Information for schools about
Story Links Training

[Date]

Dear Participating School,

Thank you for considering the implementation of the Story Links intervention in your school. This letter provides an outline of the intervention and what resources it requires.

## What is Story Links

Story Links is a parent-partnership intervention to support vulnerable pupils whose emotional and behavioural difficulties are getting in the way of their learning. It uses [therapeutic storywriting](http://storylinkstraining.co.uk/?page_id=48) to support emotional wellbeing and reading skills. The intervention involves pupils, parents and teachers in the co-creation of stories that address the pupils’ behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

While it is the pupil’s behaviour that may trigger attention in the classroom or school, these pupils often also have severe underlying emotional difficulties that can be related to attachment difficulties with their parents or carers. It is for this reason that the involvement of parents is a central aspect of the intervention.

The intervention targets pupils aged 6-11 years and runs over 10-weeks. It uses joint storywriting, and the metaphors it generates, to encourage the parent/carer to think about their child’s emotional and social wellbeing. It also aims to involve parents in their child’s learning by encouraging them to regularly hear their child read the co-created stories at home.

## Training

The Story Links teacher is required to attend all days of a 3-day training. The training days are spaced out to allow the teacher to start running the intervention after day1. The teacher brings work from sessions for discussion to days 2 and 3 which will also extend theory and practice.

The training is supported by an [online training manual](StoryLinksTraining.co.uk) that includes downloadable resources.

## Structure of a session

The SL teacher sees the parent for 5 min before the TA and pupil arrive, in which she checks how the reading has gone during the week and also if there have been any particular emotional or behavioural issues for the pupil. The TA then arrives with the pupil from class and gives the behavioural score from the classteacher to reflect how the pupil has been in class through the week. The pupil fills in a behavioural score chart.

There is a feelings check-in followed by the pupil reading aloud last week’s story. The SL teacher then gives the opener for this week’s story and the group co-creates the story. The TA then takes the pupil back to class and the SL teacher spends a final 5 min with the parent reflecting on the session.

Once the parent has left the SL teacher types up the co-created story at the pupil’s reading level. She prints 2 copies and leaves one for the parent to collect and gives one to the TA.

## Evidence-base

A 2 year research evaluation of the Story Links programme conducted by the University of Chichester found the intervention led to:

Improvement in pupils’ behaviour

Improvement in reading skills

Reduction in incidents that can lead to exclusion from classroom

Reduced stress for pupils, parents and professionals

Improved parent/pupil/school relationships

Increase in parent-partnership skills of professionals attending the 3-day training

## School Resources Required to Implement Story Links

The intervention lasts 10 weeks (either side of a holiday break is fine) and requires the following staff time commitment:

Story Links teacher: 1 hour per week (30 min SL session + 30 min to write up co-created story at pupils’ reading level directly after session)

TA: 30 min per week in SL session + 2 x 20 min reading sessions in week with pupil

The role of the TA is essential as she provides the bridge between the classteacher, pupil and parent as well as implementing the follow-up reading programme. It is preferable if the TA already works in the pupil’s class. The TA work supports reading skills, emotional literacy and speech & language development.

Each Story Links programme includes a pre and post parent and pupil evaluation.

Further information is available at [www.StoryLinksTraining.co.uk](http://www.StoryLinksTraining.co.uk)

" Story Links has been very effective here. It’s a valuable vehicle for working with parents of pupils at risk of exclusion and especially supports those pupils who also have problems with literacy.
(Headteacher, Brighton)

### Delivered in collaboration with:

[Local authority]