

Milton Keynes Parent Partnership Service (PPS) provides **impartial** information, advice and support to the parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs or a disability. The School Choice Adviser, who supports the parents/carers of all pupils at the school transfer stage, is also based in PPS.

Parent Partnership understands impartial to mean:

- being unprejudiced and fair;
- not favouring one side over another;
- treating all parties respectfully;
- ensuring that the views of others are accurately conveyed regarding both source and content;
- not having a vested interest in the outcomes of discussions or decisions.

The service maintains the trust and confidence placed in the service, its staff and its volunteer Independent Parental Supporters (IPS) by being impartial. We do this by:

- striving at all times to support parent/carers to reach the best possible outcomes for each child;
- providing accurate, up to date, and neutral information on special educational needs from both local and national sources;
- giving alternative sources of information, such as the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) / Independent Panel for Special Education Advice (IPSEA), so that parents may check the information given by PPS;
- supporting parents/carers to challenge schools or the Local Authority when they feel decisions that are made about their children with special educational needs do not appear to follow local and/or national guidance, or do not appear to be in the best interests of the child;
- assisting parents/carers to express their views and wishes or, if necessary and only with their permission, representing their views to professionals;
- trying to ensure that all parties in discussions understand their rights and responsibilities, and the rights and responsibilities of the other parties;
- recognising where potential conflict of interest may occur, such as a staff member or IPS being a governor of a school, or having a child in a school, and ensuring that families are supported by a different staff member or IPS.

The Parent Partnership Service is an 'in-house' service, which means that it is funded by Milton Keynes Council. However, PPS operates an 'arms length' service, which means that it is an impartial, confidential service for parents/carers. To strengthen the independence and impartiality of the service:

- PPS is based in its own self-contained office at the Galley Hill Education Centre. This is a separate building, away from the SEN, School Improvement and Children's Social Care teams who are based in Children & Young People's Service at Saxon Court in Central Milton Keynes;
- The PPS budget is held and managed by the Parent Partnership Officer;
- The PPS is based in a different directorate to the Children & Families Services. This means that the PPS has a different line management structure from the SEN, School Improvement and Children's Social Care teams who are based in Children & Families Services.
- PPS staff have access to independent, external training from nationally recognised providers;
- PPS staff and volunteer IPS receive training to recognise and understand the factors that can influence the ways that people give and receive information to enforce the importance of impartiality;
- PPS are aware of the implications of equal opportunities, and endeavour to ensure that the service is as accessible as possible to all parents/carers;

PPS does not:

- Make decisions for parents;
- Offer directive advice;
- Act on behalf of the Local Authority, other agency, or any educational setting.