

Education Services
Strategy

DRAFT
**Parental Involvement and Engagement
Strategy**
Education Support Services

2018

1 POLICY STATEMENT

Dumfries and Galloway Education Authority, Children, young People and Lifelong Learning Directorate, Education Services have prepared the following **Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy** in line with The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

2. Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Strategy 2018-2021

Introduction When parents take a supportive role in their child's education there is a positive impact on children's achievements. The purpose of this strategy is to provide all early learning and childcare and school settings with a supportive framework they can use to engage parents in the education of their children.

3. The definition of a "parent" is the one set out in the Education Scotland Act 1980 which states that "parent includes guardian and any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibilities in relation to or has care of a child or young person. This includes ensuring that non-resident parents receive all information they are entitled to".

4. Education Services are also proactive in encouraging parental involvement of parents of "looked after children", that is children who are subject to supervision orders and live with family members as well as children who live with foster carers, in residential schools or care homes; non-resident parents and other parents/carers allocated the responsibility of a young person. They will do this by working closely with partner agencies and schools. Much of this work is set out in the [Dumfries and Galloway Children's Services Plan 2017-2020](#). It also sets out key achievements, new developments and identifies work over the next few years and meets our requirement under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

5. Parental Involvement and Engagement forums:

- **Parent Forum:** includes any parent with a child at Nursery, Primary or Secondary education in a Council operated school within the Council area
- **School Parent Council:** membership of this formally constituted body is open to any parent with a child in attendance at the school and membership of office bearers (Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary) is by election within the individual school.
- **Area Parent Forum:** membership of this formally constituted body is open to members of School Parent Councils. This is known as the Dumfries and Galloway Parent/Carer Forum.
- **CYPLL Education Committee:** Membership of this Council committee is through election by and of members of the Area Parent Forum.
- **CONNECT –** Membership Organisation for Parent Council via Education Services
- **National Parents Forum of Scotland:** Attendance at national events is open to any member of the Parent Forum. There is one elected representative and a depute from each Education Authority, both of whom are members of the Area Parent Forum and attend termly meetings.
- **SPION:** Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network is for officers from local authorities across Scotland with the responsibility for parental involvement.
- **Scottish Government/Education Scotland:** also provide information directly to parents through Parentzone Scotland <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>

6. To help us get it right for parents we have established several ways to engage:

- A new web page for parental involvement <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools>
- Scheme of Establishment for Parent Councils – framework for parents.
- This Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy
- Parental Communications Framework
- School Handbooks (Council and school support information)
- Connect Membership – Insurance, Training and Information for Parents
- Ask us to Look Again process

We also engage and share information in the following ways through our Communications Framework, found at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools>

- Information sharing directly with Parent Council Chairs
- Parental information via Council website's gov.delivery online messaging
- Updates for parents from Headteachers through Engage - Authority Electronic Newsletter
- Updates for parents through school newsletters (from schools)
- Sharing of information with Dumfries and Galloway Parent/Carer Forum – facebook page
- Sharing of information with seldom heard groups – direct mailing
- Open invitations for engagement and consultation

7. Education Services Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy is based on the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

The Act covers three broad levels of engagement with parents. These are:

Home / School / Community Partnership - Shared Responsibility

Schools must be open to the involvement of parents in the work they do and they should consider ways of providing information that helps parents engage with the school and their child's education.

Learning at home - the vital role of parents

Parents are the first and ongoing educators of their own children and, as such, should receive information and support to help develop their child's learning at home and in the community

Parental Representation

It makes provision for parents to be members of the Parent Forum at a school, and to have their views represented to the school, education authority and others, through a representative Parent Council for the school

8. We also work to the following principles that underpin successful parental involvement:

Principle	What do these principles mean?
INTEGRITY	Listen to what parents say and genuinely consider the views expressed.
VISIBILITY	Make sure all parents know about chances to give their views.
ACCESSIBILITY	Design information, methods and activities so they are attractive, and all parents can access them and join in.
TRANSPARENCY	Explain to parents what the involvement processes are and how their responses will be used.
DISCLOSURE	Be clear about what areas of the issue they can influence, how much influence they can have and what decisions have already been taken and are therefore not part of moving forward and what other alternatives there might be.
FAIR INTERPRETATION	Collate and interpret responses to reflect the views parents have expressed where appropriate.
PUBLICATION	Publish the results of consultations when parents have been involved.

9. Implementation

Parental Involvement and Engagement strategies will take place in schools and by departments across the Council where colleagues work with children and young people. Engagement with other services such as Community Learning and Development, NHS, Police, Third Sector and Community groups and pupils - all of whom should be aware of how the principals of Parental Involvement should form part of the implementation process.

*Parental Engagement is intended to support the national vision of **excellence through raising attainment and achieving equity** on entering school to leaving school.*

Excellence through Raising Attainment

- **achieving raising attainment:** is more than just exam success. It is about the development and progress of a child or young person's skills, achievements and life chances. It also means that we want to raise ambition for improved chances for success and good wellbeing in all children and young people.

Excellence through Achieving Equity

- **achieving equity:** is the approach taken to Raising Attainment, ensuring that every child or young person has an equal chance to be the best they can be, no matter what their circumstances. This will be different in each school setting and class.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Partnerships are most effective when schools regard parent's views as important, take them into account and this is fully recognised and appreciated by parents. This will happen when parents and school staff are committed to partnership working and have a clear understanding of their respective roles.

Schools will support the work of pupils and parents by

- All members of staff ensure that they treat parents as partners in the education of their child(ren).
- All members of staff have a responsibility to help to realise the potential of each individual child and to work in partnership with each child's parents to achieve this.
- The Headteacher will ensure that an effective school Parental Involvement Policy is in place and that it has been developed in conjunction with the views of parents in their respective schools.
- Headteachers encourage parents' participation in school policies and involve them in the development of their School Improvement Plan.
- Schools should encourage the involvement of pupils (Pupil Councils) and consider their views on Parental Involvement and Engagement.

Parents will support the work of pupils and the school by

- Working in partnership with their child(ren)'s school to support their children's education, which might include:

- ❖ Being involved with and developing the processes involved in preparing children for key transitions, such as from nursery to primary, primary to secondary and leaving school
- ❖ Discussing the opportunities available to children during key periods of their school career, such as the Senior Phase (S4-S6)
- ❖ Formulating the school's priorities for improvement (the development of the School Improvement Plan)
- ❖ Revising existing school policies and introducing new policies
- ❖ Developing the School Handbook.

- The Parent Councils should encourage positive dialogue between school, staff and the Parent Forum. The Parent Council plays a key role in engaging with the wider Parent Forum.
- Having an awareness of and access to sources of information and support agencies (via School Handbooks and other school level information leaflets). These should be used as a reference point to support their children throughout the child's time at school.

Education Services will support the work of schools and parents through

- Education Officers offer support and challenge to Headteachers in the interpretation and implementation of parental involvement and engagement in all schools is supported
- Education Support Services provide information on practical support for parents and families and opportunities to influence and inform policy making
- Education Support Services will undertake to promote and disseminate examples of good practice in parental involvement
- Education Support Services offer support to Parent Councils through the provision of Parent Council Insurance and Training opportunities as part of CONNECT (formally SPTC) membership for the benefit of ALL parents.

11. School Policy on Parental Involvement and Engagement

Schools may already have an existing policy on Parental Involvement. If not, schools should prepare one and it should be included in the cycle of policy reviews.

A school policy on Parental Involvement should contain reference to:

- the commitments that the school is giving to parents
- the expectation that the school has of parents
- ways to access advice, further information and raise concerns and complaints
- arrangements for reporting to parents on their child's progress formally and informally including sharing information on their child's achievements and concerns
- the kinds of activities and approaches that are used to engage parents meaningfully in their child's education

It is important that the implementation of this strategy forms part of the School's Parental Involvement and that informal discussions may need to take place over the understanding and practice of the Strategy. The strategy for Parental Involvement would be reviewed by D&G Council, Education Services on a three-yearly cycle.

12. Schools will be expected to take account of parental involvement when preparing their School Improvement Plans.

The criteria for a successful strategy are that parents are confident in, and comfortable with, their relationship with the school – however schools and parents should continue to find ways to improve the level and quality of partnership.

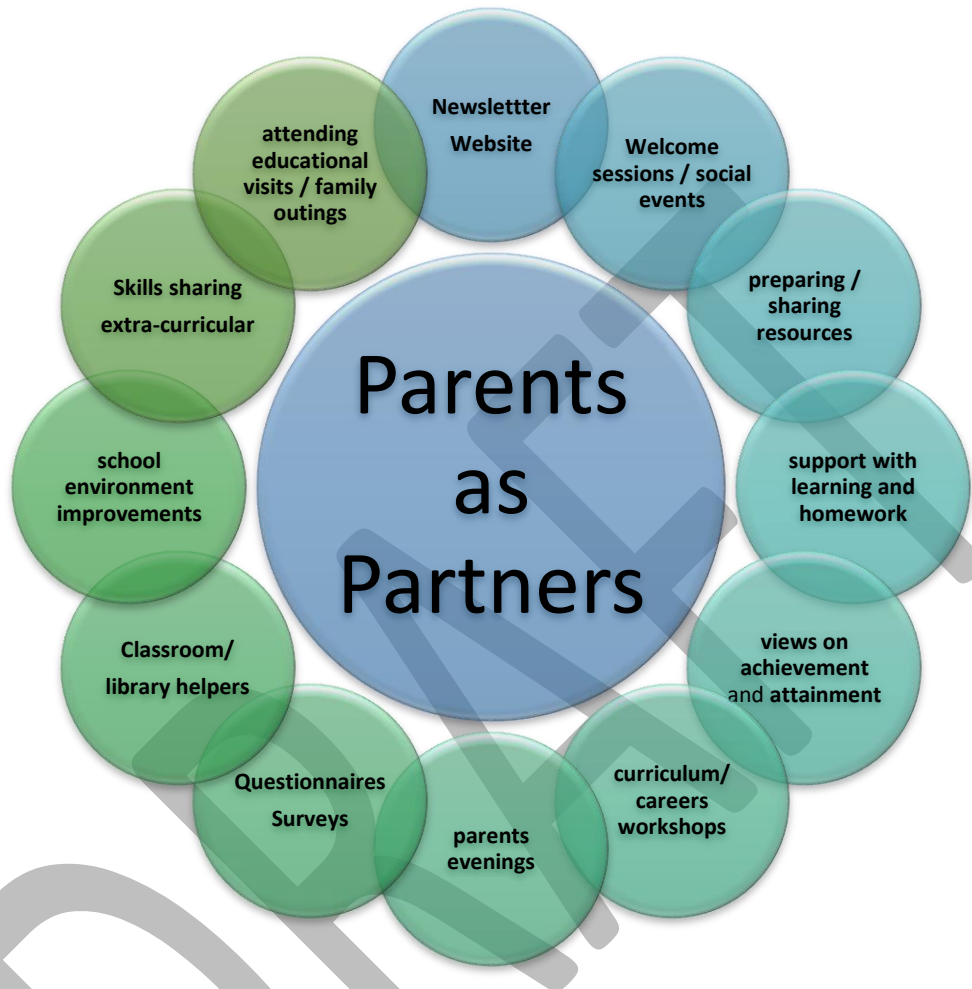
Social and fundraising events take place in many schools on a regular basis. These events which involve parents and staff working together are to be commended and provide invaluable opportunities for building positive relationships.

Effective Parental Involvement and Engagement provides ALL teachers and learning partners with a clearer understanding of children's home circumstances and personal out of school achievements, and increases parental understanding of what children are learning, how well they are achieving and how they can support learning in the home environment.

Decisions taken with the active involvement of parents will be based on an important shared understanding of the local situation. For example, it will enable parents to have the information they want, at the right time, in the right format and with the correct level of detail.

Parents as Partners might include the following activities and events:

Parent volunteers can also help to give pupils a visible indication of parents and staff working together in partnership to enhance the quality of learning. Dumfries and Galloway Council has an agreed set of procedures for any adults working in schools. These are set out in the "Participation in School Activities by Volunteers" available from your school office that must be followed. It is important that both parents and schools understand the need for these procedures and that the potential benefit of involving volunteers. (refer to overall Council strategy)



13. Communication

Schools will hold copies of Education Services Parental Involvement Strategy which will be available to all parents via

- **Parent Council**
- **School office** - All schools should promote their Parental Involvement Policy and be encouraged to create opportunities to raise awareness of it with ALL parents.
- **Online at** <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools>

Education Support Services will as appropriate use Area or Cluster models to encourage parental consultation. These will enable representatives from local Parent Councils to meet and discuss current issues. Senior staff from the Service will attend as appropriate.

The Council will provide advice and communicate with parents as appropriate. Education Services have produced a Communication Framework that sets out how we engage with Parents/Carers that is shared at link above under Parental Involvement and Engagement.

14. Training

- Education Services is committed to helping Parent Councils (and Parent Forums)
- Parent Council members, through the membership of Connect, can access training and support advice as identified by the Parent Council or Parent Forum.
- Education Services will provide opportunities centrally for parents to enhance their knowledge of education and care and wellbeing issues.
- Schools may deliver ongoing programmes to assist parents in supporting their child's learning.
- Parent Council members who are to be involved in the appointments procedures for Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers will receive appropriate training prior to the commencement of the procedures.

15. Two-way communication between School and Parents/Individual children

Schools are expected to meet the principles and expectations of the National Improvement Framework (NIF). This is reflected in the local Raising Attainment Reflection toolkit, which is a resource to enable individual management teams to monitor and assess performance in relation to the following themes:

- a) How well do I work with individual parents/carers to help them support their child's learning through shared high expectations and motivation to achieve?
- b) How inclusive and proactive is my strategy for enabling parents/carers to engage with me and the school. Is it working?
- c) How effectively do I look for opportunities to engage the wider community to enrich learning experiences, and raise motivation and aspiration amongst my children and young people?
- d) Is a school year calendar or planner distributed to all families identifying opportunities for parental engagement in learning?
- e) Where appropriate a home work diary can be provided for each pupil as a useful way of encouraging informal two-way communication between home and school.

16. Education Services has also made the commitment as part of the Education Authority Annual Plan to:

There is now an increased responsibility for Parental Involvement within the National Improvement Framework (NIF) that all schools and Education Services will report on.

1. Strengthen links with parents and partners in the wider community to enhance outcomes for all learners; engagement plan and impact measure (qualitative and quantitative)
2. Further develop the annual parental engagement survey to provide an opportunity to gather more detailed parental views to inform engagement and parental involvement strategies
3. Engagement with school improvement planning process / standards and quality reports including parent / young person and community accessible versions through focus group scenario settings
4. Develop and implement approaches to parental engagement and family learning to include professional learning utilising CLD approaches as appropriate
5. Improve access to information for Parent Councils – Creation of a Parent Council Pack, reviewed School handbook template in line with new guidance from the Scottish Government
6. Develop a template for Parental Involvement for Schools to further develop to meet their local needs

17. National Standards of Community Engagement and Dumfries and Galloway Centre of Excellence for Participation and Engagement.

Education Services is committed to using the National Standards of Community Engagement in its approach to meet those commitments. The 7 National Standards are:

1. **Inclusion:** We will identify and involve the people and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement.
2. **Support:** We will identify and overcome any barriers to participation.
3. **Planning:** There is a clear purpose for the engagement, which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and ambitions.
4. **Working Together:** We will work effectively together to achieve the aims of the engagement.
5. **Methods:** We will use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.
6. **Communication:** We will communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement.
7. **Impact:** We will assess the impact of the engagement and use what we have learned to improve our future community engagement.

More detailed information is available from the following link: <http://www.voicescotland.org.uk/>

In addition, Dumfries and Galloway Council has established a Centre of Excellence for Participation and Engagement whose key principles have been included in this document as best practice principles. These key principles and behaviours should underpin engagement between School, Parents and Education Services ensuring all partners are treated fairly.

Education Services also supports the work of Dumfries and Galloway Parent/Carer Forum (DGPCF), the independent voice for Parent Councils with representatives from across Dumfries and Galloway. We will use this forum as a communication channel and a forum for engagement and consultation.

18. Monitoring

Education Services will prepare a progress report on Parental Involvement for the Authority Education Annual Plan, National Improvement Framework. This process includes;

- Regular meetings with the DGPCF with senior management of Education Services are established.
- These meetings enable DGPCF to raise concerns or opportunities as identified by Parent Councils across Dumfries and Galloway and by working with Education Services identify the best way to address these.
- At these meetings the Parental Involvement Strategy will be reviewed and revisions made as appropriate.
- The DGPCF also have a non-voting presence on the Education Services, CYPLL Committee allowing them to support and/or challenge Educational policy or practice as presented to Elected Members. Education Services Committee meetings are set out side of any parental involvement framework.
- Representatives on this committee from Parent Councils from across Dumfries and Galloway enable operational issues and the progress of Parent Councils to be monitored.

19. Survey Monitoring

Education Services/Schools and Parents

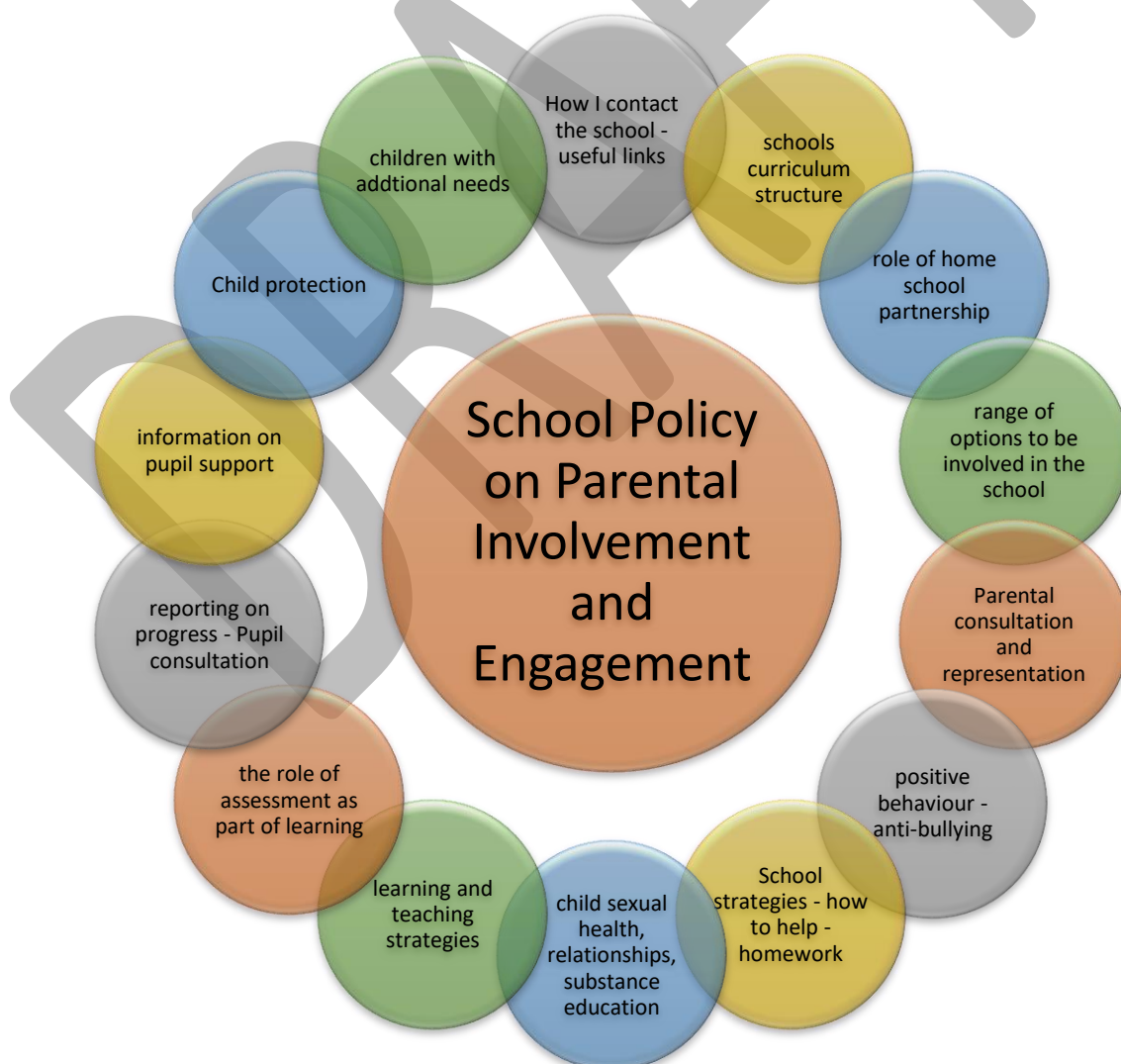
Each year we provide the opportunity for parents to take part in a Dumfries and Galloway wide parental satisfaction survey. Education Scotland (Scottish Government) and schools will also carry out their own parental surveys as appropriate. These measures enable us to develop a clearer picture of what is important to parents and what they perceive to be the issues at times of great challenge and change.

All officers of the Schools Service should have a role in ensuring Parental Involvement within their specific areas of responsibility.

Education Officers monitor through professional dialogue with the Headteacher, the degree and quality of Parental Involvement within their schools and report back to Education Services especially where there is an identified need to build better working relationships or share the best practice with other Parent Councils across Dumfries and Galloway.

D&G Council, Education Services also works with data and qualitative information from Education Scotland, Scottish Government and individual schools on how schools and Education Services, reflect and improve by listening to parents/carers.

20. School level Policy on Parental Involvement, Engagement and Monitoring



Parent Council:

Within each school, the Parent Council (acting on behalf of the **Parent Forum**) should take responsibility for monitoring the school's policy on Parental Involvement.

Schools:

Headteachers should report on the activities within their own school based on the National Improvement Framework (NIF) Report.

School Pupils:

There should also be regular consultation with pupils regarding Parental Involvement within the school. This should be recorded by the school and shared with the wider Parent Forum through the school newsletters, blogs or as part of their regular communication strategy.

Reports:

It is important to encourage an atmosphere in which parents feel able to share their perceptions of their child's progress. In nursery and pre-school contexts informal discussions can offer a positive way initiating dialogue and this form of communication should be encouraged throughout primary and secondary schools including:

- Parental and pupil response sections on Pupil Reports
- Parents should also be provided with a list of useful contacts, including the range of support services who work with the school on a regular basis
- Other ways of communicating could include;
- Phone calls and text messaging emails – group call – (SEEMIS) reporting.
- A Parents Section on school website for parent workshops
- Letters and newsletters written by parents/pupils
- Face to face informal contact

21. Pupil Support

a) Personal Support

Parents should have clearly defined procedures for communication relating to their child's general welfare and at times of transition. Parents should receive regular information on their child's personal and social development. Home-school communication systems should be clear to all parties and published in the School Handbooks and should cover both written and verbal contact. All parents should be provided with a named contact person.

b) Additional Support for Learning

Parents of children with additional support needs should be made aware of any special arrangements that have been put in place for their child. Their attention should also be drawn to the parents support group Parents Inclusion Network (PIN).

Whole school matters

All schools should regularly seek and consider the views of parents on the identification of priorities for their school. An ideal way to do this is by working with the school on their School Improvement Plan. Methods of engagement may include the use of focus groups and parental surveys in addition to the Parent Council.

Parental consultation should be included when developing major school policies and procedures. Parents should also be included in partnership approaches utilising local community support and influence.

If you require any additional information or wish to discuss any aspect of this strategy please contact Education Services by emailing educationsupport@dumgal.gov.uk

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 Guidance can be found at:
<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/Documents/parental-involvement-act-guidance.pdf>

Appendix 1 Scheme

Scheme for the Introduction of Parent Councils operational guidance for Parent Councils – summary needed from the Scheme.

Scheme for the Introduction of Parent Councils

Dumfries and Galloway Education Authority, Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning Directorate, Education Services have prepared the following ***Scheme for the Establishment of Parent Councils*** in line with The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 please click on link for the full Act details:

What does this mean for:

Parent and Parent Councils:

- the document has been prepared to help with the establishment of new Parent Councils, and to help existing Parent Councils review their Constitutions when they decide it is appropriate to do so.

The Authority/Education Services/Schools:

- to provide a common framework informing and setting out the governance for Parent Councils creation and operation.
- to provide a framework to review and amend their Parental Involvement Strategy to ensure that parents are aware of and able to be engaged in supporting their school and their child's learning.

A copy of the DRAFT Scheme of Establishment can be found online at
<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools> - Parental Involvement

Appendix 2 Appointments

Appointments Process must be included in the FINAL version

Complaints Process must be included in the FINAL version

Vanessa Morris
Support Officer
July 2018