

Working Together with Children and Families

Leadership reflection prompts

- How do we make sure children, young people and families are treated as equal partners in decisions about support?
- How do leaders model trust, empathy and respectful communication with families?
- How do we know whether communication with families is clear, timely, accessible and easy to understand?
- How do we gather children's views in ways that match their age, communication needs and preferences?
- How do families help us better understand strengths, needs, barriers and what matters most to their child?
- Are children's and families' views influencing everyday decisions, or mainly being gathered for formal meetings?
- How do we act on feedback from families and show what has changed as a result?
- Do staff know how to signpost families to the Local Offer and other local sources of support?

What you might notice in practice

- Families know who to contact and what to expect.
- Conversations with families are respectful, honest and solution-focused.
- Children and young people are supported to share their views in different ways.
- Plans and reviews include strengths, interests, aspirations and what matters to the child and family.
- Staff avoid jargon and explain processes clearly.
- Interpreters, translated information or alternative formats are used where needed.
- Feedback from families is gathered and used to improve practice.
- Parents and carers can see how their views have influenced decisions.



"Working together like this means I feel less anxious and more involved."



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Voices to listen to

Ask children and young people:

- Do you know who can help you in school?
- Do you get a chance to say what helps you learn?
- Do you feel included in decisions about your support?

Ask families:

- Do you feel listened to and taken seriously?
- Is communication clear and easy to understand?
- Do you know what support is in place and why?
- Are meetings accessible and useful?
- Can you see how your views have shaped next steps?

Ask staff:

- Do we have consistent approaches for communicating with families?
- Do we know how to gather and use pupil views?
- Do we feel confident having honest, respectful conversations with families?
- Do we know where to signpost families for further support?

Useful leadership activities

- Review a sample of recent support plans or review records and consider how clearly the child and family voice is reflected.
- Carry out a short parent-carer feedback activity focused on communication and partnership.
- Use a staff meeting to explore what good co-production looks like in everyday practice.
- Invite families to review whether written information is clear, accessible and free from jargon.
- Use a case reflection to consider how well the school worked with a family from first concern through to review.
- Discuss with governors how the school knows families feel informed, respected and involved.

Possible next steps

Leaders may want to identify:

- one thing that is already working well and should be shared more widely;
- one barrier that children or families are experiencing;
- one practical change that could improve communication, trust or participation;
- one way to review whether the change has made a difference.