

St John's School

Partnership with Families

Rationale

The staff and governors at St. John's School recognise the rights of families to be involved in the education of their child and also the key role which parents and carers play in supporting their child's learning.

St. John's School works closely with families in order to ensure that teaching and learning strategies are appropriate, collaborative and consistent.

Home-school agreement

All maintained schools are required to adopt a home-school agreement.

St. John's home-school agreement forms the basis of the partnership between family and school. It sets out: -

- the school's responsibilities, aims and values
- the family's responsibilities in supporting the school. (see Appendix 1)

When a child commences St. John's the family is asked to sign the family declaration, showing that they understand and accept the agreement. Where appropriate the child may also read and sign.

Family - school communication

The school provides all families with a home-school book in order to keep them up to date with essential information and regular updates on the work their child has covered in the course of a day. Teachers will aim to write in the Home-school book daily. Teachers may also send photos and small video clips of activities children have taken part in. We welcome regular communications in the book from families about events at home or questions for teachers.

There are occasions when school will wish to contact families via phone calls. Similarly, families may wish to phone or e-mail school to speak to staff. Staff will always respond to these calls when they are not teaching.

Families are encouraged to contact staff whenever necessary. However, it is school policy that staff will not disclose their personal contact details and will remain available through school postal/email addresses and phones. Staff will not contact families using social networking sites.

Families are asked to respect the privacy of staff members.

Families are welcome to visit the school for information or to discuss any issues affecting their child. An appointment should be made through the school office to make sure that the appropriate member of staff is available.

On occasions, teaching staff will arrange to visit a family at home either during or outside school hours to discuss aspects of their child's education. A home visit will only take place with prior arrangement, mutual consent and a pre-arranged reason for the visit. A record of the home visit will be kept in the pupil file. See Guidance for Home and Hospital Visits.

The school website (www.st-johns-school.co.uk) provides information about the school including future events. A newsletter is circulated to families every half term to keep them informed of activities/events relating to all aspects of school life. An annual calendar with details of important dates for the following academic year is given to all families at the end of the Summer term. Parents are encouraged to sign up for 'Parent Mail' and will receive emails and texts regarding future events and useful information. This information is from St John's School or has been sanctioned by St John's. No contact details will be given to any third parties.

Reports

Detailed reports are produced by school staff and other professionals prior to the Annual Review meeting held to review the Statement of Special Educational Need. It is hoped that all parents and carers attend this meeting as well as contributing to the report. Families are also sent a mid year review of their child's IEP. The end of year report outlines the progress made throughout the school year.

Consultation evenings are held during the Autumn term. During this time there is opportunity for parents and carers to discuss their child's progress with teaching staff. Family workshops are held during the year as are coffee mornings. All families are invited into school for special occasions such as Christmas and achievement assemblies.

Feedback from parent/carers on school development

A questionnaire is sent annually to families. As a school we are interested in the views of parents and carers regarding various aspects of school life, for example: the quality of support given by school to families; whether nature of IEP targets is relevant and how the school could improve communication with families.

Transition

Prior to starting at St. John's, families are invited to meet with the staff who will be working with their child. They will also be able to look around the school to see the facilities and resources available. A 'Starting School Booklet' is completed with families for information purposes to ensure that the transition into school is successful. If a child is educated at another school or nursery, teachers will visit the child there prior to them starting at St John's.

Parents/carers of younger children who are starting school may wish to settle their child into school and are welcome to stay for an appropriate period of time for this purpose.

Pupils transition from Primary to Secondary at the end of Key Stage 2, and to Post 16 Provision after Key Stage 4. During this transition year families are invited in the Spring/Summer terms to discuss the transition process, accommodation and curriculum changes. This includes meeting the new staff and viewing the facilities.

An open evening is held in the Summer term for families to meet their child's new staff team.

The school Transitions Manager works closely with the SEND advisors for transition in order to support families whose children are in Year 9 and above. The focus is on supporting families to make plans for when their child will leave school. Support may include providing information in different formats such as informal home visits, coffee mornings and information sessions, visits to post school providers, arranging for meetings with key professionals i.e. from health and social care regarding changes between children's and adult services.

Parent governors

Parents/carers are represented on the Governing Body of St. John's School. Parent governors are elected every four years and all parents/carers are eligible for nomination. Parents/carers, as governors, have an active role in the self-review and development of the school.

Parent governors can be contacted via the school office.

St. John's Special School Association (SJSSA)

There is an active parent/carer and staff association to which all parents, carers and staff are automatic members. A committee meet monthly to arrange both fund raising and social events. The association is a member of the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations and is a registered charity.

Details of forthcoming SJSSA activities and committee meetings are included in the St. John's newsletter.

Siblings

St. John's recognises that many of the siblings of our pupils welcome more information about the school. Siblings are welcome to visit for a tour of the school and to stay for a session with their brother or sister.

Parent/carer volunteers

The school always welcomes offers of help at school from families. Parents and carers are generally asked to help in a department of the school other than where their child is based.

Those interested in volunteering at school are asked to contact the school office so that their details can be forwarded to the Department Leaders. They will also be informed of the Safeguarding procedures and other relevant policies in place at St John's. Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks will be carried out as appropriate in line with school policy.

Raising concerns

Should a parent/carer have a concern about their child's education this will usually be resolved through the normal channels of communication such as the home/school book, conversation or a phone call. Parents are welcome to call or meet with the Assistant Head Teacher for Pupil Support to discuss any concerns or questions they may have regarding their child. On some occasions parents/carers may feel the need to take the concern further. In such cases, a copy of the St. John's School Complaints Procedure will be provided to assist resolution (available on the school web-site). Parents/carers may also wish to contact Bedford Borough Parent Partnership Service for advice.

Policy promotion and review

- this policy will be made available to all parents upon request ensuring that it is accessible to parents for whom English is an additional language
- this policy will be reviewed regularly every three years by the Personnel and Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body