Home-School Link: Parent Awareness
By Aimee Bates, editor and author
Part 10 of a series of 12 of Macmillan’s Home-School Link

It’s great that you have good intentions for involving parents and improving your communication with them!

But where do you start? We suggest starting with increasing parent awareness. Here are a few ideas which will help.

**Macmillan courses and their Home-School Link**

This does not mean give them a copy of the curriculum! Instead, create a friendly and accessible leaflet explaining what their child will be learning and how, suggesting activities that parents can do at home to support their child’s learning.

Ensure the leaflets are clear and simple with illustrations. Upload onto the school website, give them out at parents’ evenings and leave some where parents will see them and pick them up.

**Make parents aware of learning objectives**

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**Use a reward system**

This could be as sophisticated as English World’s Home-School Connect’s merit card system, or as simple as giving out stickers to celebrate achievement.

Also explore digital options. Perhaps your school already has an online reward system or you could make use of emails and social media to send illustrated messages of congratulations.

**Get dads involved, too!**

You could set up some parent and child workshops which will help to build dads’ confidence. Also, why not organise sports activities to engage dads in the school.

**Communicate in a variety of ways**

Don’t just send a letter or an email - speak in person on how parents can help their child’s learning at home.

**Use every opportunity to communicate with parents**

This, in turn, will help increase their awareness of how they can support their child’s learning. Remember all of the methods of communication available to you and try to find the one with the highest response rate for your class. Do parents have a preferred means of receiving information? Are there certain parents who may have literacy difficulties and would appreciate being kept informed by telephone, rather than in writing?
Use an interpreter

For parents who do not speak the local language.

Keep displays in your classroom updated

Use new examples of student work, make sure displays are eye-catching and reflect the themes the class is learning. If a parent should make a visit to your school, the display will definitely catch their eye and they will be more aware of what their child is learning.

You could take this one step further and invite parents to a special exhibition of student work.

Remember - showing student work can also take the form of a performance!

Make sure parents know how to contact you

It is important that they realise the need to share information with the school about their child.

Encourage parents to share their interests and skills

For example, if you are teaching a topic about holidays and one of the parents is a holiday tour operator, they would make an exciting guest in the classroom. Or perhaps one of your parents is an actor and you are studying Shakespeare with your class. They could come into the lesson, and help you to run an activity. You can also get extended family members involved too.

Work together with parents, other teachers and schools

This will ensure a smooth transition between classes and schools at the beginning and end of each academic year.

Find more articles, top tips and quizzes at www.macmillanyounglearners.com/home-school-link

1. What is Home-School Link?
2. How well do you communicate with parents?
3. Top tips on developing a good communication strategy.
4. Using technology in your Home-School Link.
5. Personal contact with parents.
6. Open evenings and parents’ evenings.
9. More than just homework.

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