



Appendix 1

West Dunbartonshire Council

Parental and Family Engagement Strategy 3-18

West 
Dunbartonshire
COUNCIL

Contents

Background	P3
Aims	P4
Culture and Ethos	P4
Vision and Leadership in Parental Involvement.....	P5
Responsible Body tables	P6-10
Monitoring Progress and Achievement and Self Evaluation	P11
Complaints.....	P12

NB THE TERM PARENT USED THROUGHOUT THIS DOCUMENT APPLIES TO PARENTS, CARERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS WHO CARE FOR CHILDREN

Background

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act) 2006 lays down the legislative requirements for the establishment of Parent Councils. The guidance that accompanies the Act makes it clear that the intention is to support parental involvement in a much wider sense, not only the representation of parents, but the building of home/school partnerships and the involvement of parents supporting their child's learning at home. The Scottish Government 'Learning Together' 3-18 sets out an action plan for Parental and Family Engagement 3-18.

There are three main levels of engagement:

- Learning at Home and Family Learning
- Home/School Partnership
- Parental Representation

The strategy aims to support all educational establishments in developing the six dimensions of family engagement:

- **Parenting** - providing opportunities for parents to get support and understanding of their child's education and development needs.
- **Collaboration with the community** - co-ordinating resources and services for families and learners in the wider community, including third sector organisations.
- **Volunteering** - providing opportunities and encouragement for parents and families to help at times that suit their schedules.
- **Learning at home** - giving information and advice on the curriculum and how parents can help their children learn.
- **Communication** - communicating and listening to all parents about their role in their child's education
- **Decision making** - ensuring a variety of parents are involved in parent organisations and committees.

The Parental and Family Engagement Strategy links with a variety of other current policy areas and plans including:

- Educational Services Curriculum for Excellence implementation plan
- Creating a Curriculum for Excellence Parts 1-5
- How good is our school? - HMIE
- How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare
- The Journey to Excellence - HMIE
- Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act - Getting it Right for Every Child
- Being well – Doing well
- Equalities act
- National parenting strategy
- The Early Years framework
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act
- National Improvement Framework
- Learning Together 3-18

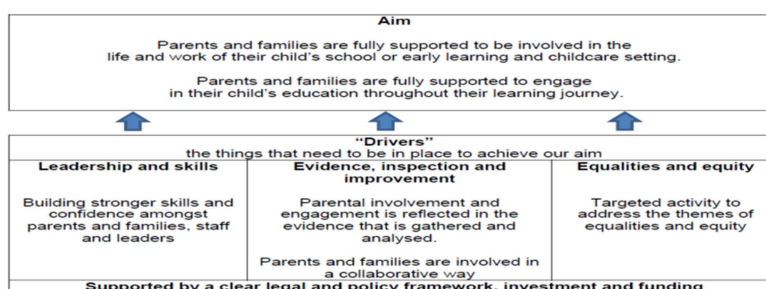
The strategy has been developed by the West Dunbartonshire Council Parental and Family Engagement Steering Group and is based on the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act.

A parent leaflet summarising this strategy has been produced for all parents.

Aims

The key aims of the authority's Parental and Family Engagement strategy are to :

- ensure that parents are supported to be fully involved in the life and work of their children's early learning and childcare setting or school;
- encourage and support collaborative partnerships between practitioners, parents and families;
- get the right support in place so that parents can engage in their child's learning;
- expand access to family learning opportunities which meet participants needs;
- improve the quality of all communication between practitioners, staff, parents and families, and;
- improve the skills of leaders, front-line practitioners and support staff.



Culture and Ethos

The importance of listening to parents and families cannot be underestimated.

It is important to encourage an atmosphere in which parents and carers' feel able to discuss comfortably any aspect of their child's progress with teachers.

Parents, families and carer's have a vital role to play in working with establishments to improve the quality of their children's learning experiences.

All establishments should ensure that parents and carers' have the opportunity to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account when decisions are being made on matters which affect their children.

Parental and Family Engagement should have a high profile in all establishments and all staff should feel confident in their ability to provide a range of opportunities to engage all parents in their child's learning.

Parents should be effectively supported by all establishments to provide strategies to extend learning at home.



Vision and leadership in parental and family engagement

Establishments must ensure that the improvement plan for the school/centre includes developments to improve parents, families and carer's involvement in their child's learning.

Every educational establishment in West Dunbartonshire should have the following elements in place to ensure that the aspirations of the parental and family engagement strategy 3-18 are realised:

- A Parental and Family Engagement policy which is aligned to the establishment's vision and values.

Expectations in relation to the three main levels of engagement described in the Act: Learning at Home; Home/School Partnership; Parental Representation are detailed in the following table, under the responsible body i.e. West Dunbartonshire Council, establishment, parents and parent council.



Learning at home and Family Learning

- To provide a policy on learning at home and family learning that will give establishments a shared understanding of what is required.
- Provide continuing information on new developments in education via website and public facing forums.
- Making support available for parents who choose to educate their child at home.
- Support families to engage in learning at home and family learning.
- Support the IT infrastructure to engage in a range of ways to support family learning and learning at home.

- To provide a policy on learning at home and family learning that will give parents, pupils and staff a shared understanding of how to support children and young people. This should reflect parental consultation.
 - Provide continuing information on curricular developments via establishment website and social media platforms.
 - Giving parents advice and support on how pupils can study, revise and prepare for exams
 - Providing guides on how children learn at nursery, primary and secondary schools - with information on activities parents can do at home to support their child's development;
- Provide information on next steps in learning.

Home School Partnership

- Provide a policy to disseminate and discuss pupil care and support information eg anti-bullying, child protection, promoting positive behaviour, relationships, peer support systems, equality, and school uniform.
- Guidance on systems to track progress and achievement of all learners and a clear guidance on how this will be shared regularly with parents and carers
- Parental involvement, where appropriate in the development of policies and procedures.

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- Have systems in place to disseminate and discuss pupil care and support information.
- Consult parents regarding the skills they have. Undertake and act upon this audit of parental skills that could support learner's experiences.
- Establishment guidelines for parents and staff regarding communication with parents.

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Learning at home and Family Learning

- Participate in a range of opportunities to enable understanding of your child's learning development.
- Have opportunities to learn about developments in education through access to websites and public facing forums.
- Engage with information on how children and young people learn at nursery, primary and secondary
- Have the opportunity to borrow support materials for home learning eg science sacks, literacy supports, active maths games etc.
- Receive information on activities you can do at home to support your child's development.
- Be consulted on what works for your children and what might help you to engage with your children's learning.

- Support and lead parental participation in opportunities to improve understanding of child's learning development.
- Signpost parents to online support materials.
- Support the establishment in resourcing materials to support learning at home and family learning.

Home School Partnership

- Regularly seek and take into account the views of parents by providing opportunities to identify areas where the service can improve.
- Provide a policy to disseminate and discuss pupil care and support information eg anti- bullying, child protection, promoting positive relationships, peer support systems, equality and school uniform.
- Guidance on systems to track progress and achievement of all learners and how this will be shared.
- Parental involvement, where appropriate, in the development of policies and procedures.
- Facilitate support for parents who require to access to support services.
- In partnership with other agencies develop parenting programmes and adult learning.
- Facilitate opportunities for establishments to share good practice.
- Support families and establishments when concerns occur.
- Review the Parental and Family engagement Strategy every three years.
- Support establishments in the effective use of additional funding to support children and young people.
- Provide information sessions for parents and carers to support understanding of child development.
- Have systems in place to disseminate and discuss pupil care and support information.
- Consult parents and families regarding the skills they have. Undertake and act upon this audit to support learner's experiences.
- Establish guidelines regarding communication with parents.
- Consult and involve parents on the establishment improvement plan.
- Offer a range of opportunities to engage parents and adult helpers in a meaningful way in their children's education.
- Have systems in place to track progress and achievement of all learners and regular sharing of this information with parents and families.
- Ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in parental and family engagement.
- Provide an establishment calendar of notable events. Through a variety of
- Provide a Standards and Quality report in parent friendly language.
- Involve parents in the development of policies and procedures.
- Provide information about adult learning opportunities, parenting skills and community involvement.
- Ensure carers of LAC young people or mobile families are fully engaged with the establishment their child attends.
- Develop ways of increasing parental involvement in learning through the use of digital technologies.
- Take into account the Child Poverty Act and Cost of School Toolkit relevance of setting

Home School Partnership

- A regular parental newsletter is published and circulated to all parents and carers and shared through a variety of media-hard copy, newsletter, website, twitter etc.
- A parent's version of the Standards and Quality report circulated with the first newsletter of the session.
- Parental involvement in the development of establishment policies and procedures
- A planned approach to regularly seek and take into account, in a meaningful way, the views of all parents and carers on the identification of areas where the establishment can improve. (we asked, you said, we did)
- Accessing translation and interpretation services where appropriate
- Making it easy for parents to find out about adult learning opportunities, parenting skills and community involvement.
- Encourage parents who find it difficult to come to school on their own to bring a friend, relative or partner with them.
- Carers of LAC young people or mobile families are fully engaged with the establishment while their child attends.
- Develop ways of increasing parental involvement in learning through the use of technologies.

- Lead and support opportunities for parent body to be involved in the life of the establishment.
- Communicate entitlements of the strategy.
- Involvement in the development of establishment policies and procedures
- Be involved in key transition points.

Parents and Families

- Be provided with and participate in a range of opportunities to be involved in your child's learning.
- Be provided with and participate in a range of opportunities to be involved in the wider life of the school.
- Receive regular updates of your child's progress.
- Have regular opportunities to review your child's profile.
- Be involved in the establishment improvement planning process
- Receive information on clubs, homework and supported study available
- Have your views regularly sought regularly on the strengths and areas the establishment can improve upon.
- Receive regular communications of the work of the establishment.
- Receive a standards and quality report from the establishment.
- Use a range of social media to access information about learning.

Parental Representation

- Provide specific help to establish new Parent Councils
- Organise training for Parent Council members to enable them to fulfill their role.
- Provide funding for Parent representation to all establishments to cover admin costs.
- Enable parental involvement through Parent Councils at key stages in the recruitment process including short listing of candidates and the interview process;
- Provide training to enable parents to participate in the process with confidence and make informed choices.
- Provide opportunities for parent councils to share good practice.
 - Support the equality needs of parent councils.
- Include parents in quality assurance procedures.
- Audit parent council activities.

Parent Council

- Prepare and publish an annual plan and a report on the way in which the plan is actioned.
- Be involved in the recruitment and interview process in line with WDC policy.
- Identify training needs of members to WDC.
- Fairly represent the views of the parent body and ensure any complaints are acted upon in a timely and effective manner.

- A parent council/parent partnership.
- Involve parents in establishment improvement groups, working parties and committees.
- Take active steps to involve adult helpers in the life of the establishment.
- Demonstrate the impact of partnerships through improved outcomes for learners

Parents and Families

- Have access to information on how to join the parent council/parent groups
- Receive regular updates on the work of the parent council/parent groups
- Have opportunities to share their views with parent council, improvement groups, working parties and committees
- Have opportunities to be involved in the life of the establishment.
- Be involved in ways and times that suit your circumstances.
- Be asked their opinion by the parent council on issues relating to the establishment and the education it provides.
- Are fairly represented by the parent council and any views of complaints acted upon in an effective and timely manner.

Monitoring progress and achievement and self evaluation

The Parental and Family Engagement Strategy reflects the Council's commitment to work in partnership with parents and families to promote their involvement supporting their child's learning and in the life of the school.

The ultimate success is that children are both happy at school and achieving their full potential. Evaluation of this strategy's effectiveness will be undertaken in a variety of ways.

Ways in which we can monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our partnership with parents and families include:

- Every establishment will evaluate the success of its partnership with parents using quality indicators from "How good is our school?" and "How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare", as a basis for its self evaluation;
- As set out in the National Improvement Framework West Dunbartonshire Council will evaluate the school's success in developing partnerships with parents;
- When having an HMIE Inspection or a WDC Improvement visit parents' views are sought through questionnaires and focus group meetings;
- The impact of the Council's strategy should be a standing item on the agenda of the WDC Parent Forum (WDC wide group)
- West Dunbartonshire Council will review this strategy, in partnership with key stakeholders, within three years of implementation.



Complaints procedures

There are sometimes occasions when parents and carers are not satisfied with the quality of service they or their child receives.

On such occasions parents and carers should contact their child's establishment to discuss their concern or complaint.

If the complaint cannot be resolved at establishment level parents and carers should contact Educational Services and parents should be advised by the establishment in these cases of the complaints procedures.

They can contact by telephone 01389 737368 or write to West Dunbartonshire Council, Educational Services, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton G82 3PU giving details of the complaint and contact details so that we can keep in touch.



Appendix 1 - Reflective Questions - for establishments

With regard to Parental and Family Engagement please consider the following key questions:

Communications and relationships

- how do you overcome the challenge of communications remaining within the 'school bag'.
- What methods do you use to communicate with parents.
- Do you regularly consider the quality and variety of communication with parents? What is the process for this?
- Are there establishment guidelines for parents and staff regarding communication?
- How are these devised and how regularly are they reviewed?
- Consider how you keep parents informed so that they understand why and how the curriculum is changing:
- Consider how your school or establishment communicates with parents about progress, achievement and attainment:

Learning outside school

- Why do we issue homework?
- What do you consider to be the features of good quality homework?
- Describe some next steps to build on an effective homework task.
- How effective is this homework task at promoting dialogue between parents and their children?
- How is this homework task intended to increase parental involvement in their child's learning?
- What support strategies do you have in place to improve the nature and quality of parental involvement in supporting learning at home?
- What strategies are in place to ensure that there is recognition of personal achievements? How are these achievements celebrated and recognised?

Transitions

- What are the benefits of improving parents' and families involvement in transitions?
- How are parents' views and knowledge taken into consideration to support children and young people through transitions?
- What steps are taken to gather feedback from parents and carers, and to inform future plans?
- How are parents helped to understand how their involvement and support can best continue after a successful transition?

Parental representation

- What opportunities are there for all parents' and carers' views about your establishment to be heard and taken account of?
- What are you doing to identify and take account of any barriers that parents face in having their voice heard?
- How are parents made aware of the opportunities available?
- How do you let parents and carers know that their views are valued and taken into consideration?
- How do you encourage all staff to see the need to consider the views of all parents and carers?
- How can we encourage more parents and carers to be willing to participate in representative duties such as membership of PTA committees or the Parent Council?
- How can we ensure that parent representatives reflect the diversity of the population of the catchment area?
- How do we communicate information on the roles and responsibilities of both the headteacher and parent representative organisations at present?

Assessment and reporting

- Consider how you are supporting parents to understand the purpose of your assessments.
- How can you demonstrate to parents that, as part of the assessment process, they can support learning and planning next steps?
- What assessment approaches to support learning and in planning next steps?
- Consider how effective you are in doing this and suggest possible changes in your current practice which would bring this about.
- How do you share with parents the relevance of the wide range of evidence gathered to assess their child's progress?
- How useful have parents found this evidence in helping them understand how their child is progressing and next steps in learning?
- How do you demonstrate these approaches to parents so that they have a better understanding of the different types of assessment approaches? E.g. what would parents understand by peer and self assessment?
- How effective are you in doing this and can you suggest some possible changes in your current practice which would actively involve parents?

Reporting

- Consider how you share assessment information with parents e.g. range of reporting approaches; on an ongoing basis, periodically, at key transitions.
- How effective are each of these reporting approaches in describing to parents how their child is progressing? How do you know?
- How effective are these approaches in providing opportunities for dialogue between staff, parents and pupils about progress and achievement?
- How could parents consultation nights (Parents Evenings, meetings) be more productive in taking account of parent's views and in supporting learning?
- To what extent does the language used clearly describe to parents how their child is progressing?
- How well does the report give a clear indication of the learner's strengths and areas for development?
- To what extent does the information within the report set out next steps and how parents might support their child to progress in their learning?
- How well does the report encourage parents and their children to talk about their learning and progress?
- How do you encourage parents to give feedback and how is this taken into account to support learning?
- What opportunities are there for all parents' views about their children's progress and learning to be heard and taken account of?
- Taking account of any barriers that parents may face in expressing their views, what other opportunities might you consider to allow all parents to make their views be known?
- Consider how you encourage children and young people to talk to their parents about their learning and progress.
- In preparing profiles what account is taken in recognising achievements out with school?
- How can a profile be best used to share a child or, young person's achievements and strengths with their family?



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