

Directorate of Education and Learning
Strategy

Parental Communication Framework

Supporting Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy

2018
Updated August 2019

1 Parental Communication Framework

The following framework sets out how we intend to communicate with parents/carers as part of our Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2019-21.

To achieve this:

- DGC Education Support Services will promote through school handbooks
- DGC Education Support Services will share <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schools>
- Schools will make parents aware of this Communication Framework and Authority Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy by directing parental enquiries
- Parent Councils will help to promote to the wider Parent Forum.

2 Rationale

The purpose of the Communication Framework is to make parents and partners aware of how we intend to share opportunities for involvement and engagement, including

- Schools /Staff /Parents /Carers /Learners and other members of the Community who support the life of the school

The key stakeholders for this communication are parents/carers, with other local and national partners who support parents/carers.

Parent Forum	Includes any parent with a child at Nursery, Primary or Secondary education in a Council operated school within Dumfries and Galloway
School Parent Council	Membership of this constituted body is open to any parent with a child in attendance at the school, and membership of Office/role Bearers (Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary) is by election within the individual school
DGPCF	Membership of this formally constituted body is open to all members of school Parent Councils. This is known as the Dumfries and Galloway Parent/Carer Council Forum (DGPCF) For more information email dandgparentforum@gmail.com OR Facebook page: Dumfries & Galloway Parent/Carer Council Forum.
CONNECT	Formerly known as Scottish Parent Teacher Council, Connect, is a Parent Council and Teacher Support national organisation. They provide Insurance Cover and Training Opportunities. Education Services have provided membership to all Parent Councils. For more information visit https://connect.scot/ Or helpline 0131 474 6199 or email info@connect.scot .
PIN	Parents Inclusion Network (PIN) is a group of parents and carers who all have sons and daughters with a disability - children of all ages and adults with all types of disabilities. For more information visit Or visit https://www.parentsinclusionnetwork.org.uk/ Or contact 01387 252683 or email parentsinclusion@gmail.com
Education and Learning Committee	Membership of this Council committee is through election by and of members of the Area Parent Forum (DGPCF)
National Parent 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 (DGPCF), who attend meetings once a term
SPION	Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network is for officers from local authorities across Scotland with the responsibility for parental involvement.

“Children, young people and their families should be involved in decisions that affect them, should have their voices heard and should be encouraged to play an active and responsible role in their communities”. DGC Integrated Children’s Services Plan 2018

3 How we Communicate

To communicate effectively we must:

- build trust with parents and partners to ensure that information can be communicated effectively through our schools, Parent Councils (to the wider Parent Forum) and our support agencies and learning partners.
- make everyone aware of the need to share information to allow us to maximise the potential of working together for the benefit of children, young people, all staff and those in the community who support their school community.
- carefully manage expectations to ensure that our engagement is deliverable and effective.

To communicate effectively we will apply principles of best practice:

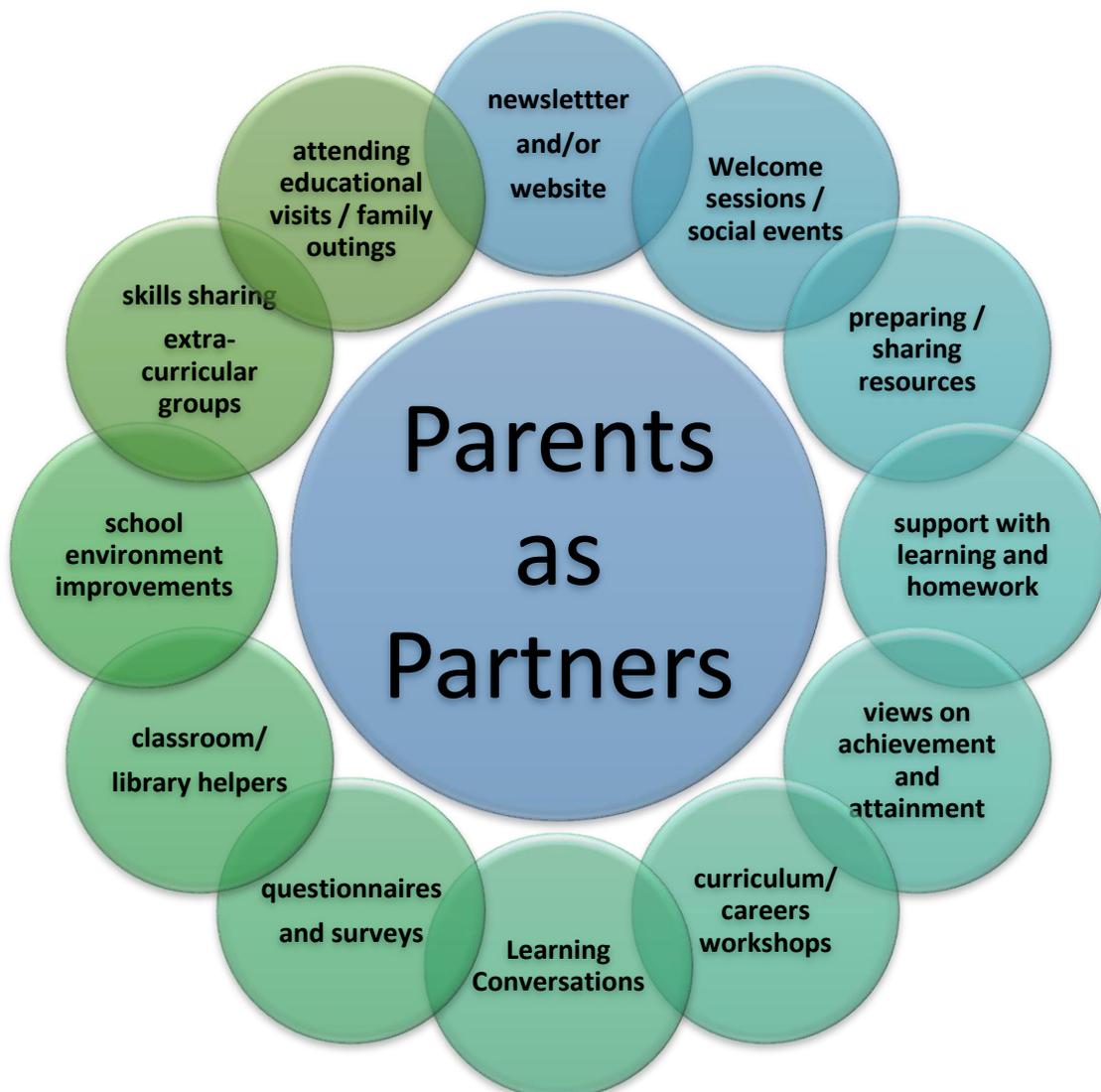
- we will work within the guidelines of the National Standards of Community Engagement and Dumfries and Galloway Council’s own Centre of Excellence for Community Participation and Engagement framework and guidance.
- we acknowledge that successful Parental Involvement is underpinned by the following basic principles:

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.

- Through co-production with parents and partners, we will produce co-ordinated, consistent, accurate and timely engagement, for parents, pupils, partners and staff with regards to Parental Involvement and Engagement that allow everyone to work towards realising opportunities set out in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

To achieve this,

- Schools will provide clarity on how parents/carers can be involved in their child(ren's) learning and the life of the school.
- Education Services will offer creative opportunities for positive meaningful engagement and consultation with key stakeholder groups to inform the work of Schools and Education Services as part of the National Improvement Framework (NIF).
- Schools will offer engagement that supports the national vision of excellence through raising attainment and achieving equity from Early Learning and Childcare (nursery) through to the Senior Phase (last years at school) through the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence.



4. Communication and Engagement Requirements for Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Communication and engagement requirements
Public	Community members should have some awareness of the work that is undertaken in their local schools and have an opportunity to be more involved to increase community participation in schools.
Parents/Carers *	<p>Should be clear on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •how they can support their children in school and at home •what training they can receive to be able to support their child(ren) •any ongoing opportunity to be informed be able to influence (where appropriate) future engagement AND •be informed and engaged on changes to the services that they currently receive or are likely to receive in the future. <p>* Education Support Services, through this communications framework, will try to engage with parents who are inclusive of nine “protected characteristics”: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. And attention is paid to those parents from refugee and asylum-seeking families, homeless families, minority ethnic families, traveller families, families of prisoners or parents of children with additional support needs.</p>
Pupils/Young People	Need to be informed about how parents are engaged in and support their learning in schools. Parent Councils should be encouraged to work with/use pupil groups and Pupil Councils.
Staff	Across the service staff need to be kept informed about their role and responsibilities with regards to engagement and involvement.
Elected Members	Elected members should be informed and consulted, in line with the member/officer protocol.
Unions	Need to be kept informed about engagement and involvement in relation to requests of staff in our schools.
Local/National Businesses	Need to understand how they may support our schools and services.
Catholic Church	Should be kept informed about engagement and involvement.
Local bodies	Dumfries and Galloway Parent/Carer Council Forum (DGPCF) / Parental Inclusion Network (PIN) / Parent Carer Association / Youth Forum / LGBTQ+ / DGVoice / Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service + others
National bodies, including but not limited to:	Education Scotland / Parentzone Scotland / Parent Club Scotland/ SPION / Skills Development Scotland / Association of Directors of Education in Scotland / General Teaching Council of Scotland / National Parent Forum of Scotland / Connect / Scottish Government
Learning partners including but not limited to:	Dumfries and Galloway College / University of West of Scotland / University of Glasgow / Barony College / Third Sector / Business Sector
Community Councils	Members should have awareness of Parental Involvement and Engagement. They could be more involved if interested.
Delivery partners	Regional collaboratives – sharing of best practice across local authority areas.

5. Methods – use a variety of methods within the available resources as listed below.

Method	Description
Media (print, radio and television)	Press releases, features, advertorial
Social media (DGC) (Facebook / Twitter / School Blogs)	Existing Council social media channels or develop channels specific to the project. School blogs
Groupcall and Apps	Xpressions app used by some schools
Meetings	National bodies / Headteachers / Parent Councils / Parent Forum Pupil Council – new secondary pupil council forum to be established
Social Media (external platforms)	Greater use of social media – Facebook, Twitter. Use bullet points / sound bites
Generic Email Addresses	Email addresses for all Parent Council Chairs – move to share on D&G School Web pages
Multimedia (images and films)	Accessible and easy to understand still and moving images to enable effective communications
Newsletters (electronic)	E-newsletter to Headteachers already in circulation, Engage
Information points in schools	Parent Councils and schools have a responsibility to ensure that ALL parents are kept informed about how they can be involved in their child(ren's) learning
User focus groups	Groups of school users, brought together and given tasks to fulfil a specific objective – focus groups
GLOW	Primary tool for communication with all teaching staff and pupils
Letters / Printed materials	School bag or traditional mail to be used for information sharing with stakeholders
CYPLL (Education) Committee	Parent representatives from DGPCF on CYPLL Committee / Annual report on Parental Involvement and Engagement and seminar input
Political Group meetings	Regular meetings with political groupings by Senior Management
Website	New page for the promotion of Parental Involvement and Engagement – with supporting documents
DGC Gov.delivery notices - self-subscription process through DGC website	Use of this automated online system allowing anyone to receive notifications of Parental Involvement and Engagement information/events to their email.

6. Communication and Engagement Action Plan 2018 - 2021

Action needed	Target Audience	When	Comments
Maintain Parental Involvement page	All	Ongoing	DGC Website - Create and Maintain information in line with key milestones
Share information with schools for distribution through their School Newsletters	All (opt in)	Termly	Education Support Officers to supply schools with key information as and when this becomes available.
Engage Updates	Headteacher and Teaching staff	Weekly	Authority wide
Share updates with DGPCF	Parents	Ongoing	Authority wide
Encourage use of DGC social media to engage and provide information	All	Ongoing	Look to use Council Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote key milestones (linked to media comms)
Share updates with Community interest groups	All	Ongoing	Look to use existing online forums outwith the council – (parental and community interest groups) to share information to those 'seldom heard' audiences
Information points in schools	Staff, parents and pupils	tbc	Information points/panels to be identified in schools for engagement and involvement
Focus Groups / Workshops	Staff, Parents and Pupils	As required	Link to major milestones or short-term studies or tasks
Members Seminars	Elected Members	As required	As part of parental engagement and involvement
Education and Learning Committee	Elected Members	Ongoing	Annual update
Staffing Models and Conditions of Service Group meetings	Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (Unions)	As required	Considered by Senior Management
Parent Forums	Parents	Termly	As part of Dumfries and Galloway Parent/Carer Council Forum and attendance at Parent Council Meetings as required
Pupil Forums	Pupils	Ongoing	Creation of Pupil Forum (on GLOW)
GLOW	Staff (Teaching)	Ongoing	Engage/Briefing notes and Headteacher forums

Appendix 1 - 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. 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 Community Participation and Engagement whose key principles have been included in this document as best practice principles. Visit <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/17349/Have-your-say> for more detail.

Appendix 2 – Key Messages

Key messages to inform press releases or dealing with enquiries.

- Research evidence indicates that when parents take a supportive role in their child's education there is a positive impact on children's achievements. The Scottish Schools (Scottish Government Parental Involvement Act) 2006 strengthened the existing framework for supporting Parental Involvement and meaningful Engagement in the education of their children and the wider school community. Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC), Education Services also recognises that partnerships with parents is central to the Education Scotland Act 2004 and 2016 (for Additional Support for Learning).
- Parental Involvement and Engagement is part of the underpinning philosophy of the DGC Integrated Children's Services Plan 2018, which the engagement with children, young people and families is a key strategic priority and we are therefore committed to giving a range of opportunities for children, young people and families to be involved in policy and service delivery at all levels.
- 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".
- Parental Involvement and Engagement strategies will take place at ALL individual 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 as well as pupils, all of whom should be aware of the principals of Parental Involvement.

- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act), and the Statutory Guidance (<https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00483676.pdf>) on Part 9 (corporate parenting) sets out a range of duties for corporate parents including a local authority.
- Parental Involvement and Engagement is recognised as a key element of the National Improvement Framework and its supporting legislation, the Education Scotland Act 2016 Please visit Parentzone Scotland at [https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/getting-involved/Scottish%20Schools%20\(Parental%20Involvement\)%20Act](https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/getting-involved/Scottish%20Schools%20(Parental%20Involvement)%20Act)
- Parental engagement is intended to support the national vision of **excellence through raising attainment** and **achieving equity** from Early Learning and Childcare (nursery) through to the Senior Phase (last years at school) through delivery of Curriculum for Excellence.
- 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.
- The National Parent Forum of Scotland's [Review of Scotland's 2006 Parental Involvement Act](#) (published May 2017) confirmed that Scotland's Parental Involvement Act (2006) has helped to "support a step-change in the quality of parental involvement across Scotland". Practice across Scotland has evolved considerably since Scotland's Parental Involvement Act was brought into force in 2007.
- **Learning together – Scotland's national action plan** on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018-2021 sets out a vision for parental involvement and engagement for the next three years. It covers the journey that a child takes from pre-birth to age 18. It takes account of the national and international evidence base as well as policy and practice expertise across the Scottish education system. It contains 13 goals and 52 national actions. It provides a national vision, but it allows for local and community innovation and flexibility. Importantly, it highlights the leadership of those who make the difference day in and day out: parents and families, teachers, headteachers, managers, practitioners and other partners.

This plan is based on the guiding aim of Getting it Right for Every Child. It is informed by the central role of the family, whatever form that may take. The theme that lies at the heart of this plan is relationships - relationships based on trust, mutual respect and collaboration.

Vanessa Morris, Support Officer

July 2018

Updated March 2019 post parental consultation

Updated August 2019 through parental involvement and engagement