**ALLOWAY EARLY YEARS CENTRE**

**PARTICIPATION POLICY**

RATIONALE

*‘It is the right of children and young people to express their views in relations to matters that affect them and to have those views taken into account.’*

(UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

*“I have the right to be listened to and taken seriously”. (Article 12)*

(UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

*“As pedagogical leaders, it is essential that we develop positive relationships with parents and carers and work closely alongside them and value their contribution”.*

(Realising the Ambition, 2020)

AIM

* To ensure the involvement of all children and families who use the provision and for staff to be committed to the meaningful engagement of children and their families. All children and families benefit from being involved in decision-making and also the organisation that involves children and families will benefit from their involvement.

OBJECTIVES

* To give stakeholders (parents/carers, partners and children) the opportunity to be involved in the day-to-day operation of Alloway Early Years Centre and the on-going development of policy and practice.
* To ensure staff think carefully about their approach to planning and delivery of consultation activities, ensure involvement of all stakeholders as appropriate.

IMPLEMENTATION

Informing Parents/Carers

We use a number of mechanisms for informing our parent/carers about their children’s learning and our service, for example:

* Parent Council (whole school)
* Family noticeboard
* EYC handbook
* Annual standards and quality report
* School/EYC improvement plan
* Termly newsletters to parents/carers and other general letters
* School website
* Social media
* Early years profiles are shared with parent/carers and they are encouraged to add a comment on the profile
* Regular stay and play sessions.
* Parent/carer workshops showcasing aspects of the Early Years Learning
* Daily feedback from key workers
* Information sessions prior to children starting Early Years
* Annual reports provided to parents/carers of children.
* Formal feedback will be obtained by questionnaires.
* You Said / We Did board.

Consulting with/involving parents/carers

We consult with our parents/carer on a wide range of development including:

* The content of the school/early year’s improvement plans
* Standards and quality reports
* Parent/carer questionnaires
* Children have a termly Personal Learning Plan (Care Plan) which parents/carers and the child are invited to meet with staff and contribute to
* Early Years staff encourage parental/carer involvement in their child’s learning by providing sessions such as Bookbug and PEEP.
* Our aim is to provide more focus groups to enable consultation with parents/carers.

**We also work with, and actively encourage the involvement of, partner agencies including:-**

* Education psychologist
* Dental health professionals
* Health professional including Speech and Language and Occupation therapists
* Early Years Workers
* Early Years Development Officer
* SAC library service
* Voluntary agencies
* Social work

Consult with/involving our children

We consult with our children on a daily basis, asking for children’s opinions and preferences. We also use the following methods:-

* Talking and thinking planning usually in a floor book, more child led learning in the setting
* Pupil consultation exercise, both formal and informal
* Developing children’s independence in early years experiences
* Developing children’s involvement in the development of outdoors
* Children are consulted weekly on the type of snack they would like to eat in the week ahead

Early years providers have a crucial role to play in developing a listening culture which nurtures day to day listening and provides opportunities for children to make decisions about matters that directly affect them.

Listening to children is an integral part of understanding what they are feeling and what it is they need from their early years experience.

There are many ways children can participate:

* Engaging with children and asking them their opinion on things that affect them will empower them
* Listen to their views
* Make decisions with them rather than for them
* Provide children with a choice
* Discuss choices to help influence not change their decisions
* Staff creating positive attitudes about participation in the setting support and encourage children to take responsibility
* Provide appropriate resources and involve children in the planning of resources
* Children have ideas therefore encourage child initiated play, not adult led

Monitoring and Evaluation

We recognise the importance of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our engagement processes and will do this by drawing on various sources of evidence, including (for example):

* Reviewing the number of consultation/involvement activities undertaken and the groups of parent/carers who were invited to participate
* Collating information on the nature and level of engagement activities with children
* Feedback from the Parent Forum in the nature and level of engagement activities with parents.

Good Practice Checklist

This checklist is designed to help us think carefully about our approach to planning, delivering and evaluating consultation activities:

1. What is the purpose of the consultation?
2. Who is responsible for leading the consultation?
3. Do we need to establish a small team who will be involved in planning, delivering and evaluating the consultation?
4. Have we established a timescale for our consultation work?
5. Which groups of stakeholders do we want to consult with?
6. Are we planning to consult with children?
7. What kind of activity do we want to undertake? (e.g. questionnaire, public meeting, a number of face-to-face interviews with a small number of people, focus consultation group meetings etc.)
8. Do we have all the expertise ‘in-house’ to undertake all aspects of our consultation?
9. How will we present our findings on the consultation?

Conclusion

We aspire to increase and develop the partnership involvement we have with all our stakeholders with a view to improving the quality of our service on an ongoing basis and ensuring our parent/carers have every opportunity to be involved in their child’s early years’ experience.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required in light of experience or any new national/local initiatives.

Updated Sept 25 – L. Miller