

School policy/framework for families with a close relative in prison or at risk of a prison sentence

This policy/framework will be displayed on the school website and available to parents upon request. We will include information about this policy in school newsletters and advise parents and carers that the school supports families affected by imprisonment.

Our school's promise to children and young people

Our school makes the following promise to children affected by the imprisonment of a family member.

Our school will:

- a. work with you so that together we can support the child/young person;
- b. do all that we can to make sure that the child fulfils their full academic and social potential and that the situation they are in does not put them at a disadvantage;
- c. provide emotional support to your child to help them cope with separation from their imprisoned parent;
- d. agree a plan with you so that if the child/young person wants to keep in contact with a family member in prison, this can be done without missing out on important schoolwork;
- e. keep a list of sources of help and support for families affected by imprisonment;
- f. be informed, seek to undertake specialist training to help us understand the issues that affect families around familial imprisonment, be able to offer families support and guidance from other professionals and organisations, and be discreet.

How will we fulfil our promise?

Training

We will provide training and information about the impact of familial imprisonment on children to staff members at our school. This training will include:

- a. the impact on and risks to children with a family member in prison or at risk of a custodial sentence
- b. recognising the signs of familial imprisonment, including changes in behaviour and performance
- c. basic principles of responding to disclosure
- d. confidentiality and information sharing
- e. attendance issues

- f. advice for children and understanding the prison regime
- g. advice to parents/carers on what to tell the children
- h. supporting the child
- i. how to incorporate information about prisons into the curriculum

Designated person

The headteacher will appoint a designated person from the school staff team to act as the first point of contact for information and advice. Their role is to:

- a. encourage the family to have confidence and trust in the school's commitment to providing care and support while avoiding labelling the child or family or sharing details unnecessarily with others
- b. liaise with the family and seek their consent to provide additional support for the child as necessary
- c. discuss information sharing with the family so that the designated person is clear about who can be included in the sharing of information
- d. use our knowledge gained to create a culture where imprisonment is openly discussed with children and young people, and they can feel comfortable talking about its impact without shame or fear of stigma
- e. where appropriate, obtain views of a parent in prison via the prison's Family Engagement Worker
- f. liaise with relevant school staff on a 'need to know' basis
- g. provide a point of contact in the school for external agencies to share information
- h. if consent is provided, use the common assessment framework (CAF) to identify the needs of the child
- i. consider convening a multi-agency meeting to address the identified needs to provide support for the child
- j. monitor the achievement, attendance and behaviour of the child
- k. consider the purchase of resources on the subject of prisons and prisoners for the school library
- l. keep appropriate and current records concerning information sharing and guidance

Designated Governor

The school's governing board will nominate a governor to support the designated person and oversee and review this policy annually. The designated governor and designated person will work together to ensure that families are aware of the policy, to promote awareness of the issues across the school, and to foster a culture of sensitivity and care.

Including the imprisoned parent in their child's education

Wherever appropriate, our school will include a parent with parental responsibility who is in prison in the education of their child by maintaining contact with that parent. We will forward copies of school reports or newsletters to the prisoner and offer a virtual parents' evening where possible.

Absences from school

Where permission is requested, and it is reasonable to do so, we will authorise absences from school to visit a family member in prison. We will ensure the child receives support to catch up on work missed. If the child is missing too much school, we will discuss with the family other ways of maintaining contact, such as letters and recorded messages.

Information on support available

If a parent or carer informs our school that a family member of one of our students is in prison, we will provide information on the support available to them. We will also provide advice and information on what to tell the children.