

Dame Meg Hillier MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

2nd August 2022

Dear Dame Meg Hillier,

I strongly agree with your comments on the PAC's report on academies, published earlier this year, that there is an "unacceptable lack of transparency and accountability to parents" and that "parents deserve a lot more visibility and clarity over exactly what is being provided to their children". Parentkind seeks policy changes to enable greater accountability to parents, as this letter outlines.

I also listened with great interest to your contribution to the debate on the Address. You raised the issue of education catch-up, citing children who have lost out on two years of education. This is a major concern of parents, too. Throughout the pandemic, Parentkind [polled parents](#) on a variety of education topics in order to find out how partial school closures were affecting children's mental health, as well as what additional resources they needed to support their child's education in the home learning environment.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak to you about Parentkind's aims in affecting policy change in favour of increasing parental participation, as well as the ways in which my organisation is already influencing policy debates in this area.

An introduction to Parentkind

As a national charity, Parentkind gives those with a parenting role a voice in education. We invest substantial resources in representing parent views on their child's learning to local, regional and national governments and agencies because evidence shows that parental participation in education benefits all children in all schools and society as a whole. Parentkind is home to a network of PTA fundraisers in the UK. We bring specialist fundraising support and advice to parent volunteers so that every school can benefit from a successful PTA. Our 12,600 PTA members generally raise over £120 million per year, placing us alongside some of the largest charities in the UK.

APPG for Parental Participation in Education

Your strong interest in the education system increasing its accountability to parents would be an enormous asset to the [APPG for Parental Participation in Education](#), which Parentkind worked with parliamentarians at Westminster to set up. Its purpose is to promote the benefits of parents being actively engaged in their children's education, and to build close and successful relationships between home and school. During each meeting, we present, or hear from stakeholders, evidence of parent voice research which is shared with MPs, peers and other interested parties. A recent meeting heard from three experts in the SEND field, and chair Ian Mearns updated Schools Minister Will Quince with a summary of the resulting discussion points. The Minister has agreed to join a future meeting of the APPG to discuss the outcome of the SEND consultation.

The next meeting will take place in Parliament on Wednesday 19th October from 4:00 – 5:00 pm. Parliamentarians will be briefed on Parentkind's Learning from Home report, which looks in detail at parents' experiences of school closures and remote learning during the pandemic. If you are unable to make this meeting but would like to consider joining us in the future, I would be happy to add you to the email distribution list.

Parentkind's Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools

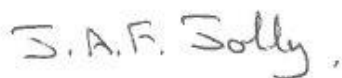
Parentkind's ['Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools'](#) is a framework for schools leaders to implement best practice parental participation based around five key drivers. The Blueprint was built from a parent perspective with extensive consultation from across the sector including school leaders. We believe that the Blueprint will benefit school communities in deprived areas serving disadvantaged young people, or in underperforming schools where a strong home and school partnership can make all the difference to young people's academic attainment. We seek national implementation of our Blueprint as a cost-effective solution to improving pupil behaviour and attendance as well as boosting social mobility.

The future of parental engagement in education

Alongside the Centre for Education and Youth (CfEY) think-tank, Parentkind developed 'Improving Parents' Participation in Education: Parentkind's Three Policy Solutions'. The solutions focus on parent consultation in schools, parent consultation at local authority, regional and government levels and parental participation in schools based on the principles of the Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools. We are looking for support from parliamentarians and policymakers, and you would be ideally placed to strengthen our voice in calling for greater parental participation and transparency to parents when we launch. I would welcome the opportunity to provide you with advance sight of the document or further details.

I would be delighted to have a conversation with you to discuss these opportunities to collaborate further. Please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,



John Jolly, CEO Parentkind

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