

## **SECTION 4: Best Practice**

### **Parents and Carers as partners**

#### **Policy Statement**

We believe that children benefit most from early years education and care when parents and settings work together in partnership.

Our aim is to support parents as their children's first and most important educators by involving them in their children's education and in the full life of the setting. We also aim to support parents in their own continuing education and personal development.

Some parents are less well represented in early years settings; these include fathers, parents who live apart from their children, but who still play a part in their lives as well as working parents. In carrying out the following procedures, we will ensure all parents are included.

When we refer to 'parents' we mean both mothers and fathers; these include both natural or birth parents as well as step-parents and parents who do not live with their children, but have contact with them and play a part in their lives. 'Parents' also includes same sex parents as well as foster parents.

'Parental responsibility' is all the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property. (For a full explanation of who has parental responsibility, refer to the Pre-school Learning Alliance's Child Protection Record publication.)

#### **Procedures**

- Recognise and support parents as their child's first and most important educators.
- We have a means to ensure all parents are included - that may mean we have different strategies for involving fathers or parents who work or live apart from their children.
- We consult with all parents to find out what works best for them.
- We ensure ongoing dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children to support their families.

- We inform all parents about how the setting is run and its policies through access to written information and through regular informal communication. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them.
- We welcome nursing mothers.
- We generate confidence and encourage parents to trust their own instincts and judgement regarding their child.
- We respect the family's religious and cultural backgrounds and beliefs to accommodate special requirements wherever possible and practical.
- We share information about the EYFS, young children's learning in the setting and how parents can further support learning at home.
- We inform all parents on a regular basis about their children's progress.
- We involve parents in the shared record keeping about their children - either formally or informally - and ensure parents have access to their children's written developmental records.
- We provide opportunities for parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the setting.
- We inform parents about relevant conferences, workshops and training.
- We consult with parents about the times of meetings to avoid excluding anyone.
- We provide information about opportunities to be involved in the setting in ways that are accessible to parents with basic skills needs, or those for whom English is an additional language.
- We hold meetings in the setting - accessible and appropriate for all.
- We welcome the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take.
- We inform all parents of the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions and check to ensure these are understood. All parents have access to our written complaints procedure. We also have a suggestion box.
- We provide opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum offered in the setting and about young children's learning, in the setting and at home.
- We provide a written contract between the parents and Stanmore Montessori regarding the condition of acceptance and arrangements for payment.
- We inform parents how the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- We operate a key person system to enable parents to establish a close working relationship with a named practitioner and to support two-way information sharing.
- Parents are given the name of their key person and the role she plays when their child starts.

- We find out the needs and expectations of parents through regular feedback. We evaluate any responses and use these to promote our practice and policy.

In compliance with the Welfare Requirements, the following documentation is in place.

- Admissions policy
- Complaints policy
- Record of complaints
- Developmental records of children