

ATTAIN ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP



Parental Engagement Policy

For

Bocking Primary School



March 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Bocking Primary School, all parents and carers are equally valued as part of the academy community. The academy recognises the important role played by parents in the education of their children and that children will benefit the most when there is a strong relationship between home and the academy.
- 1.2 The academy actively encourage all parents to be fully involved in their child's education and in the life of the academy. The academy seeks to work in partnership with all parents, keeping them informed of their child's achievements and the workings of the academy.
- 1.3 This policy aims to provide a framework in which all parents can engage meaningfully in the education of their child and the life of the school.

NB the term parent used throughout this policy applies equally to parents, carers and family members who care for children.

2. Inclusion Statement

- 2.1 The academy welcomes and values all children, irrespective of ability, religion, race, gender or cultural heritage. As a consequence, our families bring a rich and vibrant mix of beliefs, cultures and languages to the academy. However, regardless of background, we all share the common goal of ensuring all children fulfil their potential academically, socially and physically.
- 2.2 The academy recognises its responsibilities to eliminate barriers that impede family involvement and to create a rich learning environment, developed in collaboration with families.

3. Aims

- 3.1 Staff, governors and parents work together to provide a high quality education in a safe, caring and stimulating environment. We want the children to achieve high standards and to enjoy their work and play in all areas of the curriculum, developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes, which will enable them to learn and to succeed throughout their lives.
- 3.2 Our aims through parental involvement are to:
 - Develop a shared understanding of our academy's aims, values, policies and practices
 - Enhance and widen our pupil's education through the involvement of parents and the community
 - Ensure parents feel welcome and involved in academy life
 - Develop supportive working relationships based on trust between parents and all academy staff
 - Establish an equal partnership with parents, based on shared responsibility and mutual respect, in which both parents and staff are seen as learning from each other

- Ensure communication is effective, timely and specific so parents can feel confident and knowledgeable about what is happening in the academy and with regards to their child's education
- Build on ways in which families already support their child's learning at home to meet the learning needs of all children
- Strengthen links between learning at the academy and learning at home.

4. Objectives

To achieve these aims the academy will

- foster an ethos and atmosphere where parents feel supported, welcomed and valued
- Maintain good communication between home and the academy
- actively involve parents, in their child's learning and progress
- make good use of parents' expertise and willingness to support their own learning and that of their children and to actively involve themselves in academy life
- provide as much information as possible in timely, specific, targeted and accessible ways so that parents feel confident and knowledgeable in supporting their children's learning
- establish the views and opinions of parents and act upon these where possible
- develop opportunities for parental and family involvement in children's learning
- provide support and encouragement for families suffering difficulties/crises, or barriers to involvement
- work with parents in promoting positive behaviour at home and at the academy
- seek to provide a range of activities, courses and workshops, to promote parental involvement in children's learning, and also 'lifelong learning' for both children and adults
- continue to build the ability of staff to effectively engage families supporting children's learning and development

5. Levels of Engagement

Levels of engagement employed in support of these objectives include:

5.1 Communication

Parents can expect to receive information about the day-to-day organisation of the academy, the curriculum, about their children's learning and how they can be best supported. This is achieved through regular, two way and meaningful communication between home and the academy as follows:

5.1.1 Letters and Newsletters Informing Parents

- Academy information is often provided to parents in the form of a letter. This may either be for the whole academy when informing parents about an event in the academy or news regarding the whole academy.

- A weekly head of school newsletter is published each Friday and sent home. It highlights events, celebrates the achievements of pupils and informs parents of upcoming events and information regarding the academy diary. Copies are available on the academy website.

5.1.2 Emails and texts

- Letters and documents are emailed to parents who have signed up to eSchools. This does involve registration and the onus is on the parent to do this.
- Texts are used when a short and urgent message needs to be communicated. There is a small charge for sending texts but no charge to parents receiving the text.

5.1.3 Direct Contact – Telephone

- Parents are contacted by telephone when issues arise throughout the academy day. Teachers will frequently wait until the end of the academy day or when they have non-contact time to speak to parents.
- Telephone calls are made immediately with regards to medical issues, if a child is taken ill or if clarification is required with regards to an important matter.
- Calls are also made as soon as possible to verify an academy's absence when parents have not reported these.

5.1.4 Home-School Diary

- Each child has a home school diary, which is used to record a child's reading at home and at the academy. Parents may also use the diary to communicate with the teacher and vice versa.

5.1.5 The Academy Website

- The academy website contains a wealth of information for parents, including news and events, curriculum information, routines, staffing arrangement, policies and organisational details. This is accessible to all. All parents are encouraged to contact the academy directly with any issues they have about the information on our website.

5.1.6 Class talks to parents (Meet the Teacher)

- At the beginning of each academic year the teachers hold a 'Meet the Teacher' event for parents in their class to explain the following:-
 - timetable
 - curriculum subjects covered and content
 - expectations for the term and the end of the year
 - important routines
 - homework
 - reading

5.1.7 New Parents Induction talk

- Each July the head of school and Foundation Stage team leader talk to parents of the children who will start in September or during the next academic year, providing information on aims, values, reading, homework, uniform and the curriculum in general.
- Prospective parents are able to find out about the academy via individual or group visits.

5.1.8 Home Visits

- Parents of new Foundation stage children are offered a home visit in the Autumn term. The class teacher and learning support assistant will visit the child and parent in their home in order to liaise over any important issues.

5.1.9 Academy Policies

- Academy policies, including curriculum, assessment and homework policies, are on the website. They are also available on request from the academy office.

5.1.10 Induction Information

In the induction pack for new starters, we make clear how much we value parent support and participation. The importance of the relationship between the academy and home is explicit within our:-

- Academy aims and values
- Prospectus
- Induction pack
- Home-school Partnership Agreement
- Induction meeting
- Key policies – e.g. Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Equal Opportunities

5.1.11 Home-School Agreement

- This is given to all new parents as their children start school. It indicates the ways that parents and the academy can support each other to provide the best for the child. Parents keep the agreement and return a slip to the office to say that they have received it. There is a space to write any comments or queries.

5.1.12 Parents' Consultation Meetings

- There are opportunities for parents to have a formal discussion with their child(ren)'s teacher at Termly Learning Conferences (TLCs) held in the Spring and Autumn terms. Teachers value these opportunities to celebrate successes, review learning targets and listen to parental views. Any parent who does not attend or make an appointment will be contacted to make one at a mutually convenient time.

- An Open Evening is held in the Summer term where all the child's work is on display for parents and children to look at. Before this each parent will have received a written individual report.
- Meetings will be held at times and in locations accessible to parents.

5.1.13 Annual Review Meetings

- All parents are invited into the academy to meet with the SENDCo and other professionals to discuss their child's Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and care Plan. Reviews are held annually or earlier if a request is made or provision changes.

5.1.14 Meetings with Head of School or Other Members of Staff

- Parents can meet with the head of school or other members of staff, at a mutually convenient time to discuss a range of issues. These meetings may be arranged, through the academy office, by staff or parents.
- Parents can talk with teachers before and after school on an informal basis on most days.

5.1.15 Reports

- Parents are provided with an interim report on the progress of their child in the Autumn and Spring term. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss any of these reports at the TLCs.
- A more comprehensive report is sent to parents at the end of the academic year which describes the attitudes, personal and social skills, progress and attainment for their child. This is sent out shortly before the summer open evenings so that if there are any queries or concerns an individual appointment can be made. Attendance and punctuality data are also included in the report as are the Teacher Assessment Results for Year 2 children and the end of Reception Year National Assessments results on the 'Foundation Stage Profile' for Foundation Stage children.
- All information is sent to separated parents who have legal parental rights. We ask parents to inform the head of school so that information may be posted.
- Where appropriate and necessary, parents might also receive specific reports on other aspects of their child's progress or personal development

5.1.16 Visits to the academy

- Parents are welcome into the academy at any time especially if there is an issue they need to discuss. Although they do not necessarily need an appointment, it may be advisable if a particular member of staff is unavailable.

5.2 Parental Participation in the Academy

- The academy is open to parents at all reasonable times.

- Parents are encouraged to become involved in the classroom and curriculum activities, in supporting their child's learning at home, in developing academy policies, in special events and through the PTA.

5.2.1 Parent Helpers

- Parents may volunteer to help in the class or with specific activities at any time by speaking with the class teacher or with staff in the office. Teachers may invite parents to offer their services for specific activities through the year, such as listening to children reading, or lend a hand with activities of a practical nature.
- Parents are invited, where possible, to visit classes and groups of children to give talks or demonstrations on areas of interest in which they are experts.

5.2.2 Academy Trips

- The academy organises a number of off-site activities during the academic year and parents may be invited to accompany the group or in some instances assist with transport arrangements.
- All volunteers helping on educational visits will be briefed by the teachers before the event – explaining the timetable and expectations for the trip. Teachers have overall responsibility for the class throughout a trip. All entrance and travel fees for volunteers are paid for by the academy.

5.2.3 Special Events

- Families are invited to regular events, activities and celebrations that are organised by the academy. These occasions provide an opportunity to celebrate success, and a viewing public for lot of the pupil's work.
- Examples of events are Harvest Festival assemblies and donation of harvest gifts, Christmas assemblies, academy productions, leavers assembly, family assemblies, sports day, curriculum weeks – sports/music/art, coffee mornings etc.

5.2.4 Parental consultation

- Parents views are important to the academy. The academy seeks to consult with parents through
 - Formal and informal ways of seeking views on academy life, children's learning and new initiatives
 - Asking parents to keep the academy fully informed of any medical, special educational needs or disability so that we can make any reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of the child
 - Asking parents to keep the academy informed of any changes in collection arrangements to ensure the welfare of the child.
 - Receiving regular feedback from parents, acting on it and letting parents know what we have done
 - Inviting parents to complete formal questionnaires and encouraging parents to use Parent View

- Ensuring parents have the opportunity to provide feedback to Ofsted via their parents questionnaire; and that parent receive information about any Ofsted inspections of our academy
- Parental feedback is taken into account by governors and staff generating the School Development Plan
- If desired by a sufficient number of families, the governing body will hold an annual meeting at which issues of interest and concern can be raised by parents and carers.

5.2.5 Parent Workshops

- The academy frequently runs parent workshops to assist parents in supporting their child(ren)'s learning. Examples of workshops that have been run include 'phonics and Reading, online safety, Maths etc.

5.2.6 Governance

- Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the governance of the academy, through our Parent Governor Elections, as and when vacancies arise.

5.2.7 Parent Teacher School Association (PTSA) Events

- Every parent is automatically a member of the PTSAs and is welcome to attend meetings and join in events. There is a mixture of fundraising and social events through the year including:-
 - Christmas fair
 - End of term discos
 - Summer fair
- The academy values the work of PTSA. This body of parents and academy staff work voluntarily to raise money for the academy.

5.3 Responding to Concerns

- Teachers will meet with parents if there is any concern (expressed by parent or teacher) about the child's progress or well-being in the academy.
- Parents are encouraged to speak to teachers if they have a specific concern about their child. Parents should ask to make an appointment to discuss matters with the class teacher at a mutually convenient time – often at the end of the teaching day.
- It is always helpful, when there is a concern or query, to meet with the class teacher as soon as possible. The academy is committed to solving problems quickly and this can prevent minor issues or misunderstandings becoming major problems. We always listen to concerns and do our best to answer queries or investigate incidents as thoroughly as possible.
- The teacher may ask you to raise your concern with the head of school if it is a whole academy matter or if they feels a parent requires further information or reassurance.
- Teachers dismiss the children at the end of the day and may be able to talk with parents on an informal basis if required.

5.4 Staff training

- 5.4.1 The academy recognises that a professional committed team of staff and governors is key to ensuring parental engagement.
- 5.4.2 To continue to build the ability of staff to effectively engage families in supporting children's learning and development the academy will
- provide high quality induction programmes for new staff
 - provide the necessary resources and training to support professional development for all staff

6. Organisation Arrangements

- 6.1 All parent helpers are expected to adhere to the Volunteers policy and the Volunteer's code of conduct.
- 6.2 Personal background checks will be made with the DBS (Disclosure and barring Service) on any person who will be working on regulated activities with children in the academy, prior to that person's involvement.
- 6.3 Insurance cover will be organised regarding parents' work at the academy, but those involved in transporting children in private vehicles will have to check their own insurance arrangements in this regard.
- 6.4 All parent helpers are asked to sign in and sign out of the academy and to wear a "volunteers" badge to show that they are authorised to be in the academy building.
- 6.5 All parent helpers working with children in class are asked to check the purpose and details of the activity, before commencement, by talking with the teacher.
- 6.6 All helpers will be reminded of the confidential nature of their work in the academy.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Responsibilities – Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body will:

- ensure that the head of school and the staff implement this policy.
- support events that are designed to engage the parent and wider community.
- be kept informed of complaints and responses made by the academy as per the trust's complaints policy.

7.2 Responsibilities - Head of School / Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The head of school / SLT will:

- monitor all home / school communication and the complaints policy and take action required if appropriate.

- ensure a response from the academy in response to any complaints/ issues raised within 48 hours.
- ensure organisation and facilitation of events to give information to parents or celebrate success.
- facilitate the gathering of views of stakeholders and discuss any appropriate action to be taken as a result.
- work with the local governing body, parents forum and any other appropriate bodies to ensure the engagement of parents.
- Establish an academy environment that welcomes and encourages all parents to raise questions, participate in academy activities and volunteer their services in a variety of ways;
- ensure that parents are treated as collaborators in children’s learning;
- ensure an academy wide approach to communication with parents about academy policies, programs, activities and reporting on pupils that is frequent, clear and two way; and
- report on parent participation in academy board annual reports

7.3 Responsibilities of Teachers

Teachers will:

- acknowledge that all parents have positive strengths that contribute to their children’s learning;
- respect diversity of family backgrounds and cultures and their contribution to children’s learning;
- encourage parent involvement in their children’s learning and provide advice to support that environment;
- provide clear and timely information to parents about the achievements and progress of their children and provide regular opportunities for two way dialogue about progress.
- abide by expectation agreed within the Home School Agreement (which has been signed on their behalf)

7.4 Responsibility of Parents

- Parents are expected to read and sign the Home School Agreement and abide by expectations agreed.
- Parents are expected to communicate with the academy directly where there are concerns or issues arising.
- Parents need to comply with all relevant policies, procedures and guidelines, and the head of school’s directives that pertain to visitors when they enter the academy.
- Parents / carers who, in the course of their participation, become a party to confidential information must agree not to divulge the information to any other person
- Parents should treat the staff at the academy with respect. The academy reserves the right to report to the police any verbal or physical abuse towards any of our staff and ask them to leave the premises – should this be the case we will continue to communicate and work with all parents in writing and by telephone.

8. Complaints

- 8.1 Parents who have issues with decisions taken by the class teacher or head of school should attempt to resolve these at the academy level in the first instance. Should the parent feel that the issue remains unresolved, then complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the trust's complaints policy.

9. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 This policy reflects the academy's commitment to work in partnership with parents to promote their involvement in supporting their child's learning and the life of the academy. The ultimate success is that children are both happy at the academy and achieving their full potential.
- 8.2 The effectiveness of our partnership with parents may be evaluated through
- Attendance at parents evenings / consultations / open days
 - Feedback from parent surveys
 - OfSTED on-line parent forum (Parent View)
 - Attendance at academy events and performances, e.g. sports day
 - Sign up for parent courses
- 8.3 This policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and the governing body to determine the effectiveness of the parental engagement strategies.
- 8.4 This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if required.