

Mapledown home-school partnership policy.

Rationale:

“Parents hold key information and have a critical role to play in their children’s education. They have unique strengths, knowledge and experience to contribute to the shared view of a child’s needs and the best ways of supporting them. It is therefore essential that all professionals (schools, LAs and other agencies) actively seek to work with parents and value the contribution they make. The work of professionals can be more effective when parents are involved and account is taken of their wishes, feelings and perspectives on their children’s needs. All parents of children with special educational needs should be treated as partners. They should be supported so that as to be able and empowered to:

- recognise and fulfil their responsibilities as parents and play an active and valued role in their children’s education
- have knowledge of their child’s entitlement within SEN framework
- make their views known about how their child is educated
- have access to information, advice and support during assessment and any related decision-making process about special educational provision.

These partnerships can be challenging, requiring positive attitudes by all, and in some circumstances additional support and encouragement for parents”.

(The Code of Practice (2001) 2:2 and 2:3)

At Mapledown School we believe it is in a student's best interest for us to work closely and effectively with their family. This ensures that the student reaches his or her maximum potential. The school and families have the common goal of enabling the student to develop through quality learning experiences.

Purposes of the home-school partnership:

- * To aid the generalisation of the student's skills, knowledge and understanding by both home and school adopting a consistent approach.
- * To ensure that the knowledge, expertise and opinions of families are valued.
- * To ensure that all those involved in the student's care and education have as clear and whole picture of the student as possible.
- * To establish common goals and purposes for the student.
- * To provide opportunities for discussion, negotiation and evaluation of the student's progress, in both formal and informal meetings in either home or school.
- * To provide support, ideas and access to expertise for the families.
- * To ensure all families have access to school information by providing translated documents, access to an interpreting service for families for whom English is not their first language, assistance with literacy etc.
- * To facilitate families to network and find support amongst themselves.

Guidelines and practice:

In order to meet the purposes outlined above, it is necessary to create opportunities whereby parents/carers can be involved and included in the fabric of the school. Currently there are many ways in which this is facilitated:

- * Annual reviews, where the past year's development can be assessed and new priorities set.
- * Key Personal Learning Targets (KPLT's), and up-to-date timetables, sent out yearly
- * Discussions/questionnaires with parents/carers to baseline behaviours and abilities.
- * Occasional home visits by a relevant member of staff who can provide support and advice in a specific area of need, e.g. physiotherapy, information technology and communication.

- Home-School books provide two-way information about a student's activities, moods, achievements and any special events, e.g. whole school assemblies, visiting theatre groups, well done stickers. Families are encouraged to do the same.
- Opportunities to attend workshops in areas such as Makaton (sign system), Communication , Mobility (MOVE) Eating and Drinking, Autism/PECS.
- Opportunities to visit the school and to liaise with relevant professionals e.g. open evenings or mornings.
- Contact between home and school at a mutually convenient time, i.e. not during lesson time if possible, either on the phone, in school or on a home visit.
- Use of text messaging service to keep families up to date with events at school
- Other events in the school calendar - International Evening, Annual Fun Run
- Focused Parent/carer coffee mornings.
- Support for parents of students leaving school – see Mapledown School Transition timeline and Guidance (Policies)
- Open evenings.
- Transition from Oakleigh School (or other schools) involves parental visits into school, school and home visits by therapists where appropriate and a final review with families after transition
- Supporting students entry into school at any time within the school year for whatever reason.
- Parents/carers come into school on a voluntary basis to help with activities.
- Various medical and therapy assessments are carried out in school. The school nurse and therapists are in regular contact with parents/carers where appropriate and can make formal assessments where necessary.
- Family support worker employed by the school one morning per week to provide advice and practical assistance.

Over and above these opportunities the school will endeavour to make contact every term to ensure parents/carers have the opportunity to talk to staff. This responsibility lies with the class teacher.

At formal events, where there is a need for language support, interpreters should be arranged. At informal events, parents/carers who speak the same language are encouraged to network to provide support for each other with consent. All teaching staff have information regarding language and interpreter needs. Furthermore, important documentation is translated where necessary for access. The EAL teachers are able to offer advice and support around the area of translation or interpretation.

In the case of students who are not living with both or either parent it is the responsibility of the school to find out if duplicate copies of information are needed and to ensure that this is sent out.

The school continually strives to improve its practice and it is the responsibility of the whole school to work within the guidelines and ethos of this policy.

This policy is the responsibility of the coordinator (Sue Hart) and will be reviewed again in November 2019.