



The Orchard Vision: *Inspiring Success*
Values: *Determination, Courage, Respect*

The Orchard Working with Parents and Carers Policy 2021

We want our school to be a **centre of excellence** for learning- for children and adults and our wider community. We want to create a school where:

- Children are safe, happy and healthy
- Children make outstanding progress and are confident, independent, enthusiastic and determined learners
- Staff are inspirational practitioners, able and enthusiastic to learn from and develop others
- Everyone shows respect and consideration for other people

We want to grow through supporting and developing other schools and continuing to learn ourselves.

We want our school to be a **rich, exciting and fun** environment which is underpinned by these important characteristics:

Learning:

- **Creating and thinking critically:** Problem solving – using and applying skills
- **Confidence** to take risks and to be independent
- **Collaboration**
- **Responsibility, Resilience, Resourcefulness, Reflection, Reasoning (5Rs)**
- **Exploring, Playing**
- **Active learning**
- **Tolerance and respect** for others, their ideas and opinions
- **Enthusiasm** for learning

Teaching:

- **Tenacious-** wanting the best for every child , every lesson, every day
- **Engaging and Inspiring**
- **Analytical and reflective assessment:** rigorous and influences every lesson
- **Challenging-** underpinned by high expectations
- **High Quality Interaction-** questioning and feedback which guides next steps, praises effort
- **Excellent relationships** underpinned by care and respect
- **Rich Language and learning environment**

Policy Aims

In working with parents/carers we aim to:

1. Develop a shared understanding of our school aims, values, policies and practices.

2. Encourage parent/carer's participation in their children's learning at school and at home.
3. Create a relationship based on shared responsibility and mutual respect.

There are many aspects to our work with parents/carers which contribute to these aims. These include:-

Informing parents and carers

- about the day to day organisation of the school
- about the curriculum
- about special events
- about their children's learning

Encouraging participation

- in the classroom and in curriculum activities
- in developing school policies
- in special events
- through the PTA

Responding to concerns

- meeting with parents/carers if there is any concern (expressed by parent/carer or teacher) about the child's progress or well-being in school
- making the complaints procedure clear to parents/carers

We provide information to parents/carers about the school through:-

Weekly information and notices

Information and requests to parents/carers are often posted on classroom doors or the cloakroom window. Such notices might include:- sound for the week, helpers lists or 'remember school is closed for training tomorrow!'. The 'weekly focus' for each class is on the curriculum section of the website.

A Monthly Headteacher newsletter

This is sent to parents/carers on or near the first Tuesday of each month. Spare copies are kept in the main entrance area. It is also published on our school website:

www.orchard.surrey.sch.uk and e-mailed to all parents/carers who provide us with an e-mail address.

Homework policy

Our homework policy is included in the induction pack and is on our school website. This explains the daily, weekly and ongoing homework for each year group.

Termly homework letters

Class teachers write a letter to parents/carers describing main topics and activities to support the children at home. These are also available on the school website.

The Prospectus

All parents/carers who visit the school prior to their child starting are encouraged to read our school prospectus which describes the curriculum, routines, staffing arrangements and organisational details. Parents/carers may receive a paper copy on request or it is available through our website.

Class talks to parents/carers

Each September teachers prepare a talk for the parents/carers of their classes which explains the following:-

- timetable
- curriculum subjects covered and content
- expectations for the end of the year
- important routines
- homework
- reading

New Parents/Carers Induction talk

Each June or July the Headteacher and Foundation Stage Team Leader talk to parents/carers of the children who will start in September or during the next academic year, providing information on aims, values, reading, homework, uniform and the curriculum in general.

New parent/carer meet the teacher opportunity

At the beginning of the September term the teacher and Learning Support Assistant meet with every new Reception parent/carer. A crèche is provided for the children and this is an opportunity to meet the staff again and see the classroom environment. Most importantly it is an opportunity to ask questions and to exchange information about your child.

School Policies

If any parent/carer wishes to read a school policy, these are available on request from the school office or via the school website.

Induction Information

In the prospectus and induction pack, we make clear how much we value parent/carer support and participation. The importance of the relationship between school and home is explicit within our:-

- School aims and values
- Prospectus
- Induction pack
- Home-school Partnership Agreement
- Induction meeting
- Staff Handbook
- Key policies – e.g. Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Equal Opportunities

We inform parents/carers about their children's learning through:-

Sharing Assessment information

- Twice weekly feedback in reading diaries
- Maths race feedback
- Half termly feedback about spellings known, reading of high frequency words, knowledge of phonics
- Termly parent evening
- Availability for appointments at other times as discussed and agreed with class teacher

Sharing targets

Each term we share the targets for each child with their parents/carers so that children can be given support at home to achieve their 'next steps'.

Parent/Carers Consultation Evenings

In the Autumn and Spring term parents/carers are given a ten minute appointment to see the class teacher about their child's attitude, attainment and progress. Teachers endeavour to provide the appointment within a half an hour time period which the parent/carer has selected. Any parents/carers who do not make an appointment will be contacted by the class teacher to arrange a convenient time. Any parent/carer who does not attend a pre-arranged appointment will be contacted to make another appointment. In the summer term we organise an open evening where all the child's work is on display for parents/carers and children to look at. Before this each parent/carer will have received a written individual report. Refreshments are available during these evenings. The Head Teacher is available to see parents/carers and the Governors of the school also attend and are available for any questions/concerns or comments about the school in general.

All information is sent to separated parents who have legal parental rights. We ask parents to inform the Headteacher so that information may be posted.

Open door

If you have any concern at any time, do not wait until parents' evenings. Parents and carers are welcome to ask to see the teacher or Headteacher and an appointment will be made as soon as possible.

Reports

A report is sent to parents/carers in July each year which describes the attitudes, personal and social skills, progress and attainment for their child. This is sent out shortly before the summer open evening so that if there are any queries or concerns an individual appointment can be made. Teacher Assessment Results are provided for year 2 children, Reception parents/carers are informed about their child's end of Reception Year National Assessments on the 'Foundation Stage Profile'. Attendance and punctuality data are also included.

Encouraging Participation

Ideas to support your child's learning at home

Your child's teacher is happy to give ideas if you want advice. As a school we use Microsoft Teams to share ideas linking to children's learning, children have access to Mathletics, Spelling Shed, E Books and Espresso.

Teddy Bears Picnic

The PTA organise a summer picnic for all families at The Orchard but particularly aimed at families who are due to start school. This is an informal relaxed event giving parents/carers the opportunity to get to know each other and experience the school environment.

Coffee mornings/afternoons

During the induction week for new reception children the PTA organise coffee mornings so that parents/carers can get to know one another and ask questions concerning school. In addition, informal coffee afternoons are organised by our Home School Link Worker during the year. Coffee mornings/afternoons are also organised by our SENCO and SEN Governor for parents of children with complex needs.

Home-School Agreement

This is given to all new parents/carers as their children start school. It indicates the ways that parents/carers and the school can support each other to provide the best for the child. Parents/carers keep the agreement and return a slip to the office to say that they have received it. There is a space to write any comments or queries.

Parent/carer support

During each year, all parents/carers are invited to attend sessions on how to help your child at home which include topics such as:-

- reading – individual and group
- writing
- maths
- ICT – computers and other technology
- managing behaviour

On-going home-school communication

When children are in the Reception Year there is a home-school “contact diary” communication book for parents/carers and staff to write in. Parents/carers are asked to leave the book in the box outside the classroom if there is a message so a Learning Support Assistant/Teacher can quickly respond to messages. Working parents/carers, whose children attend breakfast club, should place the contact diaries in the box provided for them.

Reading record diaries are used to communicate how each child is progressing with reading and parents/carers are also able to put notes in their own child’s book bag if they have a concern or a question.

Where a child has a particular need, individual communication books are used, for example – to convey new vocabulary and concepts to a parent/carer of a profoundly deaf child or child with complex needs,

- provide a record of behaviour
- support enhanced/social needs

If your child has an additional educational need or a disability, please refer to our SEND school offer on the website or request a paper copy of this booklet.

The school website provides ongoing information for parents/carers.

The school ParentMail system is used to convey emergency messages e.g. regarding school closure to all parents/carers as quickly as possible via e-mail and text.

Helping in school

Parents/carers who help in school agree times and what they will be doing with the class teacher. All parent/carer helpers must have a DBS check and have attended Safeguarding Training run by the Headteacher (several sessions are held to ensure everyone’s attendance). Please look on our website or ask the office staff to help you organise this. Once the check has been completed liaise with the class teacher about which times you might be available. When helping, parents/carers sign in the school visitors book and wear a “Parent Helper” ID to show that they are authorised to be in the school building.

School trips

We require a ratio of 1 adult to 4 children for reception class trips or 1:5- 1:6 for year 1 and year 2. Again, parent/carer helpers must have a DBS check and safeguarding training. Teachers will brief parent helpers before the trip – explaining the timetable and expectations for the trip. Teachers have overall responsibility for the class throughout a trip. We pay for parent/carer helpers entrance and travel fees.

Questionnaires

Each year we ask for parent/carers' ideas and opinions on different aspects of school policy and development.

In the past three years we have included the following areas:-

- after school provision
- transition (from one year group to another)
- grounds development
- safe travel to school
- Home-School Agreement
- OFSTED questionnaire

Governors and staff analyse the responses and then plan the actions which forms part of our School Improvement Development Plan.

Special Events

During the year we organise special school events which encourage the involvement of parents/carers:-

- Team days (1 per term)
- International Day
- Donation of harvest gifts
- Christmas assemblies
- Leavers assembly
- Ground force days
- Sports day including a lunchtime picnic
- Class trips
- Curriculum weeks – sports/music/art/maths

PTA Events

Every parent/carer is automatically a member of the PTA and is welcome to attend meetings and join in events. There is a mixture of fundraising and social events through the year including:-

- Christmas Fair
- Cake sales – 'Bonfire', 'Valentines', 'Easter'
- End of term discos
- Easter egg hunt
- Race Night
- Quiz night
- Summer Fair
- Molesey Carnival

Meetings are held once each month at The Orchard.

Security

If an adult comes to collect a child from school who is not expected and not the child's usual carer, the teacher will check with the Headteacher and office staff before allowing him/her home. We ask parents/carers to inform us of any change in arrangements and, if unsure will keep the child at school until a parent has confirmed the identity of the person collecting.

Children are dismissed by their teachers one at a time from the classroom or main entrance door. The teacher only allows children to go once the authorised adult is seen.

Responding to Concerns

Teachers dismiss children at the end of the day and so are able to pass on information when necessary. Sometimes teachers may need to inform parents of a fall in the playground, a particular achievement or an incident involving inappropriate behaviour.

Parents/carers are encouraged to speak to teachers if they have a specific concern about their child. Parents/carers should ask to make an appointment to discuss matters with the class teacher at a mutually convenient time – often at the end of the teaching day. Similarly, teachers will consult parents/carers if they have any concerns about a child.

It is always helpful, when there is a concern or query, to meet with the class teacher as soon as possible. We are committed to solving problems quickly and this can prevent minor issues or misunderstandings becoming major problems.

The teacher may ask you to raise your concern with the Headteacher if it is a whole school matter or if she feels a parent requires further information or reassurance.

If parents/carers feel that a problem has not been resolved by either the class teacher or Headteacher, the next step is to write to the Chair of Governors, c/o the school, marking a letter 'PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL'.

We always listen to concerns and do our best to answer queries or investigate incidents as thoroughly as possible. Staff are very courteous, welcoming and committed to working with parents/carers in the best interests of the children. We ask parents/carers to show the same courtesy in raising concerns and enjoy a relationship with parents/carers based on this mutual understanding and respect (see copy of Home School Agreement).

Rare incidents of parent/carer aggression or rudeness towards a member of staff are reported to the Headteacher who will clarify our 'Working with Parents' policy and expectations with the parent concerned. The police are called if there is any instance of violent behaviour or recurring aggression from anyone on the school site.

This policy is a working document, reflecting current practice. It will be amended as our practice is committed to developing effective relationships with parents and will review this policy annually.

Latest Review: September 2017