**ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) FIRST SCHOOL**

**PARENT & CARERS COUNCIL POLICY**

“For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.”

1 Timothy 4:4-5

**Summary**

* The Parent Council is a channel of communication for communication between home and school and vice versa
* The Parent Council represents the whole parent/carer body of the school
* Meetings will vary in frequency/length depending on need, as perceived by the parent/carer representatives in the group
* Any parent/carer is welcome to attend Parent Council Meetings as an observer

**Rationale**

Archbishop Runcie First School is a Church of England First School. In harmony with the Christian ethos of our school our policy for the promotion of equality is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ. We believe each one of us is unique and created in the image and likeness of God. This uniqueness is to be valued and promoted by all of us.

This policy will help promote strong, positive, open relationships in our school. High quality education and parental involvement essential for opening up opportunities and increasing the life chances of our children.

“*Parental engagement is consistently associated with pupils’ success at school”,* EEF.

Under the Parental Involvement Act 2006, our school encourages and supports parents to become involved in the life of our school. The Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 changed the arrangements for parental representation in all schools. All parents are automatically members of the Parent Forum for their school and they have a right to establish a Parent Council/Forum to represent them.

**Defining parent groups**

* **Parent Forum**

The membership of the Parent Forum is made up of **all parents** who have a child at an education authority school. Membership of the Parent Forum allows parents to have a say in the local arrangements to enable their collective view to be represented on matters such as the quality and standards of education at the school and other matters of interest to parents. One of the ways parents in the Parent Forum will be able to express their views will be through the Parent Council.

* **Parent Council**

A Parent Council advises the head teacher and governors. As the name suggests, they are made up of parents, but members may be selected from a parent forum. The Parent Council will have links with the PTA and the two bodies will both work to improve the school.

For best results, the parent council membership needs to reflect the entire school community and although this can be difficult to achieve, having representatives from every class or year group helps. Children of varying ages need support in different ways. A well-run forum can drastically improve home-school relationships by making the Head Teacher accountable to parents in a very real sense

* **Parent, Teacher & Friends Association (PTFA)**

The Parent Teacher & Friends Association serves a different purpose. The PTFA is a group of parents and staff selected by members of the parents and school to represent all the parents of children at the school. The type of things a Parent Teacher & Friends Association could get involved in include:

* Supporting the work of the school
* Gathering and representing parents' views to the Head Teacher
* Promoting contact between the school, parents, pupils and the local community
* Fundraising

**About the Parent Council01 January 2017**

The Parent Council is a group of parents selected by members of the parent forum, to represent all the parents of children at the school. The Parent Councils has an important role to play in ensuring that children's education is enriched by parents' valuable life experience, individual personal skills and unique knowledge of their own child.

**What is the role of the Parent Council?**

The Parent Council help parents and carers to become more actively and effectively involved in their children's learning. It is recognised that parents play an important role both in their own child's learning and in the life of our school. Our Parent Council is flexible and designed to make sure that it represents our school and its interests effectively. Parent members should decide what is most important for the Parent Council to work on. Meetings will vary in frequency/length depending on need, as perceived by the parent/carer representatives in the group

**Parent Councils can:**

* provide a voice for parents, in schools and in their local authority, on issues that are important to them and their children
* help the school to understand how to most effectively involve parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school
* support the school and Headteacher in developing strong home/school partnerships
* support the school in its development and improvement, and in understanding and making links with the wider community
* capture the unique and varied skills, interests, knowledge and experience that parents can offer

**Who can be a member of the Parent Council?**

Members of the Parent Council must be parents/carers of children who attend the school and the chairperson must have a child in the school. However, the Parent Council can decide to co-opt other members including school staff or Governors who have knowledge and skills to help them. Members of the Parent Council will bring knowledge from their own experience and personal views. However, as parent representatives, they must also consider how they can ensure that the Parent Council presents a co-ordinated, collective voice through consultation with other members of the Parent Forum. Any parent/carer is welcome to attend Parent Council Meetings as an observer but is requested to let the members know that they will be in attendance in advance of the meeting.

Ideally we would like the Parent Council to have a total of 10 members (including the Headteacher and a Governor Representative). We will allow self-nominations until we are at full capacity and will vote to select candidates if there are more self-nominations that there are vacancies.

**Working in partnership with the school**

The Parent Council helps to create an environment where all parents know that their views matter, and where they feel confident and comfortable putting them forward. It is important that the Parent Council and the school have a joint commitment to seek parents' views and ideas and to ensure that these make a real difference to the work and life of the school. Sharing parents' views with the Headteacher and staff, and making sure those views are listened to and taken into account, will be possible if the Parent Council and the school have a positive working partnership.

**Gathering and sharing parents' views**

Each school community is unique and there is a wide range of educational issues on which parents may wish to contribute their views. Areas in which parent views could be sought may include:

* How the school communicates with parents
* Supporting delivery of the curriculum by tapping into parents' skills, experiences and expertise
* The processes involved in preparing children for key transitions, such as from Nursery to Reception, Y4 to Y5 (Middle School)
* Formulating the school's priorities for improvement (the development of the School Improvement Plan)
* Revising existing school policies and introducing new policies
* Any significant changes (for example, moving to a new school building)
* Further developing the school website

The Parent Council has open and transparent arrangements in place for gathering the views and opinions

on matters that appear to them to be of interest, or concern, to members of the parent forum. A variety of methods will be used to gather opinions, but not to judge the school. In our school opinions are gathered via email but we will also consider alternative avenues of communication.

**Conclusion**

At Archbishop Runcie Church of England Voluntary Aided First School we aim to ensure that everyone has a voice which can be heard, in order to promote a cohesive community that works for the collective good of the children at our school.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if deemed necessary.

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| **Date** | **Reviewed / updated** | **Staff involved**  | **Review Date** |
| Jan 2019 | DRAFT Policy | KM | Parent Council Meeting 4.2.19 |
| 4.2.19 | Updated  | Parent Council | Feb 2020 |
| 4.3.19 | Updated & agreed | Parent Council  | Feb 2020 |
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