

HOW THE SCHOOL WORKS WITH FAMILIES BEFORE CHILDREN ARE SCHOOL AGE

School X believes that outreach to families is the first major step toward improving engagement in school.

Playgroup - Before the child is within six months of starting nursery, the school hosts a playgroup. This is an opportunity for the children to be slowly introduced to the educational environment but in a positive way, as they feel like they can have fun. They can meet and socialize with other children of similar age. Not only does it help the children transition, but it also allows the parents to engage in the educational environment, ie learning educational songs, and it also allows the parents to socialize with other parents.

Outreach - As School X is within a lower socio-economic area, a trend shows that the lower the status the lower the engagement/attendance. Some families find it hard to trust a school due to several things, such as a bad experience of education themselves. However, the teacher being welcomed into the home of a family to meet the prospective pupil is a step of trust. So on the first day of school, the child will see the teacher as a close person as opposed to a stranger.

Open days - Open days are a great way of allowing a child to come in and out of the school environment, allowing them to feel in control rather than being put straight into the school where a routine is straight set. It gives the parents a chance to meet the teacher in the school environment and ask them any questions they may have regarding the school itself.

Transition Meetings - Transition meetings can be arranged after the open days and stay-and-play sessions have been completed. This is an opportunity for the parents and families to meet the teacher, and/or headteacher and air any further concerns they may have. These meetings are mainly beneficial to those children who have ALN (Additional Learning Needs), as between both the parents and anybody necessary a plan can be put in place.

HOW THE SCHOOL WORKS TO EMBED ITSELF IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

School X is at the heart of its community, within an area of a housing estate the community provisions are limited. The school tries its hardest to make community ties where possible. They have positive relationships with;

- Police - the police come in and talk on age-appropriate issues, ie road safety, keeping safe when out with friends
- Health - the local gp allows a community nurse to come into the school once a week to allow children or parents to discuss and non complicated health problems
- Local church - The local church and priest attend specific Christian events at the school. They also allow the school choir to perform at their church.
- Local Residents association. - Allowing the school fields to be used for a community fun day!

The school is then also used as a polling station, and the playing fields surrounding the school are used by local rugby, football clubs to train on. This gives the school a great partnership to encourage their pupils into extracurricular sports.



HOW THE SCHOOL HELPS FAMILIES OUT OF HOURS

School X can provide wrap-around care, which means the school offers both a breakfast club and an after-school club.

The breakfast club starts at 07:20 before school in their school hall, offering children a place to play and a space to keep warm and have breakfast. In line with the Welsh government's streamlining of free school meals, this service is also free thanks to the funding from the Welsh government. - This service helps those children who may go without breakfast due to family personal issues.

The after-school club is provided by a commercial provider, which offers after-school care from 15:10-18:00 in the schools main hall. Although unlike the breakfast club, this is not free. It gives parents who work long or unsocial hours an opportunity to not rush to pick their children up. The commercial provider offers care not only routinely but with emergencies and can work with rotas also.

The school is also part of a foodbank, although it encourages the local area to drop off any food that is still on date. It then collects this and delivers it to the local food bank. A foodbank initiative is a great way for the parents to feel like they are giving back to their community in an indirect manner. So instead of them having to personally hand out food, the foodbank will donate to those that need it most.

HOW THE SCHOOL WORKS WITH FAMILIES OF CURRENT PUPILS

To keep pupils engaged in school life, we must encourage their families. There are plenty of different ways we can do this, ie

- **Person-centred** - Where the families feel they are listened to, and their opinions are valued. A great example of this is a **parent governor or parent counsellor**, allowing parents to voice their opinions and concerns and give ideas. School X are a great believer in Parent council, they have had many good ideas and opinions given to them via this channel.
- **Strengths-based** - This is where families' strengths are built upon. Within School X children have the opportunity to take books home with them and complete a reading diary at home. This is optional to fill in the reading diary however encouraging the reading of books at home can be a great way to give the parents the feeling that they are a part of their child's education.
- **Trauma-informed** - This is a newer part of School X's environment, this is acknowledging that trauma is a part of normal life. - Something that the school have done is allowed a therapy dog into the school, this is for the children who have lost relatives, have had a traumatic experience in their lives or struggling with confidence or mental health issues.

The school communicates with parents via a platform called myEd, it replaced the system of sending letters home. It means important dates and information will be sent home to parents via the app. Families can also track their child progress behaviour and achievements through Class Charts which is accessible for parents via the internet or an app.