

St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School



Parent Forum Handbook

2023-24

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1. Introduction

What a Parent Forum is.

The Parent Forum is representative of all parents and carers in the school community and is an inclusive and accessible way to involve parents and carers in decisions about the school. It is a forum through which parents and carers can be consulted, learn more about the school and how they can be involved in it, be provided with information and encouraged to network with other parents and carers. Involvement in the Parent Forum enables parents and carers to make a real contribution to the school.

What a Parent Forum is Not.

The Parent Forum is not an opportunity for parents and carers to make complaints about the school or individual members of staff, nor does it have a role in dealing with complaints from individual parents. For matters that concern their own personal issue, parents should follow our whole school procedure of making an appointment with the school office to speak to the class teacher in the first instance, as items are dealt with immediately and most effectively this way. The Parent Forum is intended to make a positive contribution to the life of the school by putting forward the views of what works well by parents and carers to the Governing Body. Comments about the management or operation of the school should be expressed in general terms rather than in terms of a particular individual. The Parent Forum is not a decision making body, but an opportunity to establish a good relationship between the school, parents, carers and Governing Body that has a productive impact.

Functions of the Parent Forum.

The Governing Body and Head-Teacher remain the decision –makers and provide strategic leadership for the school. The Parent Forum is involved in a supportive role that is committed to fully supporting the Headteacher and the school's Catholic ethos and vision statement; it is a means to inform and consult parents and carers of decisions that are being made and the possible barriers to the successful implementation of these ideas.

St. Augustine's Parent Forum.

Parents and carers are a driving force behind their children's achievements, but also for improving the school system as a whole. The Parent Forum gives parents and carers a route to express what works successfully as a whole school and also ideas for how to strengthen the achievement of all stakeholders each academic year, in accordance with the priorities of the school.

The Parent Forum also supports the Governing Body in promoting the well-being of pupils. Parents and carers value not only educational achievement at school, but a commitment to a positive ethos and a range of activities and opportunities beyond the formal curriculum. Involvement in the Parent Forum is an opportunity to generate a culture of genuine participation and to attempt to reach those disengaged parents and carers, or parents and carers of particular groups of pupils who may face significant barriers to their inclusion such as language or culture.

The Benefits of a Parent Forum

The following benefits have been identified by schools who have implemented Parent Forum:

I. Children

Achieve more and behave better when their parents and carers support the rules of the school and are involved in their learning.

II. Parents and Carers

- Is representative of the whole school community
- Are informed of initiatives being considered that will be adopted throughout the school
- Work with the school to find solutions.
- Know they are being listened to and they can make a difference
- Develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for other parents
- Learn about how school operates.

III. The School

- Draws new and different parents and carers into active involvement
- Gains an understanding of parents' and carers' views and experiences
- Demonstrates that the school is engaging with parents and carers
- Works with parents and carers to find solutions.

St. Augustine's Parent Forum.

2. Parent Forum Vision, Aims and Mission

The Vision

St. Augustine's Parent Forum aspires to reach out and engage with all parents and carers, providing them with an opportunity to actively contribute to making a difference to the educational and life experience of pupils.

The Aims:

- To encourage parents to participate fully in the life and work of the school and their children
- To ensure effective communication is maintained between all stakeholders
- To be a forum for parents to meet with the school regularly
- To gain the support of parents and actively encourage them to participate in the process of school improvement as we share our vision for excellence.

The Mission:

Success through parental engagement and involvement.

3. Parent Forum Ground Rules

The Parent Forum has a set of ground rules by which it will conduct its meetings. By volunteering to Parent Forum, each member is expected to accept these ground rules
Members will:

- Respect and listen to other people's contributions and ideas
- Ensure only one person speaks at a time
- Participate actively in all discussions
- Limit the length of individual contributions
- Ensure contributions are delivered in a positive and constructive manner, even when complex issues are being discussed
- Concentrate on positive outcomes for the Parent Forum that will be of benefit to the school and its pupils, staff, parents and carers.
- Keep to the agenda and keep to time
- Respect confidentiality and be cautious about naming individual pupils, parents or teachers and discussing individual instances/events inappropriately
- Remind anyone attending Parent Forum meetings of the function and boundaries and the ground rules by which it operates
- Be constructive and supportive when engaging with parents and carers

4. Membership of the Parent Forum

Having a child in school makes parents/carers eligible to be a representative on Parent Forum.

Ideally each meeting should include:

- one parent/carer for each year group
- one member of the school Governing body
- a member of the Senior Leadership Team

St. Augustine's Parent Forum.

The term of office will be for one academic year, with new appointments being made in September. Ideally a few parents from the previous year remain to ensure continuity of work achieved the year before.

5. Parent Forum Meeting Arrangement

The following arrangement for Parent Forum meetings will take place:

- I. **Timing and Frequency** – generally meetings will be held at the end of each half term (6 meetings). They will usually be at 2:00pm on a Friday.
- II. **Length** - We aim to meet for 1 hour but allow for an extra 15 minutes.
- III. **Quorum** – to enable an effective meeting to take place there should be at least 3 parent/carer members present.
- IV. **Voting** – where applicable, will take place by a simple majority through a show of hands.
- V. **Meeting Agenda** –Any items to be considered for the agenda should be sent to the office to pass on to the Headteacher a full week before the meeting. The agenda will be emailed to Parent Forum Representatives during the week prior to a meeting. Items must include the name and year of the parent who has brought the item to the Parent Forum representative for it to be considered. Items without the name of the parent to whom it regards will not be considered. If it is not deemed to be an item suitable for Parent Forum, the parent will be directly contacted and informed how best to approach their issue.
Any Other Business (AOB) to be considered must also be put forward a week before the meetings. New items or AOB will not be accepted less than a week prior to the meeting and will be taken into consideration for the next half term's meeting.
- VI. **Minutes**- will be approved and signed at the following meeting. They will then be published on the school website
- VII. **Venue** – Conference room/Teams
- VIII. **Communication** – Most communication will be either through texts or the school website. Items for the agenda or AOB should be e-mailed to the Headteacher's Secretary on headspa@staugustines.herts.sch.uk

7. Evaluation of the Parent Forum

It is important to ensure that the Parent Forum is working for the benefit of parents, carers and the school. In order to do this the School and Parent Forum will evaluate to what extent it is meeting its objectives, what benefits and impacts it is having and what might need to be improved or made more effective. It is essential that this evaluation is fed back to the Governing Body, as depending on the outcomes of the evaluation, the Governing Body may wish to review the structure or remit of the Parent Forum.

St. Augustine's Parent Forum.

The Parent Forum's objectives are as follows:

- providing a positive space to advise parents on current initiatives
- identifying and promoting opportunities
- consulting parents and carers
- providing parents and carers an opportunity to contribute to the school
- encouraging parental involvement in the school
- encouraging parental networking

Evaluation against these objectives will take place during each academic year.

