

Together from the start



*Nursery School & Children's Centre*

## Parental Involvement Policy



Date written: June 2008

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### Introduction

It is our belief that children have the maximum chance of success if families and practitioners at the Centre work closely together.

We believe that all parents/carers are important and make sure that they are welcomed and valued.

Throughout the policy the term parents is used to describe mothers, fathers and other primary carers.

### Benefits of parental involvement

Parents and practitioners have a lot to learn from each other and when practitioners work closely with parents we can ensure that each child grows and develops into a healthy, strong individual with positive attitudes to learning. Through developing good relationships with parents we will nurture the children and provide worry-free quality care/education.

### Aims of parental involvement

- To work with parents as equal partners
- To affirm the crucial role of parents as children's first educators
- To value parent's knowledge and experience of their child
- To promote parent's awareness of children's early learning and development
- To involve parents in the life of Highfield Children's Centre and their child's well-being and education
- To provide opportunities and support for parent's lifelong learning through their own continuing education and personal development

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### Objectives

In order to promote a positive partnership and successful relationship between your child, you, your family and the Centre staff we aim to provide the following:

**A welcoming setting** – families are welcomed into the Centre where we provide an ‘open-door’ policy. When a child first attends the Centre parents are encouraged to stay with their child for as long as they need. We believe that this is important in allowing parents to feel secure when leaving their child in our care as well as allowing the child to become confident with the support of their family alongside the practitioners. This is also a valuable time for sharing important information about the child with the practitioners so that their needs can be met appropriately. In some Centre groups parents are welcomed to stay to be a part of their child’s learning and development. Families can also be supported through our community and family outreach team who can offer advice and assistance.

**Communications** – we encourage effective communication with a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between parents and practitioners; in this way we can build on what a child can do from experiences that take place at home. We believe it is important for partnerships to be supported through regular reviews of children and offer opportunities for parents to participate in many aspects of Centre life to ensure the children are making progress. Parents have access to our policies and procedures, which are usually communicated informally but are available in written format on request. In nursery, each child has a key person; the key person has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for and building relationships with their parents to make sure that every child is

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being cared for appropriately for each family. The key person is also responsible for creating careful records of the child's development and progress which are shared with the parents, the child and other professionals as necessary.

**Parents as educators/learners** – we recognise that parents are partners in all aspects of their child's development and look for ways in which to support this role. We encourage family involvement in children's learning, such as welcoming parents to take part in activities led by the Centre and to become involved in workshops which allow parents to develop their understanding of early learning and development. This is seen as important for ensuring children have opportunities for learning skills, knowledge and attitudes in all aspects of their life which will support them in their lifelong learning journey. We are keen to involve parents in the daily routine of the Centre and welcome help on a voluntary basis in any aspect of Centre life.

**Transition** - parents are invited to visit the Centre with their child where they can meet our practitioners, find out what their child will do during a typical session, see the resources we have available to support their learning and have any questions answered. The outreach team are available to support families with transitions if required. This is repeated as your child grows and develops with us, moving into other services within the Centre; we believe this is important for a smooth transition for children as they progress through services offered at the Centre. In our Caterpillar Unit (for children aged 0-24 months) close parental liaison is vital in order to ensure individual children's routines reflect those of the family home. The key person in all nursery units will ensure that there is continuity between home and nursery, such as maintaining sleep patterns and toilet training. As children become ready to

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begin Reception class in primary school, parents will be supported by the relevant staff in the transition processes.

**Strengthening parents' voices** – through effective two-way communication we can ensure that parents' views are shared. We regularly ask parents for their views on the services which the Centre provides. We believe that it is important that these comments are used in order to further improve the services which we offer.

**Special needs/inclusion** – we work positively to include all families and their children without judgement as we value and respect that there are many different types of families that use our Centre. For a child who has needs that are additional to and/or different from other children we aim to provide families with sensitive and practical support. We ensure that we listen to families and take part in a sensitive exchange of information, including other professionals if necessary, including whether there is any special services and equipment required.

### Areas for development

The Centre always strives to improve the services that are offered for parents and their children.

In the near future we aim to provide:

- Curriculum workshops for parents who wish to receive more information about ways to support their child at home
- A group for fathers/male carers to become more involved with their children
- A project which will support parents to engage further with their children in order to develop self-esteem and well-being

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### Review

This policy will be reviewed in June 2009

### Reference to other documents

Other relevant policies include:

Admission policy

Equality and diversity policy

### Management of parental involvement

The named Parental Involvement Co-ordinator (PICO) is Gail Murphy (Deputy Head of Centre).

Parental involvement is also promoted by Chris Morris (Community and Family Outreach Manager / Assistant Head of Centre).

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