

HELE'S SCHOOL BAROMETER GROUP



Hele's School

MATCHING POLICY TO PRACTICE



Barometer Group Vision and Mission

The Vision

“A great place to learn. A great place to grow”

The Mission

Hele's School Barometer Group aspires to reach out and engage with all parents and carers, providing them with a voice and to actively contribute to making a difference to the educational and life experience of students.

Purpose

The Barometer Group will strengthen the partnership between parents/carers and Hele's School and will provide an opportunity to contribute to school decision making and improvement planning.

Principles

- Hele's School Governing Body recognises and supports the role of the Barometer Group as part of their statutory duty to have regard to the views of parents
- The Barometer Group is an advisory and consultative body with no decision making authority
- The school leadership team will support the Barometer Group, providing information, support and guidance.

Membership

Parent/carers of all learners on the school roll will be eligible to be a member, but need to contact the school to join prior to attending meetings of the Barometer Group.

Meetings

- Meetings of the Barometer Group will take place at least once per school term
- Written notice of each meeting will be given by the school, identifying the item/s for consideration
- Meetings will be led by members of the school leadership team, as appropriate to the item/s for consideration
- Meetings will normally take the form of presentation followed by discussion
- Discussion contributions by parents/carers will not be personalised
- There will be no consideration of additional items introduced by parents/carers during a meeting, but items can be added to the agenda prior to the meeting.
- Meetings will conclude with an agreed statement of outcome/s which will be considered by the school governing body and/or leadership team, as appropriate, and which will be available on request to any parent/carer unable to attend.

Items for consideration

Items for consideration at meetings of the Barometer Group will be determined by the School Governing Body and/or leadership team.

What a Barometer Group Is

A Barometer Group is a body of parents and carers, which represents parents and carers and provides a forum for them to put forward their views to the Principal and Governing Body. The Barometer Group 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 Barometer Group is less formal and requires a lesser commitment than being a member of the Governing Body, whilst enabling parents and carers to make a real contribution to the School.

What a Barometer Group is Not

The Barometer Group is not a forum for parents and carers to complain about individual members of staff, nor does it have a role in dealing with complaints from individual parents. Parents should follow the School's published complaints procedure if they have a complaint against the Principal, a member of staff, the Governing Body or the School. The Barometer Group is intended to make a positive contribution to the life of the School by putting forward the views of 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 Barometer Group accepts that it is not a decision making body, but an opportunity to influence and contribute to the running of the school. The Barometer Group is not a fundraising body.

Functions of the Barometer Group

The Governing Body remains the decision-maker and provides the strategic leadership for the School. The Barometer Group has a consultative and advisory role; it is a means to strengthen the voice of parents and carers and to enable them to express their opinions and influence decisions.

Parents and carers are a driving force behind their children's achievements, but also for improving the School system as a whole. The Barometer Group gives parents and carers a route to express their opinions and ideas and the School and the Governing Body a means to sound out parents' and carers' views on decisions about the strategic direction of the School.

The Barometer Group also supports the Governing Body in promoting the well-being of students. Parents and carers value not only educational achievement at the School, but a commitment to a positive ethos and a range of activities and opportunities beyond the formal curriculum. Involvement in the Barometer Group is an opportunity to generate a culture of genuine participation and hence carers and parents of particular groups of students who may face significant barriers to their inclusion such as language, literacy or culture, are particularly welcomed.

The Benefits of a Barometer Group

The following benefits of having a Barometer Group have been identified:

- o Children achieve more and behave better when their parents and carers are involved in their learning.
- o Parents and Carers are representative of the whole school community; are consulted and have a voice in the running of the school; know they are being listened to and they can make a difference; develop a sense of ownership; learn about how School operates.
- o 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.

Barometer Group Ground Rules

Suggested ground rules by which the Barometer Group conducts meetings. By accepting appointment to the Barometer Group, each member will agree to accept these Ground Rules.

Members will

- support and be guided by the Chair of the meeting
- respect other people's opinions and ideas
- ensure only one person speaks at a time
- participate actively in all discussions
- take turns in speaking
- allow the Chair to decide who speaks next
- limit the length of individual contributions
- actively listen to others' contributions
- ensure contributions are delivered in a positive and constructive manner, even when challenging or difficult issues are being discussed
- concentrate on positive outcomes for the Barometer Group that will be of benefit to the School and its students, staff and parents and carers
- keep to the agenda

Relationships - Different Bodies, Different Roles

The Barometer Group must have a close working relationship with both the Governing Body and the School to ensure that its goals relate to the work of the Governing Body and the School's objectives.

The Governing Body - consulting on matters relating to the conduct of the school, through:

- attendance of Parent Governors at Barometer Group meetings
- the Governing Body parent/carer communication
- specific written requests from the Governing Body
- invitations to attend Governing Body or committee meetings to observe and provide views and opinions.

The Barometer Group - advising the Governing Body as to the views of parents, through:

- the Parent Governors attending Barometer Group meetings
- the Barometer Group meeting notes and action points
- specific written information
- invitations to other Governors and Headteacher to attend Barometer Group meetings
- regular attendance by teachers to Barometer Group meetings to advise and support
- invitations from the Barometer Group to specific teachers and the Senior Leadership Team to attend and provide presentations

The School - consulting on matters relating to the conduct of the School and providing information and guidance to parents through:

- invitations to the Barometer Group to become involved in or promote School activities and events
- requests of the Barometer Group to seek views from parents on specific issues.

Barometer Group Meeting Arrangements

The following arrangements for Barometer Group meetings have been determined:

- Timing and frequency - generally meetings will be held once a half term.
- Length – 1 hour and definitely no more than 1.5 hours - all agenda items should have time allotted to them;
- Quorum - to enable an effective meeting to take place there should be at least 3 parent/carer members present.
- Voting – where applicable will take place by a simple majority through a show of hands, with the meeting chair having the casting vote if the decision is split.
- Meeting agenda - to be agreed by the Barometer Group at the previous meeting. Any other business should be discouraged.
- Meeting notes - simple and concise notes will be recorded, noting a description of each item discussed and matters agreed. The minutes will be published on the School website on the Barometer Group web page.
The following items will be standing items:
 - Review of Meeting Notes and Decisions
 - Review Schedule of Actions
 - Review of meeting outcomes against Barometer Group objectives
 - Date, Tim, Venue and Agenda for Next Meeting
- Involvement of Members -
 - The agreed principle is that some attendance is better than no attendance.
 - To ensure maximum attendance, the Barometer Group will consider different days/times to hold meetings
 - In some cases membership may be 'at a distance' using the buddy system, website or email
 - Support - members, parent governors and staff should welcome and support parents/carers attending for the first time.

Invitations to non-members - to include:

- general invitations to parents to attend open meetings
- specific invitations to groups of parents to attend meetings
- invitations to governors
- invitations to the Principal, members of the leadership team and teachers involved in specific areas of interest

Communication with parents/carers - this can be promoted via:

- The Hele's School website
- posters around the school

- flyers
- a generic email address which parents/carers can use to communicate with the Barometer Group
- the school newsletter
- emails from the governing body

Evaluation of the Barometer Group

It is important to ensure that the Barometer Group is working for the benefit of students, parents, carers and the School. In order to do this the Barometer Group 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 the Governing Body, as depending on the outcome of the evaluation, the Governing Body may wish to review the structure or remit of the Barometer Group.

The Barometer Group objectives are as follows:

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