

# **Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)**

## **Parent Carer Forums (PCF) information pack for setting up a Participation Group in a primary school**

This information is to support the development of resources for the initial set up of a Participation Group in a primary school for the PINS project.

# Terms of Reference (ToR) for School Participation Group

## Membership:

- The Participation Group is open to all parent carers of children at the school with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). SEND is defined as any child that has a learning difficulty or disability that make it harder for a child to learn compared to children of the same age. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are likely to need extra or different help from that given to other children their age. This help is known as special educational provision.

Children are not considered to have SEN just because their first language is not English, although some children for whom English is not a second language may also have learning difficulties.

- The Participation Group will be run by Family Voice Surrey and will be supported and facilitated by the school.
- Membership is voluntary.
- All members of the Participation Group will have an interest/involvement in the school (parent carers).

## Purpose of the Parent Carer Participation Group:

- The Participation Group aims to work in coproduction with the school to share information, decrease isolation and develop or strengthen positive relationships between parent carers and the school. The group aims to identify and develop in coproduction specific areas of school practice.
- The Participation Group believes that by working co-operatively with the school, parent carers can have their voices heard and contribute to improvements in the services delivered for children and young people with SEND.

## The Meeting requirements:

- Venues and meeting times will be arranged between the parent carers and the school.
- Meetings will be during term time. However, consideration should be given to engaging parent carers who are unable to attend during school hours.
- Parent carers should be able to contribute to agendas.
- PCF to share the proposed agenda with the school for the upcoming meeting, ideally the week before the meeting.
- The school should be able to contribute to the agenda.
- Meeting time and duration TBC in agreement with membership of the group and school.
- The minimum frequencies of meetings will be one a term.
- Themes from the meeting will be recorded and shared. These will provide a broad outline of issues discussed; reference to individual views and perspectives will not be recorded. Notes will be completed and circulated within 2 weeks of the meeting.
- The notes or themes will be shared with the school for discussion and potential action.

## Participation Group Values

### – to be agreed at first meeting

- **Respect** – we all have different views and experiences as parent carers.
- **Listening** – everyone can make valuable contributions to the group and should feel heard and valued.
- **Confidentiality** – don't share what other parent carers have discussed in the group.
- **Productivity** – if you have a complaint or suggestion about the school, discuss it productively and follow procedure.
- **Safeguarding** – usual school processes apply if there are safety concerns

## Themes for Meetings

You may like to have themes in mind for some sessions. This can encourage more parents to attend if it is a subject they feel strongly about or a topic they would like to learn more about. The results of the PINS Parent Carer Survey can also be used as a 'conversation-starter' and to inform initial areas for discussion. For some of these, you may like to consider inviting a guest speaker, but it can also work well just to discuss topics as a group and share experiences.

### Example Topics for discussion:

- What is working well in the school?
- What areas in school need improving/developing? What can be learned from other schools?
- How do schools communicate with parents? How can this be improved?
- What support is available in school? For example, time out cards, alternative playtimes etc
- School clubs and wraparound care, if appropriate, and how to ensure they are accessible to all children
- Does the school have an Improvement Plan? How can the group support this and influence it?
- Events in school – how to ensure they are accessible to all children.
- How can parents be supported to help their children with learning at home? Is this working for children with SEND?

### Example Information sharing session ideas, this could be an opportunity to bring in guest speakers:

- Sleep
- Nutrition and eating difficulties
- Navigating social situations – comic strip conversations and social stories
- Looking after ourselves as parent carers
- Sensory difficulties
- Zones of Regulation technique
- Local organisations and activities
- Online resources

## Draft introduction letter

Dear Parent Carer

We are pleased to advise you that **[insert name of school]** is participating in the **Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)** programme, which aims to improve support for children with additional needs.

In order to support the PINS project, we are also creating a Parent Carer Participation Group with the school. The Participation Group is for all parent carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND); no diagnosis or EHCP is required.

We will hold regular meetings in order to:

- Work co-operatively with the school
- Ensure that parent carers have their voices heard by the school
- Bring parent carers together to share experiences

At the meeting we will be planning how our sessions will run for the next academic year, and what parent carers would like to theme sessions on.

The meeting will be held **[details of meeting including location, availability of refreshments etc]**.

If you are unable to attend .....

Please try to join us and encourage other parent carers to come along too.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,

**[Name]**

.....  
You can drop in to the meeting, but you can also indicate your attendance by completing this form and handing it in at the school office.

I would like to attend the Parent Carer Participation Group meeting on **[date and time]**.

Name: .....

Parent/Carer of: ..... in ..... class

Delete as appropriate: I am/might be/am not interested in taking on a responsibility within the group.