

Parental Engagement Strategy Paper

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide for consideration a copy of the Education Service revised Parental Engagement Strategy 2018.
- 1.2 The revised Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 has been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including parents, Parent Council members, teachers, Head Teachers and other partners such as representatives from the Educational Psychology team and Youth Services.
- 1.3 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
- Note the continued commitment of the Education Service to enhance and further develop opportunities for parental engagement in all of our schools, in the context of the Scottish Government's developing policy position in regard to the development of a National Action Plan.
 - Agree the revised Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 as set out in Appendix 1 on the basis that any amendments which may be required thereto in consequence of the Scottish Government's National Plan when published are delegated to the Head of Education: Lifelong Learning and Support in consultation with the Head of Education: Learning and Teaching, the Executive Director of Customer Services and the Policy Lead for Education.

Parental Engagement Strategy Paper

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide for consideration a copy of the Education Service revised Parental Engagement Strategy 2018.
- 1.2. The revised Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 was drafted following a review in March 2018 of the 2016 Parental Involvement Strategy and was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.
- 1.3. 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 prospects¹.
- 1.4. 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.
- 1.5. Effective parental engagement 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.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. Note the continued commitment of the Education Service to enhance and further develop opportunities for parental engagement in all of our schools, in the context of the Scottish Government's developing policy position in regard to the development of a National Action Plan.
- 2.2. Agree the revised Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 as set out in Appendix 1 on the basis that any amendments which may be required thereto in consequence of the Scottish Government's National Plan when published are delegated to the Head of Education: Lifelong Learning and Support in

¹ "The more engaged parents are in the education of their children, the more likely their children are to succeed in the education system." (Goodall and Vorhaus 2011)

consultation with the Head of Education: Learning and Teaching, the Executive Director of Customer Services and the Policy Lead for Education.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1. In September 2016 the Community Services Committee approved the Parental Involvement Strategy which set out how the Education Service would support schools to help parents to become involved in their child's education within the context of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education and the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.
- 3.2. Ensuring high quality partnership working through increased parental engagement and participation is one of the key objectives of the Education Vision and Strategy *Our Children, Their Future*.
- 3.3. In December 2016 the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills John Swinney MSP launched the 2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education. The National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education sets out the Scottish Government's vision, priorities and drivers of improvement. A key driver of improvement within the National Improvement Framework is parental engagement since research shows that engaging parents in their child's learning improves children attainment and achievement.
- 3.4. In November 2017 the Scottish Government published the document "Empowering Schools – A Consultation on the provisions of the Education (S) Bill" in which it is stated that the Scottish Government "*will include provisions in the Education Bill to make the existing legal duties in relation to parental involvement clearer and stronger, to reflect the transfer of responsibilities to Head teachers through the Head teachers' Charter and to encourage stronger collaboration between school leaders and parents.*"
- 3.5. The Scottish Government have also intimated that following recommendations resulting from the National Parent Forum of Scotland's review of the impact of the Parental Engagement (Scotland) 2006 Act, the Scottish Government's intention to strengthen, modernise and extend the provisions of the 2006 Act, ensuring that as Head teachers and teachers are empowered, so also are parents empowered to engage in their child's education.
- 3.6. We are presently awaiting the publication by the Scottish Government of the National Action Plan on Parental Engagement and the Education (S) Bill, both of which are expected to be published in June 2018.
- 3.7. It is the context of these national policy developments that the 2016 Parental Involvement Strategy was reviewed and revised at the review date of March 2018 following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.
- 3.8. The revised Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 seeks to provide for

envisaged forthcoming changes in education legislation and policy as detailed above and seeks to implement the spirit of strengthened partnership through parental engagement as envisaged in *Our Children, Their Future*.

- 3.9. The proposed Parental Engagement Strategy has six objectives for schools, namely:
- Develop strong partnerships with parents.
 - Promote and support effective communication between schools and parents.
 - Provide support and encouragement for learning at home.
 - Support and promote the role of Parent Councils.
 - Provide a clear route for parents' concerns and complaints to be resolved.
 - Seek views and respond to feedback from parents about this policy.
- 3.10. It is proposed that a number of actions will take place in school session 2018-2019 to communicate and implement the Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 as set out in the action plan detailed in Appendix 1.

4. **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1. The revised Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 will enable parents, schools and the Education Service to work together in a more effective manner.
- 4.2. 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.

5. **IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. Policy - This report links directly to Outcome 3 and 4 in the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement (Education Skills and Training Maximises Opportunities for All).
- 5.2. Financial – None
- 5.3. Legal – Meets the statutory requirements as prescribed by the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act) 2006 and the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.
- 5.4. HR – None
- 5.5. Equalities – None
- 5.6. Risk - The performance of Education in Argyll and Bute can significantly enhance or detract from the Council's reputation and attractiveness as an area to work and live in.
- 5.7. Customer Service – Parental engagement is integral to the National Improvement Framework for Schools.

Anne Paterson
Head of Education: Lifelong Learning & Support

Cllr Yvonne McNeilly
Policy Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning

14th June 2018

For further information contact: Robyn McIlroy, Area Education Officer

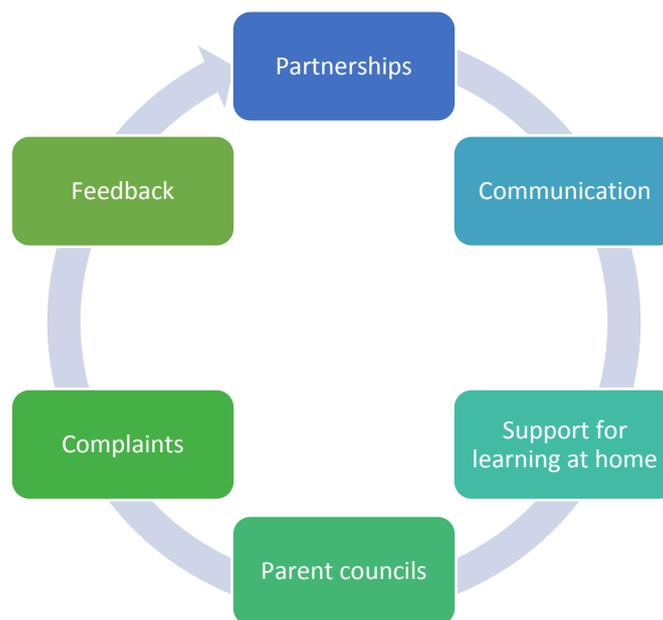
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Parental Engagement Strategy 2018

Appendix 1



Argyll & Bute Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2018



Introduction by Anne Paterson, Head of Education

Our vision, set out in our *Our Children, Their Future* is that we want Argyll & Bute to be the best place to grow up. We want young people and families to remain in this area, and be attracted to live here. A key part of that vision is to strengthen high quality partnership working and community engagement.

We recognise that most of a child's development takes place outwith our schools and therefore the role of families and carers is critical to ensuring our children and young people succeed. We want to support families to engage meaningfully in their child's education.

This revised Parental Engagement Strategy was created in consultation with a wide group of stakeholders and reflects our commitment to empower parents to become better involved with our schools and better engaged with children's learning.

Key objectives

We have six key objectives for our schools to support and improve parental engagement and promote family learning.

- ❖ **Develop strong partnerships with parents.**
- ❖ **Promote and support effective communication between schools and parents.**
- ❖ **Provide support and encouragement for learning at home.**
- ❖ **Support and promote the role of Parent Councils**
- ❖ **Provide a clear route for parents' concerns and complaints to be resolved.**
- ❖ **Seek views and respond to feedback from parents about this policy.**

1. Partnerships

We are committed to building and developing strong partnerships with parents.

This means:

- All parents will be welcomed and actively encouraged to become involved with and participate in the life and work of the school.
- Schools will make developing partnerships with parents a priority in school improvement plans.
- Parents will be given the opportunities to discuss and agree with school staff any particular types of support to suit individual parents needs and circumstances
- Schools will identify and reduce potential barriers to parents becoming involved with the life and the work of the school.
- Parents will have opportunities to contribute to school improvement plans and policy development.
- Schools will be asked to identify a member of staff to help promote and support parental involvement and engagement.

2. Communication

We are committed to providing useful information about children's learning and communicating effectively with parents. This means:

- Schools will communicate regularly with parents providing relevant and timely information about children's learning.
- Schools will consult with parents about preferences for methods of communication.
- Schools will consult with the Parent Council about the ways in which schools report to parents on children's learning and progress.
- Non-resident parents will be provided with regular reports on their child's learning as agreed with the Head Teacher.

3. Learning at home

We are committed to providing opportunities for parents to share in their child's learning at home. This means:

- Schools will work with parents to decide how schools can support learning at home.
- Schools will signpost parents to ways in which they can get support for family learning in the local community.
- Schools will develop home learning policies in consultation with pupils, staff and parents and Parent Councils.

4. Parent Councils

We are committed to supporting Parent Councils and ensuring that they have sufficient opportunities to be involved with the life and work of the school. This means:

- Schools will seek views of the Parent Council on the development of the school improvement plans and significant school policy development.
- Parent Councils will contribute to the recruitment of senior school staff.
- Parent Councils will be given an annual funding contribution by the local authority to support training.
- Parent Councils will be asked to ensure that they communicate their work to the broader parent forum.
- Parent Councils will be asked to recognise and overcome any barriers to parents becoming involved with the Parent Council.

5. Complaints

We are committed to help parents resolve any concerns or issues at the earliest opportunity. This means:

- Parents can bring any concerns directly to their child's school and can expect the school to take steps to resolve the concern within five working days.
- Schools will provide parents with a named person to contact to resolve any concerns.
- If any parent is not satisfied with the way their complaint has been responded to, parents can make a formal complaint in terms of the Argyll & Bute Council complaints procedure which can be accessed at <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/do-it-online/comments-and-complaints>.

6. Feedback

We are committed to seeking the views and opinions of parents about how we are engaging parents in schools and pupils' learning.

This means:

- We will consult with parents and representatives of Parent Councils in the creation and review of this Strategy.
- We will consult with Head Teachers and the Head Teacher Advisory Group on the creation and review of this Strategy.
- We will provide parents with the opportunity of responding to a Parent Satisfaction Survey on an annual basis from 2020.
- We will review this Strategy every three years taking into consideration the feedback from the Parent Satisfaction Survey and any other representations on this policy.

Action plan

- Communication of this policy: a copy of this policy and action plan will be available to all parents and all schools by September 2018.
- Head Teachers and Parent Council Chairs will be asked to ensure that the policy is discussed at Parent Council meetings and action taken to implement the key objectives by December 2018.
- All schools will be asked to audit and evaluate their existing engagement with parents, Parent Councils and provision of support for family learning by March 2019.
- All schools will be asked to develop a Parental Engagement and Home Family Learning Strategy by June 2019.
- All schools will be asked to nominate a member of staff to promote and support parental engagement and family learning by August 2019.
- A parent satisfaction survey will be sent to all parents to evaluate the impact of this Parental Engagement Strategy and to request feedback by June 2020.
- All schools will be asked to evaluate the progress and impact of their Parental Engagement and Home Family Learning Strategy September 2020.
- This Strategy will be reviewed in March 2021.

Relevant policy background

Parental engagement and learning at home features in a number of Scottish policies and strategies including the following:

- ❖ Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006
- ❖ National Parenting Strategy (2012)
- ❖ Scottish Attainment Challenge (2015)
- ❖ Family Learning Review (2016)
- ❖ 2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan (2017)