

Cobham Montessori School

Education for life

Parent Partnership Policy

Policy statement

Parents provide a learning environment which is enduring and comprehensive. It begins even before birth, operates beyond the child's day at our school and provides continuity as the child transfers from one learning environment to another. Over 70% of children's lives are spent, not in a school, but with their family and the wider community. Therefore, we recognize home and community as significant learning environments in the lives of children.

In particular we acknowledge that:

- All parents can enhance their child's development and learning.
- Parents have the right to play a central role in making decisions about their child's care and education at every level.
- Successful relationships between parents and educators can have long-lasting and beneficial effects on children's learning and well-being.
- Successful relationships become partnerships when there is two-way communication and parents and educators really listen to each other and value each other's views and support in achieving the best outcomes for each child.
- Parents and educators thus share a joint interest in, and responsibility for, children's development and learning
- Both parents and educators are key people in building children's self-esteem and dispositions to learn, although they bring different perspectives and expertise - Parents are experts on their own child, educators are experts on children's learning and development.

Some of the ways in which we aim to forge partnership working with each family are listed below. Parents are most welcome to make suggestions for other ways in which we can foster trusting working relationships with our families.

We shall:

- Seek the parents/guardians views via the Admissions process, Registration Forms, New Starter questionnaires and conversations with the parents prior to a child joining the school.
- Welcome them and their child at the door with a smile and a 'good morning'.
- Respect each family and respond as flexibly as we can to each family's needs.
- Receive brief updates/news at drop-off which may be relayed to the child's teachers;

- Send regular emailed bulletins which support the activities of the school featuring policy reminders, staffing arrangements, important activity dates and current themes and projects.
- Invite willing members of any child's immediate or extended family to come in and share their experience whether it be an interesting job or hobby, speaking another language, sharing cultural information or simply reading a favourite story (*parents in the classroom*)
- Invite parents to view the school in session by prior appointment. In the Children's House parents may view through the kitchen hatch to get a 'fly on the wall' view of their child.
- Inform parents of the school's policy file and provide key policies to parents via our website, including our policy for making a complaint.
- When there are any aspects of a child's development which may give cause for concern, explore with parents whether additional support might be required and assist parents in accessing appropriate support for their child.
- Inform families of health issues such as chicken pox outbreak or head lice, through email or the prominent display of health warning notices when required.
- Carry out home visits as part of our settling-in arrangements when appropriate.
- Provide information of interest relating to child development and education.
- Invite parents to attend face to face meetings once per term during which we share our observations on the child's development and suggested next steps for the child, as well as listen to parents' views and ideas from home.
- Provide an annual written report on each child's progress.
- Hold a sports day picnic during the Summer term, where parents are invited to spend time informally chatting to each other and the teaching staff
- Hold a 'school show' during the winter term, with parents joining staff and the children to celebrate the children's achievements.
- Hold regular coffee mornings after drop-off to discuss a particular aspect of Montessori education and child development, for example independence, discipline, language and numeracy in a Montessori context.
- Make all parents aware that they may request to speak to their child's key person/teacher at any time. If it is not immediately possible for the key person to meet the parent, a prompt appointment will be offered for a more private discussion. Parents are welcome to phone the school in or after hours or make a specific appointment with their child's key person if they feel they need more than a quick chat.
- Always welcome the contributions of parents, whatever form these may take.
- Periodically, invite parents/guardians to make comment about the effectiveness of our practice, things that we could do better as well as what they feel we may be doing well.
- Make known to all parents the procedures for registering queries or complaints.