged to share their ideas and thoughts about how improvements to access in the school through focussed discussions at Parent Coffee Mornings, Parent Consultation Evenings and Questionnaires.

Confidentiality

- Any personal data on children and their parents/carers is held securely.
- Linwood School processes personal data about its pupils and is a "data controller" in respect of this for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998. It processes this data to:
 - support its pupils' teaching and learning
 - monitor and report on their progress
 - provide appropriate pastoral care, and
 - assess how well the school as a whole is doing.
- This data includes contact details, national curriculum assessment results, attendance information, and characteristics such as ethnic group, special educational needs and any relevant medical information.
- This data may only be used or passed on for specific purposes allowed by law.

- If you wish to access your personal data, or that of your child, then please contact the school office.
- We do not allow parents access to the records of other children.
- For pupils of 13 years and over living in the Local authority of Dorset, the school is legally required to pass on certain information to Ansbury on request. Ansbury are the Dorset's support service for all young people aged 13 to 19 in England. This information includes the name and address of the pupil and parent, and any further information relevant to the careers services' role. However, parents or the pupils themselves if aged 16 or over, can ask that no information beyond name and address (for pupil and parent) be passed on to Ansbury. If as a parent, or as a pupil aged 16 or over, you wish to opt-out and do not want Ansbury to receive from the school information beyond name and address, then please contact the school

We treat information about children and their families as confidential. We only disclose this to staff on a 'need to know' basis and only with the agreement of the parent/carer.

The class teacher is responsible for sharing information about the progress and welfare of a child with his/her parents/carers. This information is also shared with other staff, to ensure that the best interests and needs of the child are met.

- Some information exchange about children occurs informally on a daily basis or when required; other opportunities for a more detailed report are offered through home/school liaison book, parent meetings, written reports to parents and appointments by arrangement to discuss specific concerns.

Class teachers keep individual records on children's achievements and progress.

Information about a child may be shared with other external agencies but parental permission will be sought unless the issue is of a safeguarding nature.

Freedom of Information

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is that public authorities, including all maintained schools, should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public.

The classes of information that we undertake to make available are organised into four broad topic areas:

- *Website* - information published in the school prospectus.
- *Governors' Documents* - information published in the Governors Annual Report and in other governing board documents.
- *Pupils & Curriculum* - information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum.
- *School Policies and other information related to the school* - information about policies that relate to the school in general.

All policies are available to parents/carers upon request via either the Home/School Book, telephone 01202 525107, email linwoodcampus@bournemouth.gov.uk or fax 01202 525107

School & policy Information can also be found on the website www.linwood.bournemouth.sch.uk

Before Starting at Linwood

We will:

- ensure that there is a clear and effective system of communication between school and parents/carers when arranging a visit to the school. Learning is more meaningful when practitioners use information from parents and carers about the child's interests, needs and skills as a starting point for new experiences
- arrange a meeting with parents/carers before their child's admission, to inform them about policies and procedures. We want to make parents and carers feel comfortable about visiting the school and talking to staff
- make every effort to ensure that information for parents/carers is made accessible to them e.g. Welcome Pack, Website, Policies etc
- ensure that any consent forms/agreements are completed.
- ensure that the required contact information is kept up to date.
- establish, where appropriate, the name of a child's legal guardian.
- keep an up-to-date record of any particular requirements/ needs of children. These records must be kept securely.
- ensure that arrangements for the children's arrival and collection are clear, and understood by all staff and parents/carers.
- establish a system in which only authorised adults can collect children, and create a plan that can be used in an emergency when the recognised adult cannot collect a child.
- ensure that information about children is treated as confidential, is held securely and is only shared with parents/carers and relevant personnel.
- we encourage parents/carers to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being.
- ensure that all staff, volunteers and students understand that information held on children and their families is confidential.
- invite families to engage with out of school services during holidays.
- Invite families to engage in any workshop/course opportunities.

Sharing Information

Home-School Agreement

We ask parents to sign the agreement when their child starts in our school. This is a requirement of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. It explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibility towards the children, the responsibilities of the parents, and what the school expects of the children.

Curriculum

Class Curriculum Newsletters will be sent to each family at minimum at the beginning of each academic year. These will detail the aspects of learning which is planned for each child and how parents and carers might be able to support this at home.

Annual Reports

Each year we provide a written report to parents/carers on each child's progress in the various areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Alma and Vita domains, and National Curriculum subjects. This report also identifies areas of strength and areas for further development. We ask parents/carers to make comments regarding their child's progress.

Consultation Evenings

Parents/Carers have the opportunity to meet with class teachers in the autumn term and spring term to discuss progress, celebrate successes, and to identify how parents/carers can support their child at home. Targets within the Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) are also shared and discussed at these meetings. Parents are able to look at their child's work and Records of Achievement/Progress Files/ Learning Journals/Progress and Achievement Books during these meetings.

Annual Review of EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan)

This takes place annually. This is a discussion to determine whether or not the EHCP should be maintained, and amended to ensure it remains appropriate. The pupil's progress against short and long term outcomes is the principal criterion, which determines this and provides the basis for discussion about the provision required to meet the individual's needs.

Newsletters/Letters

Termly school newsletters are sent home and posted on the website. These will contain information such as dates, events and key highlights of the term. Parents are advised about educational visits newsletters/letters/texts and are informed about the purpose of the visit. A Healthy Schools Newsletter is sent home to parents on a termly basis.

Day to Day Contact

We encourage parents/carers to first discuss any concerns or issues about their child/ren with the class teacher. The class teacher must discuss any issues that cannot be resolved with the Phase Leader. Parents can make contact via the home-school book or by telephone before and after school.

Home - School Liaison Book

This is sent home on a daily basis. These are designed to help ensure meaningful two-way communication about the day's events, behaviours, home-learning etc. Comments should be positive as far as possible and the class teachers determine the frequency of completion. Where parents/ carers may find it difficult to read or write in the book, alternative arrangements should be made, e.g. such as a brief daily call or verbal handover at collection.

Celebrations/Festivals

Parents and carers are invited to regular events, activities and celebrations that are organised by the school. We encourage parents to attend coffee mornings, Stay-and-Play sessions, open days, performances and festivals. These occasions provide opportunities to celebrate success and view the children's work.

Tapestry

Across the EYFS classes all children have an online learning journal where videos, photographs and comments can be added to the journal and shared with parents to celebrate and document children's achievements and learning.

School Website

We encourage parents and carers to access information through the school website which we aim to update regularly.

Governors

The Governing Board prepares an annual Impact Statement report for parents/carers which is published on the website during the Autumn Term each year.

The Governing Board contributes to termly school newsletters and Governors attend school events throughout the year where they are available to speak with parents/carers.

Annual Information Evenings (Future Pathways)

Parents/carers from Linwood Campuses and other SEND Schools in the area are invited to attend a twice-yearly Information Evening, Linwood's Future Pathways events. Professionals and community-based support groups are invited to exhibit and share information on how they can offer support to families with regards to education, social care and leisure opportunities. The aim of the events is to encourage students and parents to have some more control over their options and enable them to make informed choices about the future. This event is evaluated from the feedback given from both professionals and the attendees.

Parent Voice

At Linwood we encourage parents to have a voice.

This is achieved through:

- Comments regarding school improvement can be forwarded to the school office and these will be forwarded to the Senior Management Team for discussion.
- Parent representation on the Governing Board
- Parent questionnaires
- Home -School Liaison book
- Parent Consultations
- Annual Reviews of EHCPs
- Steering Groups which have parent representation e.g. Healthy Schools, Anti-Bullying Policy etc.
- Parent Coffee Mornings
- New Parents Groups / Parent wellbeing group
- Home Visits as appropriate including the School Nurse and/or Family Support Worker where appropriate
- Individual appointments/discussions with Family Support Worker

- **Tapestry (Online learning journal)** - All children within EYFS classes have an online learning journal. Parents are encouraged to upload photographs, videos and comments to share home learning and contribute to their child's journal.

Family Support

Linwood has a Family Support Worker and an Assistant Family Support Worker who work across all the campuses and is usually based in the Family room at Linwood campus but offer booked appointments across all campuses.

- All parents and carers are welcome at all campuses
- Family Support hold regular Coffee Mornings, run events, holiday clubs and workshops. They offer confidential support and is able to signpost parents and carers to additional services. They can access resources to support the family [Youth Groups, Coping with Chaos, supporting during holidays]. They can make phone calls or write letters on behalf of families and provides a listening ear.
- Family Support also works with other Family Support services within schools, C-CAMHS, ID - CAMHS and Social Care.
- Family Support provides a leaflet. For further information please access the website or ask for a copy of the leaflet from the school office.

Dealing with complaints

- Any complaint is dealt with promptly by class teachers/Phase Leaders/Deputy Headteachers/Assistant Headteachers or Headteacher as appropriate.
- We keep a written record of the nature of the complaint, the action taken, the timescale and the outcome. We keep copies of this. (See Complaints Policy)