

Case Study: A Parents' Handbook (Werneth School, Stockport)

Werneth School is a specialist school for Performing and Visual Arts. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. A central aim of the school is to work in partnership with parents and guardians to achieve the very best for students.

What are we doing and why?

Although we have always sought strong home-school partnerships, we knew that we had to improve our communication with parents and carers.

To help develop relationships further, we consulted staff, a wide spectrum of parents, and our students to seek advice on how to guide parents through their role in modern schooling.

Although our parents received a lot of information on our website and through our prospectus, they told us that they wanted something a bit different.

Parents were especially keen to know more about how they could support their children, how best to communicate with the school and where to turn to for help. We decided to produce a Parents' Handbook.



In order to make our Handbook as accessible as possible to parents, we produced it in magazine style and made it available on our website www.wernethschool.com.

The Parents' Handbook is available on a Parents' Zone section of the site, which also includes:

- A revision guide for parents
- The School Handbook
- Our parent-partnership policy
- Support for parents
- The Stockport home-learning booklet



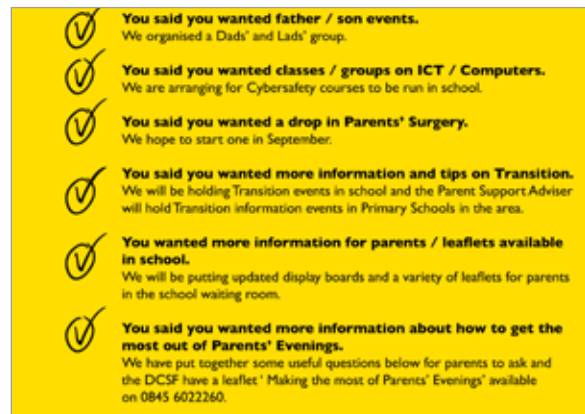
Some sections of the Parents' Handbook also feature in our School Handbook. For example:

- The curriculum, so that parents are clear about what is being taught
- Our specialist school status, and what opportunities this provides for their children
- What our reports look like, so that parents can understand them
- Who's who at the school, so parents know who to turn to

However, our Parents' Handbook also contains a great deal of additional information. For example there are sections on:

- Useful websites aimed at parents
- How parents can access family learning and other courses
- Where to go to for advice on debt
- How to help children to support their community
- Tips on securing good attendance
- How to provide a healthy lunchbox
- What family services are available in the community
- How to survive your teenager!
- A "We asked – You said – We did" section pinpointing improvements
- Questions to ask at parents evenings

You said – we did!



- ✓ **You said you wanted father / son events.**
We organised a Dads' and Lads' group.
- ✓ **You said you wanted classes / groups on ICT / Computers.**
We are arranging for Cybersafety courses to be run in school.
- ✓ **You said you wanted a drop in Parents' Surgery.**
We hope to start one in September.
- ✓ **You said you wanted more information and tips on Transition.**
We will be holding Transition events in school and the Parent Support Adviser will hold Transition information events in Primary Schools in the area.
- ✓ **You wanted more information for parents / leaflets available in school.**
We will be putting updated display boards and a variety of leaflets for parents in the school waiting room.
- ✓ **You said you wanted more information about how to get the most out of Parents' Evenings.**
We have put together some useful questions below for parents to ask and the DCSF have a leaflet 'Making the most of Parents' Evenings' available on 0845 6022260.

What has happened as a result?

- We have had a very favourable reaction from parents
- Parents have made useful suggestions for our next Parents Handbook
- We have expanded the information we provide to parents
- We are better at feeding back to parents on what they said and what we did
- Students say their parents are better at supporting them emotionally
- Attendance has improved



TOP TIP



Tailor your handbook to the needs of your particular parents