



Parental Involvement Policy

St Marks Pre-school believes that children benefit most from early years education and care when parents and settings work together in partnership.

The pre-school aims 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.

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, St Marks Pre-school will ensure that all parents are included.

When the pre-school refers 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.

The Children Act (1989) defines parental responsibility as 'all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property'.

Procedures

Parents are made to feel welcome at St Marks Pre-school by:

- Being greeted appropriately.
- Ensuring all parents are included - this may mean that the practitioner team have different strategies for involving fathers, or parents who work or live apart from their children.
- Making every effort to accommodate parents who have a disability or impairment.
- Consulting with all parents to find out what works best for them.
- Ensuring on-going dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children and to support their families.
- Informing all parents about how the setting is run and its policies, through access to written information, including our Safeguarding Policy and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty, and through regular informal communication. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them, talking it through with them as necessary.
- Keeping confidential any information about a child and his or her family. The pre-school provides parents with a privacy notice that details how and why we process a child or family's personal information. The exception to this is where there is cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where there are concerns regarding a child's development that need to be shared with another agency. The pre-school will seek parental permission unless there are reasons not to in order to protect the safety of the child. Reference is made to the pre-school's Information Sharing Policy on seeking consent for disclosure.
- Seeking specific parental consent to administer medication, take a child for emergency treatment, take a child on an outing and take photographs for the purposes of record keeping.
- Making clear the expectations that the pre-school makes on parents at the point of registration.

- Making clear the expectation that parents will participate in settling their child at the commencement of a place according to an agreed plan.
- Seeking parents' views regarding changes in the delivery of the pre-school service at least annually, and periodically throughout the academic year as the service is reviewed.
- Actively encouraging parents to participate in decision-making processes through involvement in the pre-school committee and/or through access to committee members.
- Encouraging parents to become involved in the social and cultural life of the setting and actively contributing to it.
- Providing a flexible service as far as possible to meet the needs of parents without compromising the needs of children.
- Providing sufficient opportunity for parents to share necessary information with Key Persons. This is recorded and stored to protect confidentiality.
- Ensuring Key Persons have regular informal moments to discuss a child's progress with their parents and to share concerns if they arise. Ensuring more formal meetings can be arranged as appropriate.
- Where applicable, the pre-school SENCo/Key Person works with parents to carry out an agreed plan to support special educational needs.
- Where applicable, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Key Person will work with parents to carry out any agreed tasks where a Protection Plan is in place for a child.
- Involving parents in the shared record keeping about their children – either formally or informally – and ensuring parents have access to their children's written developmental records.
- Providing opportunities for parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the setting.
- Supporting families to be involved in activities that promote their own learning and well-being; informing parents about relevant workshops.
- Consulting with parents about the times of meetings to avoid excluding anyone.
- Providing 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; making every effort to provide an interpreter for parents who speak a language other than English and to provide translated written materials.
- Holding meetings in venues that are accessible and appropriate for all.
- Welcoming the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take.
- Informing all parents of the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions. Ensuring all parents have access/are signposted to the pre-school's written complaints procedure.
- Providing opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum offered in the setting and about young children's learning, both in the setting and at home. There are opportunities for parents to take active roles in supporting their child's learning in the setting: informally through helping out or taking part in activities with their child, or through structured projects engaging parents and staff in learning about children's learning.

In compliance with safeguarding and welfare requirements, the following documentation is also in place at St Marks Pre-school:

- Admissions Policy;
- Complaints procedure;
- Record of complaints;
- Developmental records of children.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the pre-school held on (date)

Signed on behalf of the pre-school

Also see: Admissions Administering Medicines Confidentiality and Client Access to Records
Emergency Closure E-safety Fees
Health and Safety Intimate Care Information Sharing
Maintaining Children's Safety and Security on the Premises
Making a Complaint Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies
Missing Child Outings Promoting Positive Behaviour
Recording and Reporting Accidents and Incidents Safeguarding
Settling into Pre-school Supporting Children with SEN
Valuing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion and Equality