



KING'S WOOD SCHOOL

Parent Engagement Strategy

King's Wood School welcomes every family and every child, actively engaging them as partners in a child's learning and school improvement.

Young people live and learn in two worlds – home and school. The way the two connect and communicate can make an enormous difference to how children learn to manage in both places. If teachers, parents and young people all trust, listen and talk to each other, the final goal of helping children learn and develop to their best ability is most likely to be achieved. At King's Wood School we will endeavour to ensure that school-home links are sustainable and supportive of children's attainment, and form part of a whole school approach to parental/family engagement. We will work with a broad understanding of what parental engagement includes, and be informed by an ongoing needs assessment. Kings Wood School will ensure the families and community members feel welcomed, informed, and included, working together to improve the outcomes for all the children. This policy will seek to clarify a parent's right to participate in various aspects of school life and embody the idea of a working relationship based on the equality of value of contribution from parents and teachers.

The importance of parental engagement within school is reinforced by the amount of research evidence which is now available to support the contention that improving Parental engagement increases the effectiveness of the education our children receive. Epstein (1990)

- Students do better in school, improve their attendance and are happier with the school climate.
- Parents see increased student achievement, and develop positive and productive relationships with school staff. They have increased confidence in the school and with the interventions programs.
- Teachers see increased student achievement, and increased parental support. They are active partners in the improved school climate.

Ballentine(1999) suggests that positive outcomes include:

- Improved communication between parent and child
- Higher academic performance of the children whose parents are involved
- Increased likelihood of completing school and attending college
- A sense of accomplishment for the parent
- Higher parental expectations/aspirations of the child
- Improved study habits among the child
- Increased likelihood of the parent deciding to continue their own education.

Therefore the parent engagement strategy will be outward facing, involving not only the views of parents, but the evidence and expertise of other schools and services in the community. The transfer of knowledge and understanding should be part of a two way process.

Whole School Approach

The parent engagement strategy will be integrated into a whole school approach.

An essential aspect of the partnership between the school and home is having a PAFT worker (Parents as First Teachers). The PAFT approach acknowledges that parents / carers are the first and most influential teachers, starting at pre-birth and leading up to five years old. The programme includes support and information regarding the child's development, home visits, play and reading. The programme is based on the truths that children learn the most from those they love and therefore parents will be the most influential teachers of their children and that the early years lay the foundation for a child's success in school and in life. The PAFT programme has run in collaboration with the school for 25 years.

This ethos is then carried forward into mainstream school to include a Family Liaison Officer, whose role is to develop and support the collaboration of parents and teachers to provide the optimum education for the child. Both roles illustrate the value and significance Kings Wood School places on the contribution of parents and working in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for the child.

The methods and planning that enhance effective parental engagement are school based family/parent activities with the improvement of children's learning as a clear and consistent goal. This is informed by continuous assessments, monitoring and evaluation of interventions, questionnaires, parent evenings and parental needs analysis. This also includes the removal of potential barriers and facilitating the appropriate intervention and expertise with both the family and the child in the context of a school improvement strategy.

School Culture

Therefore in recognition of the value parents/families contribute to each child's educational experience, King's Wood School will aim to:

- Increase dialogue and time spent between parents / carers and children.
- Build relationships between parents / carers and school.
- Increase learning through play at home.
- Reach a wide range of parents / carers.
- Share clear expectations.
- Create a shared accountability for a child's learning between teachers and parents / carers.
- Acknowledge and positively support parent's / carer's efforts in helping their child learn at home.
- Ensure the school environment is friendly and welcoming.
- Ensure communications are clear and frequent.
- Developed partnerships with all families.
- Encourage parents to volunteer.

School Environment:

- Posted signs warmly welcome parents (in various languages).
- Office personnel greet parents in a friendly, courteous way.
- There is a comfortable reception and information area for parents.
- There is an orientation program for incoming students and parents.
- There is a program for children and parents who come to the school after the beginning of the year.
- There are regular events where parents and school staff can get to know each other.

- The school welcomes parents into classrooms through open day events and stay and play sessions.
- The school has an “Open Door” policy where parents are welcome to meet with senior staff without prior appointment and teachers are accessible at the end of every day.
- The school has a written statement about partnerships with parents.

Communication

- There is a school newsletter with up-to-date information.
- The school sends home a calendar for the year in September listing dates of parent-teacher meetings and other major events.
- The school holds regular open days and parent information events.
- Parents know where to go with concerns, questions, and complaints.
- The school provides in-service training to help teachers work with parents.
- There is an early warning policy in effect for teachers to consult with parents promptly if a child is falling behind or having social difficulties.
- Training and resources are available for parents of students on the SEN or G.T programme to help them participate in the Individualised Education Plan and other processes.
- Text messaging is used by all staff to communicate with parents.
- The school website is kept up to date with key information for parents and pupils
- Parents are able to approach the Headteacher or senior staff to question general school policy or procedures (aside from those affecting their own child).
- There are established procedures for dealing with parent’s demands, especially those of a vocal minority.
- We conduct an annual parent’s survey and respond to the outcomes.

Volunteer Participation

- The school has an organised volunteer program.
- There are a wide variety of jobs available for volunteers, including ones that could be done at home or on weekends.
- All parents are expected to volunteer in some way during the school year.
- The volunteer program is reassessed periodically.

Staff Support

A successful relationship between teachers and parents is based on a two-way communication process which involves sharing information, concerns and ideas that will support their child’s learning. Therefore in order to sustain effective relationships with parents, teachers need to use many of their interpersonal skills.

To engage effectively with parents, staff need to be given training and coaching, particularly around working with parents whose backgrounds are very different to their own. Parental engagement training will form part of the induction process as well as being part of the school’s continuing professional development programme.

Teachers are encouraged to consult with the Head teacher or senior member of staff if they are having difficulty dealing with a parent

Parent Support

Parental engagement with children's learning is effectively supported when parents / carers receive clear, specific and targeted information from school. This enables them to have a positive non-judgemental relationship with the whole school.

As a school we acknowledge parental effort towards a child learning and make an effort to know our parents/carers personally as individuals as well as keeping them well informed about the progress made by their children.

To support our parents we:

- Provide clear information about day-to-day matters that affect their children.
- Welcome parents/carers/families who are willing to support school events and provide practical help but are less likely to join a committee.
- Provide resources that enable parents/carers/families to be active home learning guides for their children.
- Become more supportive the more that they are involved, particularly if they have attended training events.
- Carry out home visits to support setting boundaries and having clear rules in place for their children that are applied consistently.
- Have clear expectations of staff and parents as to their role and contribution to a parent engagement programme
- Work with a parent-teacher organisation that meets at least once a month.
- Have a framework for obtaining parent input on new policies and programs.

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