

Wharfedale Montessori School & Wharfedale Babies

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & PARTNERSHIP POLICY

Date created: September 2011

Person Responsible: Principal

Review period: Annually

Last reviewed: January 2017

Last re-written:

Next due for review: January 2018

Aim of Policy:

The role of parents is a key component of the Montessori philosophy, concerned with the development of the whole individual, and we believe that children benefit most from their education where parents and schools work together in partnership.

Our aim is to support parents as their children's first and most important nurturers & educators by involving them in their children's education, care and development and in the full life of the School and baby nursery. We support them in their next choice of placement, by providing transitional arrangements and advice. We also aim to support parents in their own continuing education and personal development of understanding related to Montessori education and care.

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.*

In carrying out the following procedures, we will ensure all parents are included:

Procedures for parental contribution:

- 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 and to support their families
- We inform all parents about how the School and nursery is run and its Policies by means of regular communications by letter, newsletter, notices, email and website, as well as more informal means of communication. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them

- We encourage and support parents to play an active part in the events and activities of the School and nursery. Parents are encouraged to contact the Liaison representatives at the Friends of Wharfedale Montessori, and are invited to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to classroom activities by signing up to our volunteering scheme
- We inform all school parents on a regular basis about their children's progress at Parents Evenings and, where provided, by means of end of year reports
- Baby nursery parents have regular discussions with key workers and can ask for an appointment at a time to suit all concerned
- 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 or digital developmental records
- Children's House provide weekly updates on My Montessori Child
- We regularly provide Parents education forums and inform parents about relevant conferences, workshops and training
- 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 venues that are accessible and appropriate for all
- We welcome the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take. Parents are always welcome to visit the School or Baby nursery to observe their children and to talk to the Principal or Nursery Manager by specific appointment, and to contact the Principal by telephone at any time. In The Cabin the parents are encouraged to make an appointment to see Mr Lord on Wednesday mornings or Thursday afternoons.
- 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 Complaints Policy

Transitional arrangements and advice:

Joining the school or Baby nursery:

As a Montessori setting with our priority of strongly encouraging a feeling of community both for the children and parents, we always organise at least two trial sessions accompanied by parent or carer who will initially stay for the whole visit. On the second or subsequent visits we would suggest that parents or carers leave their child for a little while perhaps going for a walk, or off for a coffee, but come back within half to three quarters of an hour. We also tell them

they can call us before return time to check that their child is happy. We aim for a gradual weaning from parent/carer into school/nursery and seldom have any difficulties settling children. As the child settles in, we offer a transition meeting with the parent/carer, at which any concerns may be raised.

At times of course a child will be tearful when a parent leaves them but due to the high levels of training and experience of our staff, we really can recognise the difference between protest crying and real distress. We would never let a child continue to cry in a truly distressed way for any length of time.

The aim is to make this important beginning for all of us a truly positive experience, not a negative one. By communicating continuously with the parent/carer, giving and receiving feedback, we can make transition from home to nursery or school as positive as is possible. Little ones may always bring a favourite toy from home as a familiar friend to make them feel comfortable. A specific member of staff will become the new child's key worker on arrival at school or nursery. This does not mean however that other members of staff will not work with your child.

Transition from nursery to pre-school:

When a child is ready to move from the baby nursery into the pre-school we arrange for pre-entry visits into school usually one visit with parents and one visit with one of our nursery staff who will stay with the child for as long as necessary on the visit morning. Parents/carers may do this transition visiting if they would prefer to do so and are available. Parents will also be invited to visit the school to familiarize themselves with the setting, and to understand the new procedures and systems.

Transition from pre-school to primary:

This is always a very exciting time and once again introductory visits, this time to the primary class, are set in place well before the child actually moves up. We also talk to the children in a very positive way about this special move and all the things that they will find slightly different in the primary setting. If a child is leaving our setting and going into main stream primary we will obviously prepare the children in the same way. It is usual for all of our local Yorkshire school to have the new intake children in for at least two visits before the move. A full EYFS record is drawn up for any child moving up from the pre-school, and a full report is also given to the parents of a child leaving our setting. This can then be given to the new setting in order for them to have a clear picture of the ability levels and some idea of the personality and character of each child.

Transition from primary to secondary school:

Children moving on into secondary education from our primary setting will be prepared in various ways. Talking about the move is very important to the child at this time. Reassurance through discussion about all the new opportunities, friends and experiences to be enjoyed will take place. The child may wish to express their own anxieties and ask questions, time must be given for this. Parents can always ask us about their choices of secondary school and have an appointment to discuss this. We are contacted by the chosen secondary setting in most instances and the lower school teaching Head will come and visit for some time in our setting. Children will be sent on with a report.

Their chosen setting will hold Open Evenings for parents and children and the child will always spend a day in their new setting the term before entry.

Home Visiting:

In certain instances it can be very valuable for us to undertake a home visit. If a parent has anxieties or concern over any aspect of their child's behaviour, school experiences or progress we are always happy to go on a home visit. It is always valuable to observe a child in the home situation; this can be particularly helpful when making assessments of need if there is a suspected difficulty of any kind. It is also often easier for parents to feel more relaxed and comfortable on home ground when discussing their child.

We are always willing to arrange home visits if we feel them to be appropriate.

Review of Policy:

We will monitor our progress and review this policy annually.