



# Introductory Meeting of Parent Forum

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October - 4.30pm - 5.30pm

## Overall Aim:

- The aim of the forum is to benefit all children by creating a vehicle for improving communication between school and parents through the exchange of views, opinions and information on relevant current topics and issues.

## What is a parent forum?

Dictionary definitions of a forum include:

- a public meeting or assembly for open discussion
- a public facility for open discussion
- a situation or meeting where people can talk about matters especially of public interest.

It is good practice in schools nationally to have a parent voice group. All parents who have a child attending a public school are automatically a member of the Parent Forum for that school. We therefore need to ensure meetings are accessible and representative of all our parents.

## Why should Whitby Heath Primary School have a forum?

Benefits for the parents, the school and primarily for the children of us working together in this way.

There are three main ways parents can get involved in supporting their children's learning:

### Learning at home:

Parents are the first and on-going educators of their own children and, as such, should receive information and support to help develop their child's learning at home, in the community and at school.

### Home-school partnership:

Schools must be open to the involvement of parents in the work they do and they should consider ways of providing information that helps parents engage with school and their children's education.

### Parental representation:

Ensuring that parents have the opportunity to express their views and have these taken into account on policy matters affecting the education of their children, to have their views represented to the school.

At Whitby Heath we want parents to be:

- Involved in their child's education and learning.
- Welcomed as an active participant in the life of the school.
- Encouraged to express their views on school education generally.

The benefits for the children are:

- It is easier for children to learn when they get encouragement from home.
- They will do better and achieve more when their parents are involved.
- Children get access to more activities in and out of school when there are more adults to help.
- Their concerns can be sorted out more quickly when their parents have a positive relationship with school staff.
- They are happy when their parents are enjoying events in the school.

The benefits for parents are:

- Their children do better when they are involved.
- They are better able to help and encourage their children.
- They have more information about their children's education.
- Parents can build their own confidence and skills.
- Where there is a positive relationship between parents and their child's school there are benefits all round.
- Parents get reassurance that their children are receiving a good education.

The benefits for the school are:

- Parents bring skills which complement teachers' skills and expertise.

- Parents contribute their time, so together parents and teachers are able to do more activities with pupils than teachers can do on their own.
- Pupils' attainment and behaviour improve.
- Parents have ideas about how the school can best support the children.
- Teachers have people with whom they can talk over ideas and get help when developing plans for the school.
- Parents can give advice and help around reaching other parents.

For a Forum to work well and have the impact we wish for our school, there needs to be clear methods of communication and a clarity about what constitute Forum issues...

#### **What do we not want?**

The Forum is not an opportunity to discuss individual circumstances, incidents or members of staff. These will continue to be resolved by individual parents arranging to see individual staff.

#### **What kind of issues would we discuss?**

Suggestions include: snacks policy, school photographs, ways to enhance communication between home and school, trips and residentials, after school clubs, new report format etc.

#### **How could it work (issues to consider):**

##### **❖ How can all parents raise issues to be discussed and be involved in discussions?**

The need for all parents to be able to contribute any issues they would like to be raised for discussion is paramount. There need to be avenues to do this anonymously.

Based on comments raised by parents, an agenda will be created before each meeting by the Chair (to be agreed), Link Governors (Helen Denny and Katrina Windsor) and the Head and distributed to all parents with an invitation to attend. If they are unable to attend, the agenda will make clear the opportunity to send in comments if there is an issue they particularly would like to discuss or if they would like their views on a particular agenda item to be shared.

We want to encourage discussion and the exchange of ideas, however the Forum is not a decision making body and decisions about the running of the school are the Head Teacher's and Governing Body's responsibility.

#### **Membership**

It is important that all parents have the chance to be involved in an open discussion. Meetings will be held once each term.

To enable all parents the opportunity to attend it may be viable to offer the meetings at varying times (e.g. the hour before pick up time, the hour after drop off, 5pm etc) and on different days.

We will need an element of stability to ensure meetings run smoothly. There will be a Chair and Secretary for each meeting who will be clear of the aims of the forum. There will also be Link Governors to ensure views raised are shared with the Governing Body.

#### **Feedback to all parents**

It is important that meetings are fed back to parents but in an easily accessible way. Minutes of each meeting are, therefore, to be circulated to all parents.

#### **Next steps**

Next meeting date to be circulated to all parents for this term (will be after half term).

No meeting to last more than 1 hour. After 1 hour the Chair will take any further items to place on the next agenda