

GOOD PRACTICE IN INVOLVING PARENTS AND CARERS IN CHILD'S PLANNING MEETINGS

Partnership with parents and carers is central to ensuring that children and young people benefit fully from their school experiences and every opportunity should be taken to encourage and support full effective parental involvement in any planning processes at every stage.

Professionals must take responsibility for encouraging good relationships with families based on trust, openness and effective communication so that when a meeting is organised the rationale for doing so is understood by everyone involved.

The Named Person is responsible for enabling the parent or carer is fully informed and prepared for any meetings which are called for a child or young person.

In cases involving young people aged 16 or over the arrangements for communications with parents should be agreed in the first instances with the young person themselves unless there is evidence they lack capacity.

Before a Child's Planned Meeting :

- The purpose and the natures of the meeting should be explained in advance
- Parents or carers should be consulted about the most suitable time and venue for a meeting in order to take account of any access needs or family responsibilities
- Parents or carers should be involved in agreeing who will attend the meeting and understand their role and the roles of others.
- Parents or carers should be made fully aware of the assessment and planning processes. This will include involvement in the child's 'Assessment of Need'
- Parents or carers should be familiarised with the 'Solution Focused' format of the meeting and invited to add points to the agenda
- Notes from meetings, and any papers or reports to be considered, should be sent out in good time
- Parents or carers should be provided with the 'Child's Planning Meeting' leaflet and 'Thoughts and comments from parent carers' form
- Parents or carers should be offered the opportunity to verbally pass on views to a key person prior to the meeting if they do not wish to use the 'Thoughts and comments' form
- Parents or carers should be advised of their right to have an advocate or supporter accompany them to the meeting

Consideration should be given to the differing needs that parents or carers may have, such as those arising from a disability, or communication and linguistic barriers to ensure that appropriate support to record and contribute views is provided

At the meeting:

Professionals should keep in mind that meetings can be intimidating; anxiety provoking and stressful for parents and carers and the format of the meeting should take this into account.

- Everyone should be welcomed and introduced
- The meeting agenda should be explained and outlined to everyone present at the start of the meeting
- Meetings should be run in a 'solution focused' format taking into account what is going well for the child and family alongside any needs or concerns that have been identified
- Language needs to be clear and simple and jargon avoided
- Parents or carers should be given the opportunity to speak and contribute during the meeting and to actively contribute to the planning process
- Time should be given to allow full discussion of the issues and ensure decisions are not rushed
- Decisions should be taken whilst parents or carers are at the meeting, or agreed with them before meeting takes place
- Arrangements for future communication to support the implementation and monitoring of the plan should be agreed

After the meeting:

- Parents or carers should be given a copy of their Child's Plan within an agreed and reasonable time scale
- The Child's Plan should be clear and understandable and avoid jargon
- Parents or carers should be offered the opportunity to feedback and discuss any area of the plan
- Time should be taken to explore any disagreements and agree a way forward
- Parents or carers feedback on the meeting process and content should be sought

Ongoing communication:

The Child's Planning meeting should provide a good opportunity for shared dialogue and discussion. It also provides the basis for maintaining clear channels of communication appropriate to meeting the agreed outcomes for the child.

A Lead Professional maybe identified and it is their role to maintain communication between all those involved to ensure that the Action Plan created from the meeting is implemented. A review meeting will take place where the plan can be evaluated and new actions created if required