

# Parent Partnership Programme

## Harrow Beijing

***"Students with parents who are involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioural problems and better academic performance, and are more likely to complete high school than students whose parents are not involved in their school".***

Henderson, A. T., and Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

### **Introduction**

There is extensive research to indicate that parents' involvement in their children's education has tremendous benefits in terms of achieving better behaviour, grades and university placements. In fact, research indicates that parental involvement in a child's education has more influence than the economic background of the family.

Harrow Beijing is a British School in China. As a school we acknowledge that forming a strong parent community that will support and develop our students' education may be perceived as challenging due to cultural and/or linguistic differences. At Harrow Beijing though we also see a tremendous opportunity to integrate the best of East and West and draw on our talented and committed pool of parents to enrich the life of the school and create a diverse and exciting environment for our students.

In 2015 we therefore decided to create the Parent Partnership Programme. The model that we chose to use for this programme was one developed by Professor Joyce Epstein from Johns Hopkins University in the USA. This model says that parents should be involved in the school in six different areas: communication, volunteering, decision making, collaborating with community, learning at home and parental training. In order to make this programme one that really reflected the needs and aspirations of our entire school community we held parent and teacher workshops for each of these six areas. All of the parent workshops were held in English and Chinese so as not to exclude any input from parents.

After holding the workshops we analysed the feedback from those sessions and used that data to make plans to further involve parents in the life of the school in each of the six areas Professor Epstein outlines:

**Communication** – Harrow Beijing will establish parent representatives throughout the school. ‘Parent reps’ will be parents that will facilitate communication.

**Volunteering** – at the beginning of every year parents will receive a list of school events for which they can volunteer and contact details in order to organise this.

**Decision Making** – Harrow Beijing will present a schedule of lectures on topics such as subject and university choices as well as talks focusing on what it means to choose an International School education.

**Collaborating with Community** – in order to assist parents to use local community resources to enhance and support their children’s learning, Harrow Beijing will distribute a list of places to visit, books to read and websites to access for each subject studied at the school.

**Learning at Home** – research tells us that the most effective way parents can support children’s learning at home is to set high but achievable goals. To facilitate this Harrow Beijing will run training sessions for parents on understanding target grades and having coaching conversations with children.

**Parental Training** – Harrow Beijing will hold a series of lectures throughout the year to help develop knowledge and skills that can enable parents to better deal with the most difficult job there is – being a parent. Lectures will focus on both the physical and psychological health of the child (and the parents!).

Please note that some dates may change during the year. Our wechat will clarify any changes.

### **The Parent Partnership Programme for 2016/17**

#### **Communication**

In order to facilitate communication between the school and parents Harrow Beijing will establish the role of parent class representative. In

September 2016 we will send all parents information on how to apply to become a parent class representatives.

### **What is a parent representative?**

Parent representatives serve a primary role in maintaining good communication between parents, teachers and the school. The class reps also facilitate the social interaction among families in the school community.

### **What is the role of a parent representative?**

Parent representatives are important links for information as well as being a contact point for parents. By working together with teachers and the wider school community, parent representatives can create a solid basis for community life in the school. They may organise social gatherings for parents that engender a climate of trust between parents and the wider school community.

### **What can the parent representatives do?**

- Parent representatives may organize activities relating to their class and wider sections of the school
- Parent representatives can forward questions on a specific subject (school trips, transport, health and safety, canteen, etc.) to the school.
- Parent representatives can communicate messages from school groups, such as the Friends of Harrow, so that parents are kept informed about social gatherings, activities and school community events.
- Parent representatives can raise questions, ideas and problems directly with the teachers.
- Parent representatives can be a point of contact for new parents.

### **What are the characteristics of parent representatives?**

- Supportive of teachers and the school
- Cooperative and interested in school activities
- Available, not necessarily to do everything themselves, but to delegate where possible
- Able to keep matters confidential
- Reliable, friendly and non-judgmental
- Familiar with the culture and practices of international education.

### **What specifically does a parent representative not do?**

Parent representatives are not to be used to help other parents express concerns about their own children. Any concerns should be raised directly with the pertinent teacher by the parents themselves.

### **Volunteering**

In September 2016 Harrow Beijing will send all parents a list of volunteering opportunities for 2016/2017.

The benefits of volunteering are many and varied. Volunteering benefits students in the school, teachers and the parents themselves who volunteer.

### **Understanding the role of the volunteer**

Volunteering is of great benefit to the school community. Volunteering is not however, an opportunity to spend the day with your child in their classroom! It is also important to respect the privacy of the students and the teachers who you are helping. As a volunteer you may become exposed to confidential information. It is very important that complete discretion is practiced.

The level of direction, training or instruction that volunteers receive will depend on the type of activity involved. This will usually be provided or outlined in the letter inviting you to volunteer.

### **The benefits to our students**

Students benefit from parents' volunteering as they further develop skills in communicating with adults. In addition, they develop an awareness of the many talents, occupations and contributions of parents and other volunteers. Our students see that parents value the school and this gives them a very positive attitude towards the school.

### **Benefits to the teachers**

The teachers benefit because they are able, with help from volunteers, to provide greater individual attention to students. The teacher is also able to develop a better understanding of the families' backgrounds, cultures, concerns, goals, needs and the views of their children. The teacher gains new respect for families' strengths and efforts and creates a greater awareness of parents' talents and interests in education and their children.

### **Benefits to our parents.**

The benefits to the parents are many and varied. They are able to understand the teacher's work, feel increased comfort while in school and continue with school activities at home. They will develop self-confidence about their ability to work in school and with children or to take steps to improve their own education. They quickly develop an awareness that families are welcome and valued at school and make gains in specific skills related to volunteer work. They will be given numerous opportunities to just have fun through their new social circle, make new friends and create new networks. There are opportunities to work with and get to know the teachers in a different and more informal setting.

There are many examples on how to volunteer around Harrow Beijing. You could volunteer to be help in a roast beef roll stall, second hand book stall at the Spring Fair, join the Friends of Harrow, or dress up as Father Christmas complete with white wig and beard. These types of activities are fun and beneficial. Like teachers and students, parents can feel pride in the school because they contribute to the life of that school.

### **Safeguarding**

Volunteers always work with children in the presence of a teacher or staff member in line with Harrow Beijing's safeguarding policy.

### **Decision making for Student Success**

In order to allow parents to help their children make better decisions for their future Harrow Beijing will provide a series of lectures and workshops that will provide them with the vital information they need to make those decisions.

As the decisions students make in Lower School and Upper School are quite different there will be separate lectures for each of the schools.

### **Upper School**

**All sessions begin at 3.30pm**

Nov 2	The ideal university applicant – what he/she looks like
Dec 7	<b>Art/D.T.</b> - what university courses does it lead to?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> <li>3 things you can do help your child with Art/DT</li> </ul>
Dec 14	<p><b>Maths and Computing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what university courses does it lead to?</li> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> <li>3 things you can do help your child with maths and computing</li> </ul>
Jan 25	<p><b>Science</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what university courses does it lead to?</li> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> <li>3 things you can do help your child with science</li> </ul>
Feb 15	<p><b>Geography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what university courses does it lead to?</li> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> <li>3 things you can do help your child with geography</li> </ul>
March 1	<p><b>Economics and Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what university courses does it lead to?</li> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> <li>3 things you can do help your child with economics and business</li> </ul>
March 15	<p><b>L &amp; L</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- why is your child studying L &amp; L?</li> <li>3 things you can do to help your child with L &amp; L</li> </ul>
March 29	<p><b>Mandarin and other languages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what university courses does it lead to?</li> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> <li>3 things you can do to help your child with Mandarin and other languages</li> </ul>
May 3	<p><b>Music and Drama</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what university courses does it lead to?</li> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> <li>3 things you can do to help your child with Music and Drama</li> </ul>
May 17	<p><b>Psychology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what university courses does it lead to?</li> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> <li>3 things you can do to help your child with Psychology</li> </ul>
May 31	<p><b>English</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what university courses does it lead to?</li> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> <li>3 things you can do to help your child with English</li> </ul>
June 7	<p><b>History</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what university courses does it lead to?</li> <li>- what careers does it lead to?</li> </ul> <p>3 things you can do to help your child with History</p>
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### **Collaborating with Community**

The wider community is a great resource that parents can use to enhance their children’s education. The school community in turn makes great contributions to the community in terms of charity work, collaboration with other schools and many other areas.

At each of the subject lectures (Maths, English etc) for ‘Decision Making for Student Success’ the relevant Head of Department will distribute a list of resources and places to visit that parents can use to help support their children’s learning. If you would like to see a list of materials to support your child before the day of the lecture please contact your tutor.

Through our volunteering programme there are also great opportunities to work with their children to give back to the local community.

### **Learning at home**

#### **Lower School**

**All sessions begin at 8.30am**

Jan 26	English - what you can do to support your child’s learning
Feb 16	Topic - what you can do to support your child’s learning
March 16	Maths/Computing - what you can do to support your child’s learning
March 30	Mandarin - what you can do to support your child’s learning
May 18	PE - what you can do to support your child’s learning

## **Parental Training**

For some years now Harrow Beijing has been running very popular and successful sessions on parenting skills. In 2016 we will enhance and enlarge this programme to include talks on health. The programme is published below so that parents can plan which sessions they would like to attend. One week before each session we will send WeChat reminders to all members of our community.

All sessions to begin at 8.30am

November 1	Eye health
November 15	Parent modelling - 7 habits parents live and teach to raise resilient children
November 29	Sleep
December 13	10 Ways to a Successful Future for your Child
January 17	Hydration and Nutrition and Eating Disorders
February 7	Turn Your Words Into Gold: the Art of Enforceable Communication at Home.
February 21	Dental Care
March 7	Mistakes Smart Parents Make
March 21	Sexual health/menstruation
April 25	From a Distance: Strategies to Maintain Parental Influence when Children live away from Home.
May 9	Role of exercise and how it can help performance at school.
May 23	Multi Culture Families: Navigating the Crossroads of Culture and Love! Positive Design for Multi- Cultural/ Global Families
June 6	Transitions: How to thrive in an ever changing world.