

Robson House

Working with parents and Carers

Core principles

Our ultimate aim as a service is for the needs of all Camden children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties to be met locally in provision that is as close as possible to mainstream. Effective collaboration with parents and carers is essential in achieving this aim.

We believe that parents and carers have rights and responsibilities with respect to what happens to their child.

We understand that parents and families have major influences on their child's development: parents and carers are the child's primary educators and there is a strong relationship between parental involvement in education and positive learning outcomes.

Effective work with parents and carers requires parental engagement. It needs to be tailored to the specific needs of the child and family and needs to be culturally sensitive. Both school and parent belief systems need to be carefully accounted for when seeking parental engagement.

Effective work with parents and carers should promote independence and self-reliance and should be integrated with other support for child.

The basis of effective collaboration with parents and carers is mutual sharing of relevant knowledge and skills considered to be of benefit to the family and the child. In this model each partner recognises the different skills, experiences and knowledge of each of the other partners; each partner values the skills, experiences and knowledge of the other partners; all the partners recognise the need for the input of each of the partners; each partner feels valued.

Our working relationship must be characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate. We share information, responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability.

Partnership involves building relationships based on trust, mutual respect, sharing of information and a willingness to learn from each other. There should therefore be a presumption that information will be shared with parents unless this is likely to put the child at risk.

Trust in the family-school relationship requires confidence that each partner will act in a way to benefit or sustain the relationship, or the goals of the relationship, to achieve positive outcomes for the child

The capacity of parents to engage successfully in this partnership is influenced by practical considerations, by their own emotional needs, the relationship between them as parents, their relationship with their child, their skills and understanding, and by their beliefs about the possibility of change.

Aims

Our work with parents and carers therefore has a number of interlinked aims. These are:

- To safeguard the child
- To build positive relationships between parents and school
- To engage parents in partnership
- To enable parents and carers to support their child's academic learning
- To build positive relationships between parent and child
- To provide emotional support for parents
- To increase parents' capacity to support their child independently
- To support the relationship between the child's parents'
- To provide practical support for the family in managing behaviour

Strategy

To achieve the aims set out about we deploy a range of strategies and approaches.

To safeguard the child, we:

- ensure regular on-going communication between home and school
- carry out home visits
- provide education to parents about risk
- have robust systems of record keeping and reporting

To build positive relationships between home and school, we:

- ensure communication between home and school
- allocate of a key worker to each parent and carer
- make regular telephone calls
- ensure a high degree of availability of staff
- provide positive feedback about each child

To engage parents in partnership, we:

- establish shared goals
- co-create strategies
- adopt a solution-oriented approach
- identify strengths in parents: acknowledge and build on these
- agree manageable tasks
- recognise successes
- involve parents in activities in school and trips

To enable parents to support academic learning, we:

- have clear systems around homework
- model and coach strategies to support child's learning
- support the learning needs of parents

To help build positive relationships between parent and child, we:

- create opportunities for positive interaction in school
- organise opportunities for positive interaction out of school
- communicate positives about child

To provide emotional support for parents, we provide:

- opportunities to be heard
- access to counselling

To Increase parenting capacity (understanding & skills), we:

- provide education about child development and learning
- deliver parenting training courses
- model behaviour management strategies

To Increase parenting capacity (motivational), we:

- foster parental belief in possibility of progress
- role play and rehearse strategies with parents
- agree weekly home assignments

To support the relationship between the child's parents, we:

- arrange joint meetings to explore positive ways of interacting as family
- create opportunities to share positive strategies to support the child
- deliver family therapy

To provide practical family support work, we:

- offer support and advice around household management
- advocate for parents in their dealings with other agencies (e.g. in relation to housing, benefits, school transition etc.)