



LOCATION: SCHOOL HANDBOOK, SECTION I, DOCUMENT 10

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS POLICY **Including Home/School Agreement Policy**

“This policy should be read as part of a collection of policies that together form the overall Safeguarding Policy and procedure for Abbey Court School.”

Date policy first adopted: March 1997
Date reviewed: September 2023
Reviewed By: Vicky Aspin
Date ratified by Governing Body: n/a
Date of next review: Autumn 2025

INTRODUCTION

The 1989 Children Act introduced the concept of ‘Parental Responsibility’ and stressed that partnership with those who have parental responsibility is essential. At Abbey Court, where an approach to education incorporates taking account of the pupil’s individual needs and their home environment, children will develop better if parents/carers and teachers work as partners. We greatly value our relationship with our parents and recognise that our pupils benefit when we work together.

This policy is intended to provide opportunities for encouraging and maintaining effective and productive communication with parents/carers. Abbey Court uses a variety of methods of communication. (It is important in all of the following to be conscious of parent’s/carer’s needs and accept the fact that some parents may not want or need as much contact with the school as others or may have their own preferred communication method).

THROUGH PARENTS IN PARTNERSHIP WE AIM TO

1.0

- Enable positive relationships between parents and teachers.
- Recognise the significant part that home and school play in a pupil’s development.
- Complement and consolidate each other’s work for the benefit of the pupil.
- Recognise the valuable contribution which parents/carers make in teaching their children.
- Support parents in becoming involved in children’s learning and the wider aspects of school life.
- Through the home/school contact, set expectations that the school and parents have of each other.
- Make parents feel welcome and valued.
- Work together with the best interests of the children in mind.

INFORMATION ABOUT PUPIL PROGRESS

- 2.0 We are committed to ensuring good communication and at Abbey Court we use a variety of methods to do this. We believe that parents should be informed about their child's progress with regard to curriculum health and well-being, and social development. We aim to provide accurate and well-presented information which is easy to read.
- 2.1 Parents are given the opportunity to attend the Annual Review on the anniversary of the child's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). (See Annual Review procedure).
- 2.2 A transitional review is convened when the pupil is 14. This is a major review with the parents, Social Services and Connexions invited. The focus is to consider the individual in terms of their future arrangements and any budget implications. (Also see Transition Procedure in the Abbey Court School handbook). At the end of each Key Stage, there is pupil involvement in the Annual Review when their achievements are presented and celebrated in a visual form.
- 2.3 As a standard part of the academic year, parents are invited into school for a parents' evening in terms 1 and 6. Parents' Evenings include individual appointments where the past and future development of the child is discussed. Staff ensure that these meetings are as welcoming as possible and that parents are made to feel comfortable. Teachers ensure that seating arrangements (including a waiting area) are prepared and suitable and that plenty of materials and pupil's work should be readily available to show parents during their appointment. (This includes individual programme plans, such as eating and toileting plans, termly Individual Education Plans and timetables).
- 3.0 The contact book or home/school diary is an essential means of communication between home and school. This travels daily with the child. The book is to help keep parents and teachers informed about daily progress of the child. They are the property of the school and should be retained by the school as a record when complete. Any confidential information should be sent home under separate sealed cover.
- 3.1 School teaching staff will make entries in home-school contact books a minimum of three times a week. All entries are signed and dated. Other school staff may make entries under the direction of the class teacher. No other personnel except the school nurse is permitted to use this school communication system. (Other personnel working with children, eg. Health Authority staff will utilise their own communication systems with parents). HLTAs or Teaching Assistants may use the books, but only under the direction of the Deputy Headteacher or Department Leader.
- 3.2 Staff should ensure that home-school contact books are read daily and any contentious, negative or controversial entries by any party should be brought to the immediate attention of the Senior Management Team (SMT) before a reply is written.
- 3.3 All staff should be aware of the school guidelines for the use of home/school contact books (appendix 1).
- 4.0 All parents/carers receive an annual report on their child's education and this is compiled prior to the pupil's Annual Review (see the Abbey Court Planning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy, ie. PARR Policy). Reports are as accurate and as positive as possible. The annual review provides an opportunity to review targets and to prepare new targets.

The focus of the annual review is to suggest ways of working together to the benefit of the child. Speech and Language Therapists and other visiting therapists maintain contact with parents by attending Annual Reviews, Parents' Evenings and making direct contact with parents as appropriate.

- 4.1 In terms 1, 3 and 5 parents receive a copy of a pupil's Individual Education Plan (IEP) which contains the pupil's targets covering two terms. At the end of terms 2, 4 and 6 the IEP is sent home with a written record showing progress on these targets.
- 5.0 Parents/carers may be invited into school to assist in a variety of activities – eg. Swimming, cross-curricular work, and educational visits. They may well have skills that can be utilised by the school.
- 5.1 If a parent is to assist in school they are required to gain a DBS check and will be classed as a volunteer (see "Volunteers policy no 6" in the school handbook), and necessary references will be sought.
- 6.0 A termly newsletter is compiled by the Headteacher and sent out to all parents/carers to keep them informed about social events, school activities and other pertinent information. This includes contributions from pupils and parents.
- 7.0 First impressions of a school are important and it is therefore essential that parents are introduced to Abbey Court School before a child is admitted (see Abbey Court School's Early Years entry policy No 28).
- 7.1 Wherever possible a home visit is arranged to allow the foundations of a partnership to be built and in order to facilitate an entry profile assessment of the pupil. Home visits may also be undertaken at other times.
- 7.2 We believe that parents should be given the opportunity to visit the school and see it at work. It is essential that whenever this happens there exists a positive relationship between home and school. Parents are made to feel welcome when they are in school (though for security and organisational reasons these visits must always be by prior arrangement).
- 8.0 Abbey Court School has no formal Parents Association but fundraising and social events are held during the year and parents are encouraged to be involved in these events.
- 8.1 When appropriate, we arrange workshops for parents on different areas of the curriculum. We recognise the importance of parent workshops, which provide essential background information and suggest ways in which parents can consolidate and extend learning at home. School staff undertake training to enable them to provide support on a range of topics e.g. Makaton. During these meetings, parents are encouraged to give their views on specific areas of the curriculum and on school processes.
- 8.2 Information about the school is regularly updated on the school website (www.abbeycourt.medway.sch.uk) and we provide parents with a colourful and informative school prospectus.
- 8.3 We organise regular displays and demonstrations on various curriculum areas on parents evenings and at other times when appropriate.

9.0 Use of the telephone is encouraged at Abbey Court School so that parents and teachers can keep each other informed. (Unlike mainstream schools unfortunately the opportunity rarely exists for parents to speak to the staff for five minutes at the end of the day). Staff are available to receive calls before or at the end of the school day, ie. before 9.00 am and after 3.30 pm.

10.0 We annually survey all parents by questionnaire about their views of the school and the education we are providing, we analyse the returns, share the results and act accordingly

We want parents to feel welcome when they are in school and share our aim “to foster a warm, friendly and supportive atmosphere where pupils and their families are valued”. We encourage the active involvement and support of pupils’ families.

HOME-SCHOOL AGREEMENT

NAME OF CHILD

At Abbey Court we

- welcome parents and offer you opportunities to become involved in school life.
- inform new parents about the school and school personnel prior to their son/daughter's entry (by letter/prospectus/meetings, etc.)
- provide your child with a broad, balanced curriculum which is tailored to meet their individual needs (including the National Curriculum and Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship).
- ensure that a high standard of teaching is offered across the curriculum.
- keep you regularly informed of your child's progress through reports and meetings.
- contact you promptly with any concerns we may have as and when they arise.
- provide home learning activities if requested.
- ensure your child's safety and well-being during the school day.
- encourage your child to do their best at all times.

Signed Date
(on behalf of the school)

As parents I/we

- ensure my/our child attends school regularly and advise the school of any different/special transport arrangements.
- support any home learning opportunities for my/our child in order to maximise progress.
- support the school's behaviour policy.
- inform the school promptly of anything which may affect my/our child's behaviour or performance at school (including changes in medical information).
- advise the school of reasons for all absences and keep my/our child at home if they are unwell; and will make arrangements for the collection of my/our child if s/he becomes ill during the school day.
- make every effort to attend Annual Review and Parents Evening meetings.
- Ensure my/our child is suitably dressed in school uniform and is equipped for the school day.

Signed (parents) Date

As a pupil, I will try to:

- Do my best at school.
- Be friendly, polite and respectful to staff, pupils and visitors.
- Look after the school and its equipment.

Signed Date

(The pupil agreement above may be attained independently or as a shared goal with families).

ABBAY COURT SCHOOL

Home School Agreement Consultation
Parents Contribution Sheet

Parents comments: