



Parents as partners

in their children's learning

March 2007

Issue No 1

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006

Following widespread national consultation, the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act was launched at a national conference on 12 September 2006.

What's it all about?

The Parental Involvement Act aims to do several things:

- ◆ *It aims to help parents become more involved with their child's education and in schools.*
- ◆ *It places duties on Scottish Ministers and education authorities to promote parental involvement, and a duty on each education authority to produce a strategy for parental involvement.*
- ◆ *It introduces a new system of Parent Councils to replace the current School Boards, aiming to make it easier for parents to express their views.*

To help achieve these aims, all parents are now automatically members of the Parent Forum at their child's school, and will be entitled to have a say in what happens at the school.

What does being a member of the Parent Forum mean?

Members of the Parent Forum can expect to:

- ◆ *get information about what their child is learning.*

- ◆ *get information about events and activities at the school.*
- ◆ *get advice/help on how they can support their child's learning.*
- ◆ *be told about opportunities to be involved in the school.*
- ◆ *have a say in selecting a Parent Council to work on behalf of all parents at their school.*

"The new law is really a once in a generation chance to take a fresh look at how parents are involved in their children's learning and education."

***Robert Brown
Deputy Education Minister***

What is a Parent Council?

The role of a Parent Council is to:

- ◆ *support the school in its work with parents.*
- ◆ *represent the views of all parents.*
- ◆ *encourage links between the school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups and the wider community.*
- ◆ *report back to the Parent Forum.*

So what happens now?

2006-07 is a 'transitional year', during which time local authorities, schools and parent bodies will be working towards developing a strategy for parental involvement, and also moving from the current School Board/Parent Teacher Association arrangements to new Parent Forum/Parent Councils. In preparation for these changes, a Strategy Group has been set up to oversee the work required during the year.

Over the next few months your school and Education & Children's Services will give you more information about how the Act will be taken forward in your school. Some schools may wish to hold a parents meeting where you will have the opportunity to state how you wish your school's Parent Council to operate following the transition from School Board.

Communication, communication, communication...

One of the keys to success in implementation of the Act will be communication, and members of the Strategy Group have been busy letting as many people know about the new Act through the following:

- ◆ Briefing sessions for Headteachers/Deputes and Principal Teachers.
- ◆ Open meeting held for all parents in December 2006.
- ◆ Briefing to School Board Chairs/Focus Group.
- ◆ Report to Lifelong Learning Committee (who govern our work as a Council Service).

This is the first of a series of Parents as Partners newsletters for schools and parents and you will receive further information as the year progresses.

To help you....

Nationally, a Parental Involvement Toolkit and Guidance pack has been prepared – all of which was launched at the recent national conference. All schools have received 3 copies of this pack for the Head Teacher, School Board, and PTA.

The Toolkit contains lots of helpful information which can be used by the Parent Forum to develop their Parent Council. All parents should be enabled to contribute to the setting up of the Parent Council if they want to.

"We want children to get the most from their education and we know that to achieve this, parents need to get involved. We want to build on the good work and strong relationships that already exist, so that even more parents feel welcome in school."

Robert Brown
Deputy Education Minister

Useful Contacts

As well as the Toolkit, there is a lot of useful information for you to look at on the following sites:

Parentzone:

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

BBC Parents:

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents

Parent Network Scotland:

www.parentnetworkscotland.org.uk

In the meantime...

We'll keep you fully informed as progress is made, but if you have any queries relating to Parental Involvement, please contact:

Pat Fegen (Chair of Strategy Group)

Tel 01738 476221

Email pafegen@pkc.gov.uk

or

Karen Robertson

Tel 01738 476216

Email karenrobertson@pkc.gov.uk

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion only, a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting Karen Robertson on 01738 476216.



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