

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS POLICY -2018-2019

***Please note- By using the term 'parents' in this policy we refer to the parents or carers of the child.**

RATIONALE

At St Mary's we endeavour to work in partnership with parents through creating a positive ethos where parents are recognised as having the prime role in influencing their children's lives.

All we do at our school is lived through the Catholic mission – with the image of Jesus at its centre.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a caring Catholic community where every child is equal. We aim to nurture each child's uniqueness in the spirit of God, helping them to achieve their full potential in a safe and happy environment.

In our Catholic school we provide a:

Safe, loving and enriching environment

Trust, and patience

Motivation to reach individual's full potential

Acceptance and celebration of uniqueness

Respect for all

Young people nurtured in the Spirit of God

School full of awe and wonder

St. Mary's School is a Rights Respecting School and as such the needs and well-being of our children are at the heart of all policies in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Research has proven that effective partnership with parents does have a positive effect on pupils' learning.

“Inclusiveness is an absolute principle. It includes not only the pupils of the school, it includes all the staff; it includes the community of the school, all of the agencies who participate in the school and supporting the learning climate in the school; it also includes parents, as key agents in young people's learning.” (‘Climate for Learning’ - Brian Dobson.)

Inclusiveness means encouraging parents to feel that they are valued as individuals, that they have a vested interest in the community and its values, and that the sense of belonging which schools and teachers work hard to sustain in the classroom and the wider school, also encompasses them. When parents see the point of a collaborative venture, when they feel it makes sense to them in terms of promoting the well-being of their children, and when they have been involved in its negotiation, then they will be more inclined to give it their active support.

If schools can develop strategies to make parents feel included and of value to the learning community, then many of the perceived difficulties associated with the idea of partnership will disappear.

In order to achieve the above, we aim:

- ❖ To create a positive ethos and climate within the school where parents are valued as having a key role in their child's education
- ❖ To work collaboratively with governors and the 'Friends' association
- ❖ To provide structures within the school for partnership with all parents
- ❖ To keep parents informed of developments within the School Development Plan
- ❖ To keep parents informed of the every day life of the school
- ❖ To inform parents of their child's progress and welfare in school
- ❖ To involve the parents in school activities
- ❖ To seek the views of parents when auditing aspects within the school
- ❖ To involve parents in their child's learning

The Catholic Ethos

- ❖ To invite parents to celebrate in school and at church with their child
- ❖ To ensure parents have opportunities to share in the faith journey of the child, through newsletters, and other messages about current religious themes, Wednesday Word etc
- ❖ To involve parents in new developments within the teaching of Religious education

We will provide information to parents about the school in the academic year 2018-2019 through:**Written/ technological sources**

- A weekly headteacher newsletter-This will be sent to parents electronically every Friday. It will also be out on the school website. Parents can register their names at the office if they wish to receive a paper copy of this newsletter.
- The Prospectus- Our prospectus is on our website, and is available for all to see. Parents may receive a paper copy on request. Please allow 48 hours notice.
- Curriculum Outlines- All parents will receive a curriculum outline for the term, describing main topics and activities to support the children. These will be given out in the first 2 weeks of each term. They will also be posted on our website.
- Yearly review – At the end of each Summer term parents are given a detailed report by the head teacher; this will include governor roles, a review of the school development plan and a summary of key activities and successes. This report will be posted on our website.
- School Notice board- This is located on the playground, and will feature news from school and the community. Parents can put their own notices here by contacting the head teacher.
- Website- All parents have access to our school website. You can access this website by simply googling 'St Mary's Herringthorpe'.
- School Policies- Some policies have been placed on the website and others are being added regularly. Paper copies are available from the head teacher on request (48 hours notice please.)
- Information booklets- We often produce a series of booklets for parents to highlight ways that they can help their child at home and / or better understand the processes in school.
- Questionnaires- We send out an annual whole school survey to tell us what our parents feel about school life. We also audit the views of the children regularly.
- Reports- All parents will be given a detailed end of year report at the end of each academic year which describes the efforts, attitudes, personal and social skills, progress and attainment of their child.
- Home-School Agreement-This is given to all parents at the start of the academic year. It indicates the ways that parents and the school can support each other to provide the best for the child.

Personal/ Group/ Class/ Whole school Meetings

- Individual meetings- Parents may be invited into school to discuss their child's progress other than at parents' evenings.
- Parents of children with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) are invited to planned meetings at set times.
- Class curriculum meetings- Parents will be offered meetings with the class teacher for more class specific topics through the year, such as growing up (Y6), pre residential meetings (Y4/5/6), Communion preparation (Y3) and KS2 tests (Y6).
- New Parents Induction Talk- Parents of children starting upper foundation will be invited to a discussion of the school, its ethos, routines and organisational details before their child starts. This is led by the head teacher and class teacher.
- Assemblies- Parents are invited to Friday assemblies every week (2.45 start). They are also invited to our weekly Collective Worship on Thursday afternoons (3.00 start), particularly if their child's class is leading the assembly.
- Parents' Evenings- Parents will be invited into school in the Autumn and Spring terms to discuss their child's progress.
- Special events- We will put on regular events throughout the year and encourage the involvement of all parents; Harvest assembly, Christmas concerts, Easter concerts, Summer concerts, Leavers' assembly, sports days, sports events, musical assemblies, class trips, coffee mornings etc.
- Mass- All parents are welcome to attend our regular key stage 2 masses which usually take place on Friday mornings. Parents are also invited to whole school masses.
- School Trips- We will require a minimum ratio of children to adults on every trip we go on. Teachers will brief parent helpers before the trip, explaining the timetable and expectations for the trip. We pay for parent helpers' entrance and travel expenses.
- Parent helpers- We are delighted to have a growing number of parents who give up some of their valuable time to help in school. We are always looking for more parents and carers who can come and share their skills and expertise in any capacity. Most helpers listen to children read, but we have parents who come in to bake, work on computers, help with ICT and sport etc. All parent volunteers must complete a Disclosure and Barring Scheme check.
- Open Door Policy- We want parents to feel that they can approach school at any time if they have a question, issue or piece of information about their child. Please see the 'Contact with school' details later on this policy.

School Association

- All parents are automatically members of the 'Friends of St Mary's'. This group is a valued and crucial part of our school community; they organise and support many wonderful annual events. All parents are welcome to join this group, by attending any of the regular meetings.

Security

- Key stage 2 Parents are asked to leave their children in the playground at morning bell time (8.55) or as near to it as possible. Parents are asked to stay with key stage 1 children until bell time unless previously arranged with school.

- If a parent wishes to collect their child during school hours, a letter must be sent to the class teacher in advance. Alternatively, a phone call can be made to the office, who will inform the class teacher.
- Children will not be allowed to leave school to attend appointments unless collected by a responsible adult at the school office.
- When visiting their child's teacher, parents must enter the school via the main entrance.
- All visitors must sign in at the school office and will be asked to wear a visitors' badge. This does not apply to parents coming to pick up their child, to talk to a member of staff or for an organised event such as parents' evening or an assembly.
- Rare incidents of aggression or rudeness toward a member of staff are reported to the Head teacher who will clarify our expectations with the parents concerned. The police are called in if there is any instance of violent behaviour or recurring aggression from a parent.

Parents/ Contacting School- Guidelines

At St Mary's we try very hard to make our school accessible to all who have a vested interest in the progress of our children. We recognise the crucial role parents play in the development of each of our pupils, and seek to allow parents as much opportunity to access school to both share in the education of their child and to be able to discuss concerns or ask questions. We want parents to feel confident that they can come in and discuss their child's progress. We do not want parents to dwell on concerns they have, nor to talk about issues negatively with other parents on the playground, via computers or any form of social media. We will always make time to see any parents about any issue, no matter how trivial. In this spirit of openness we would ask parents to follow the procedures laid down below if they wish to contact school.

For reasons of security and to give staff every opportunity to nurture independence in every child we ask that parents do not routinely come into school to help their child get ready for the day. Instead, we would ask that parents follow the steps detailed below:

- Coming in person to the office- Parents are welcome at any time to come to the front entrance and to speak to either Mrs Peace or, our school administrators, or any other member of staff available. There may be brief occasions when there is no-one in the office because the office staff have been called away and no-one else is around. At these times please ring the bell and wait at the hatch and someone will attend you when available. If required, you will be then be let through the security door. (Please note: Mrs Peace and Mrs Pearson have a lunch break from 12.30 till 1.00, so are usually not available at this time.)
*The front door is the only access point for anyone except staff once school has started. Access can only be gained with the consent of a staff member. Children who are late (i.e. arriving at school after 9.00) should be brought through the front entrance.
- In writing-Parents may choose to write a letter and address it to the person they wish to contact. The letter will be read at the earliest possible convenience, and a response will be given if needed.
- Ringing the office- Parents/ guardians are welcome to ring the school on 01709 361 502 at any time. If no-one is available to take your call, please leave a message. Someone will get back to you if necessary.

- Emailing school. Parents may email parents if they wish. Emails are usually opened within 24 hours of arriving. Our address is office@stmarysherringthorpe.co.uk
- The head teacher will go onto the playground when he is able to from 8.45 every morning. This is an ideal time for any parents/ guardians to chat informally to him if they wish.
- If parents wish to see the class teacher concerning a minor issue, there are several ways of doing so;
 - Ring the school and make an appointment.
 - Come to the school entrance and ask if a class teacher is available for a quick chat. If the teacher is available, you may be able to have a word there and then. If not, you will be able to arrange a time when you can meet with the teacher.
 - Speak to a teacher on the yard before school. Staff may be able to see you very briefly when they are bringing their class into school before school.
 - Speak to a teacher after school. Staff may be able to see you briefly when the children are being released at the end of the day.
- * We would ask that parents do not meet teachers or the head teacher with contentious issues in view of other parents, children or staff.
- If parents have a more serious issue to discuss that may take longer than a couple of minutes to resolve or that may be contentious, we ask them to make an appointment to see the class teacher/ head teacher. We will try our best to fit parents in at the earliest possible convenience, and to ensure that the ensuing discussion is given appropriate time.
- At Mary's we are very lucky to have almost unequivocal support from our parents in support of our mission to develop their children's academic, spiritual, moral and social growth in the image of Christ. We thank each and every parent for this support.

We are aware that in the day to day hurly burly of school life there may, very occasionally, be a grievance that a parent may have. We sincerely hope but do not assume that all our parents will be happy with everything we do or with everything that happens at St Mary's all of the time. However, we hope that, should such a grievance materialise school and parents work together openly and quickly so that minimum disruption is caused and so that the grievance can be resolved as quickly as possible for the benefit of the child.

If your child comes out of school telling you of something that has happened in school that has upset them in some way, please talk to them about what happened. School will have dealt with issues that they know about accordingly and in an unbiased way. In order to do this, we ask that;

- Children tell staff if they have been upset by another child in any way, whether physically, name calling, social exclusion etc.
- Children never take a matter into their own hands. We tell our children that retaliation in any way is not allowed at all. We would ask that parents echo this important message at home.
- Parents trust the school to deal with all issues sensitively and fairly, based on consideration of the view point of the child and other parties.
- Parents try not to discuss issues that have happened in school with other parents before or after school.
- Parents do not confront other parents or children about an incident that has happened in school.

If, after speaking to your child you still have questions about how the issue has been resolved, please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see a member of staff to discuss the issue.

In the vast majority of instances where a child has incurred an injury the incident will have been an accident, usually the result of enthusiastic play. However, we deal with ALL instances resulting in intentional physical injury, no matter how minor, with the utmost seriousness. If, after considering all sides, we conclude that the injury has been inflicted on purpose we will contact the parents of the child who has inflicted the injuries and execute an appropriate sanction.

Swearing or name calling is not allowed, whether in retaliation or not. If a child swears or calls another child a particularly offensive name, we will contact his or her parents at the earliest possible convenience. We ask that parents support us in such an instance by discussing the issue with their child, and telling them that such an offence, whether in response to something another other child has said or done or not is not tolerated by teachers or parents.

We are enormously proud of the standards of behaviour, good manners, care for others and courtesy shown by all of our children for the vast majority of time. We wish to help this to continue, and wish to do this in close partnership with our parents, who almost without exception support us in this.

Complaints-A summary of Guidelines for Parents

If your child has a problem at school you should be able to sort it out through an informal discussion with your child's teacher. If you can't resolve a problem informally, the school should have a formal complaints procedure that you can follow.

Contacting your child's school

If you're worried about your child's learning or welfare at school, your child's class teacher is the best person to approach first. Teachers will usually be in the classroom during the day, but you can leave messages with the school office asking the teacher to get back to you.

If the teacher can't help, or you are not satisfied with their response, you can talk to the headteacher. You should be able to arrange a meeting or a telephone conversation with the headteacher through the school office. If this isn't practical, you may wish to make a written complaint.

Complaining to the governing body

If your complaint is not resolved, the next stage is to approach the governing body of the school. All state-funded schools are required to have a procedure to deal with any complaints relating to the school, or to any facilities or services that the school provides for the local community.

If you want to complain to the governing body, ask the school for a copy of its complaints procedure. All complaints to the governing body must be in writing.

Complaining to your local authority

Some procedures may allow for an additional stage if the local authority (LA), Diocesan Body or another external agency provides an independent appeal or review. LAs are also required to set up a procedure for dealing with certain types of complaints, for example complaints about the curriculum or collective worship in a school.

Complaining to the Secretary of State

Finally, if you believe that your school's governing body or your local authority is acting 'unreasonably' you can complain in writing to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. Complaints to the Secretary of State are handled by the government's Department for Children, Schools and Families. This should be a last resort, and you should highlight in your letter the steps you have already taken to resolve the problem. You should be aware that the Department for Children, Schools and Families will not usually be able to investigate your complaint if your child no longer goes to the school where the incident took place.

Complaining to Ofsted

Ofsted has powers to investigate certain types of complaint from parents to help them to decide whether to inspect a school - though in most cases, you should raise any problems with the school first.

Types of complaint to which Ofsted can respond include:

- the school is not providing a good enough education
- the pupils are not achieving as much as they should, or their needs are not being met
- the school is not well led and managed, or is not using its resources efficiently
- the pupils' personal development and well-being are being neglected

When considering a complaint, Ofsted can require the school or local authority to provide information, or require the school to arrange for a meeting of parents to seek their views.

Ofsted can also record parents' concerns for consideration during the school's next inspection.

Where a complaint is very serious, Ofsted can arrange an immediate inspection of the school.

For further information, call the Ofsted helpline on 08456 40 40 45.