



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY



December 2016

INTRODUCTION:

National Context

Our Parental Involvement Strategy sets out how the Education Service will support schools to help parents to become involved in their child's education. This is within the context of the **Scottish Schools [Parental Involvement] Act 2006**, the **National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education** and the **Education (Scotland) Act 2016**.

The **Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006** published in May 2006 is about improving the involvement of parents in their own child's education and in the life of the school.

- It aims to help parents to be:
 - Involved with their child's education and learning
 - Welcomed as an active participant in the life of the school
 - Encouraged to express their views on school education generally
 - Able to work in partnership with the school

The **National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education** sets out the Scottish Government's vision and priorities for our children's progress in learning. It aims to improve and increase the ways in which parents and families can engage with teachers and partners to support their children and increase the voice of parents in leading improvements with schools.

The **Education (Scotland) Act 2016** makes provision in relation to school education about priorities, objectives and reducing pupils' inequalities of outcome.

Local Context

In Argyll and Bute we recognise that parents, carers and families are the most important influences on children's lives and value greatly the contribution that parents and other family members make in supporting their children's learning, both at school and at

home. The promotion of parental involvement and partnership working is therefore a key priority within Education Services.

Our Children, Our Future (Argyll and Bute's Education Vision and Strategy) confirms our aspiration to ensure that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow up.



Our vision is underpinned by our values: **respect**, **openness** and **fairness** and will be delivered for all our children through the following 6 key objectives.

Raise educational attainment and achievement for all

Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people

Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed

Equip young people to sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life

Strengthen partnership working and community engagement

Strengthen leadership at all levels

Supported by these objectives this Parental Involvement Strategy will enable parents, schools and the Education Service to work together in a more effective manner.

Through working together and the sharing of knowledge, parents, schools and the Education Service will be able to help support children to reach their full potential.

Within this document the term 'parent' includes:

- *guardians*
- *any person who is liable to maintain or care for a child or young person or*
- *any person who has parental responsibilities for a child or young person.*

BACKGROUND

The **Scottish Schools [Parental Involvement] Act 2006**, placed duties on Education Authorities, aimed at helping all parents to be involved with their child's education.

These duties require the Authority to:

- Promote the involvement of parents in their own child's education, in school and at home, and in the education provided by a school to its pupils generally
- Prepare a 'strategy for parental involvement'
- Promote the establishment of Parent Councils and support the running of Parent Councils by giving advice and information when requested
- Ensure that advice and information is given to any parent relating to the education of their child when it is requested
- Involve a Parent Council in the appointment of a Head or Depute Head Teacher to their school
- Have a procedure for handling complaints relating to these duties.

In terms of the Act, every parent of a child at school is automatically a member of that school's Parent Forum. The Parent Forum is entitled to be represented by a Parent Council established for that school.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The purpose of this Strategy is to improve attainment by promoting the engagement of parents in the education of their child.

Research consistently demonstrates that where parents are involved with their children's education and learning, both at home and in partnership with the school, their children do better and achieve more. These benefits can be long-lasting and extend to better health, better relationships and improved employment prospects.

Parents have a key role as prime educators and carers of their children. By working in partnership, schools and parents can develop children's attitudes to learning, helping to ensure that children achieve their full potential. This partnership working will also provide schools with a clearer understanding of children's home circumstances and personal achievements.

Effective parental involvement support helps parents to understand what their children are learning, how well they are doing and how they can support learning in the home environment. Good communication will allow schools and parents to respond quickly and effectively to emerging issues and concerns.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Five key principles are identified in the successful delivery of our Parental Involvement Strategy. These are:

- **Parental Influence**
- **Inclusion**
- **Partnership**
- **Communication**
- **Participation**

Parental Influence

Parents and families are the most important influence on their children's attitudes, behaviour and achievement, and effective parental involvement will support this influence in a positive way.

Inclusion

Parental involvement and consultation should be inclusive and encourage participation by all parents.

The **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)** approach ensures services focus on the needs of the individual child using early intervention, information sharing and child-centred planning to identify appropriate service support at a local level.

Partnership

Parents, carers, pupils and staff are partners in the education process, each with a distinctive role to play. Mutual trust and respect should underpin all aspects of parental involvement.

The Education Service will work with all partners to ensure a range of universal and targeted services are available to meet the needs of children.

Effective co-operation is promoted between home and school to support pupil's learning and allow potential difficulties and opportunities to be identified at an early stage.

Communication

Parents should be able to communicate openly and effectively with schools and the Education Service. All parents should feel that they are valued and listened to and that their opinions are taken into account.

Information should be timely and appropriate. Parents can access information about the Education Service and the education of their children easily. Consultation allows parents to be directly involved in setting the priorities for the service and shaping future service delivery

Participation

Effective parental involvement acknowledges that parents have skills that they can contribute actively and effectively in a number of ways:

- supporting children's learning at home
- participating in learning and teaching at school, e.g. through volunteering to help in school activities and fundraising
- participating in discussion and decision-making at school, e.g. in a school's Parent Council or Parent Teacher Association; in raising issues as a member of the Parent Forum; or through responding to parent consultations
- promoting collaboration with partner agencies

HOW WILL THIS STRATEGY BE IMPLEMENTED?

This Strategy will be implemented across all schools and early years' establishments. However, it is recognised that approaches to parental involvement will be different in individual establishments. The strategies used by establishments will reflect the needs of their school community.

To ensure the successful implementation of this Strategy it is important that:

- Parents are active participants in their child's learning and that they are provided with opportunities to work with the school to support their child in achieving their full potential.
- Head Teachers are supported in implementing this strategy.
- Head Teachers encourage and develop good relationships with parents and take cognisance of the strategies when developing School Improvement Plans.
- The Education Service recognises the vital role that parents play in supporting children's learning and is committed to fostering positive relationships with parents.

Learning at Home, in the Community and at School

Parents need appropriate information and support to enable them to develop their child's learning at home, in the community and at school. This will enhance parental confidence, skills and aspirations to become further involved in supporting their child's education from early years to the end of secondary school.

At various stages of their child's education journey the information required by parents will change.

Parents are entitled to:

- Information on their child's progress in nursery, primary and secondary school
- Opportunities across the year, to formally and informally discuss their child's progress and development
- Access to a range of methods of communication – written, verbal and electronic to ensure they are able to fully access the information
- Access to being involved in supporting their child's education and the wider life of the school through partnership working
- Access to the help and advice required to support their child's education both within school but also through access to other agencies as appropriate to need.
- Opportunities to be involved in groups which represent the parent community e.g. Parent Council groups, parent focus groups, other community related groups
- Consultation on the educational arrangements for their child

Parental Representation

The **Parental Involvement Act (2006)** provides a framework for ensuring that parents have the opportunity to express their views and have these taken into account on policy and practical matters affecting the education of their children. It states that all parents are members of the Parents Forum at a school and can have their views formally represented to the school, Education Service and others through a representative

Parent Council for the school. Views can be represented by telephone, in writing, by e-mail or in person through the school.

Best Practice in Parental Engagement

The following characteristics would be evident in a school setting with excellent practice in relation to family learning.

- Targeted support is given to those families identified as having single or multiple needs that are having an impact on their health and well-being development and/or learning
- Families have regular opportunities to discuss their learning with staff and set targets for next stages
- Families are well supported to plan opportunities for personal achievement
- Learning targets are in place specific to the family as a whole and as individual learners, built on prior learning and development and with them clearly at the centre of planning
- Parents/ carers are supported to actively and meaningfully engage in their children's learning and life at school and any barriers to this occurring are reduced through the entitlements met by the Education Service.

Possible Barriers to Parental Engagement

The Education Service will strive to address any barriers to parental engagement.

We need to create genuine opportunities for parental engagement. Parents should routinely be invited to participate in all working groups and not just those which would have been considered traditionally to be within the parental sphere of interest – uniform, homework etc. Schools need to build relationships based on confidence and trust in order to fully engage the potential of parents.

This will be achieved through:

- Awareness of the impact of time constraints on busy parents /carers
- Supporting parents with additional support needs to attend school meetings and ensuring alternative means of communication where possible
- Encouraging parents to attend meetings / consultations with a support person where they find it difficult to attend alone
- Identifying parents who have economic needs that restrict engagement
- Providing interpreting and translation services to help communication with

- parents whose first language is not English
- Actively encouraging parents of 'Looked after Children' to play their part in supporting parental engagement
- Ensuring diverse groups are not discriminated on the grounds such as race, gender, faith, age or disability
- Encouraging and supporting non-custodial parents and parents without parental responsibilities within the limits set out by law
- Monitor closely attendance at Parents Evenings and other school events and follow –up non-attendees
- Target disengaged parents and invite them to meet with appropriate staff in a relaxed setting

ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Head Teacher** is at the core of this Strategy and will:

- Set an appropriate tone by welcoming all parents to the school, by being receptive to parental input and by listening to parents
- Be accessible and visible to all parents
- Ensure that communication with parents is excellent, using a wide range of methods including website, text messages, Facebook and Twitter
- Work closely with the Parent Council to improve parental involvement in the school
- Regularly consult all parents and demonstrate action as a result of parental feedback

The key relationship here is between **teachers and parents** working together at school level.

Parents are expected to:

- Endeavour to create a relationship of mutual respect between home and school
- Support the school by ensuring that their children attend and follow the school dress code
- Encourage their children to fully engage with learning in school and at home – in particular, check that homework is being completed
- Keep the appropriate members of school staff informed of any factors which may impact upon their child's progress or wellbeing
- Attend school events, especially Parents Evening
- Respond to consultation on the work of the school and contribute positively to decision- making.

- Respect the professional judgements of staff in relation to the progress of their child's learning.

Any comments or questions in respect of this Strategy please contact:

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This Strategy will be reviewed in March 2018.

APPENDIX 1

Parental Involvement Strategy
Actions 2016 - 2017

Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Draft policy issued to Head Teachers	August 2016	Education Officer – Parental Involvement
Consultation with Parent Councils. This will include an opportunity for an area meeting with Parent Council Chairpersons and central education staff.	August – September 2016	Head Teachers Head of Service Education Managers Education Officers
Feedback on consultation to Authority	October 2016	Head Teachers
Schools should review their own strategies for promoting and encouraging parental engagement based on the Authority's revised strategy.	December 2016	Education Officer – Parental Involvement
The revised framework for reporting on the standards and quality within schools should include a requirement to report on parental engagement and involvement and the outcome and impact for learners.	June 2017	Education Manager – Performance and Improvement Head Teachers Education Officers
Specific reporting on parental engagement across the authority areas should be included in the annual reports to Area Committees.	June 2017	Education Officers Head Teachers
Annual area parent council chair persons meetings to be convened.	January – June 2017	Education Officers Head Teachers

APPENDIX 2 – Checklist for Schools

Strategies to Improve Learning at Home and Home/ School Partnerships

What we do	How we do it
We encourage our Parent Council to gather and represent the views of our Parent Forum. This supports us in the development of our policy in relation to parental engagement, home learning and home/school partnerships	
We support an inclusive approach and, recognising the diversity of our parents, use a range of ways to encourage parental involvement.	
All staff in our school are committed to securing the involvement of parents/carers in their own child/children’s education both in school and at home and offer support and encouragement.	
We will improve our information and advice on the curriculum by ensuring our website and parental information gives clear guidance on curriculum areas and content, including homework.	
We will support parents to review and enhance the learning environment at home to improve homework completion and quality as well as motivation and effort at school.	
We will offer workshops/ seminars for parents that address areas such as literacy / numeracy or health and well-being and how children learn.	
We will work with partners to develop consultation processes that build genuine home/ school partnerships.	
We will work with parents to ensure those with specialist knowledge or skills can be involved within particular educational contexts e.g. a parent literacy champion could be identified and work with staff and parents to improve literacy across a primary school.	
In line with strategies relating to Developing Scotland’s Young Work Force and as part of wider curriculum links, we will develop business and community links that help strengthen parental engagement.	

<p>As part of our annual standards and quality reporting, we will report on the overall progress, review the success of our parental engagement and describe the impact and outcomes for our learners.</p>	
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