

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Lifelong Learning Committee – 27 May 2009****PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY****Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)****ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this report is to set out the Perth and Kinross Parental Involvement Strategy.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1.1 agrees the Parental Involvement Strategy for Perth and Kinross Council;
- 1.2 approves its implementation; and
- 1.3 instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to present an update on the progress of the implementation of the strategy by December 2010.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act) 2006 sets out the legislative requirements for the establishment of Parent Councils. This legislation also includes a statutory duty for all Local Authorities to produce a Parental Involvement Strategy. 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.
- 2.2 There are three main levels of engagement described in the Act:
 - Learning at Home
 - Home/School Partnership
 - Parental Representation
- 2.3 In February 2007, Lifelong Learning Committee was informed of the progress made in implementing the commencement orders of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 (report 07/167 refers). This report outlined the requirements of the legislation which stipulated the duty placed on Local Authorities to produce a draft strategy for parental involvement.
- 2.4 A Parental Involvement Strategy Group made up of parents, school staff and Education and Children's Services staff with additional involvement from young people and representatives from voluntary agencies worked together to

develop a strategy to support and improve parental involvement in Perth and Kinross.

- 2.5 This Parental Involvement Strategy contributes to the vision of “a confident and ambitious Perth & Kinross with a strong identity and clear priorities that everyone works together to achieve. Our communities will be vibrant and successful; safe, secure, healthy and sustainable environments; places where people are nurtured and supported”. (Statement of Intent, Perth & Kinross Council March 2007).
- 2.6 This strategy links to the Communication and Consultation Policy which is part of the Perth & Kinross Council Education and Children’s Services Policy Framework. In addition, the strategy also complements the Parenting Strategy for Perth and Kinross (2008 – 2012), which outlines support for parenting provided by the Council, the NHS and Voluntary Agencies. (Report no. 08/398 refers) and The Corporate Parenting Initiative which is part of the Looked After Children Strategy.
- 2.7 A parent leaflet summarising this strategy, “Parents as Partners” has been produced. (See Appendix 1 of Parental Involvement Strategy).

3 PROPOSALS

It is proposed that:

- 3.1 The Committee approves the implementation of this strategy.
- 3.2 The Committee approves the intention to publicise and share the strategy with the different parent bodies and with schools e.g. through development days and strategy meetings.

4 CONSULTATION

The Executive Director (Corporate Services), Head of Democratic Services and Head of Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

The draft Parental Involvement Strategy was also the subject of consultation with the stakeholder groups outlined in Appendix 2.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The cost implications for the publication of the final strategy and parent’s leaflet will be contained within the existing revenue budget for Parent Councils.

6 COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2006-2010

6.1 This report takes forward the Service's Statement of Intent and links to Business Management and Improvement Plan Objectives:

- Develop the range and quality learning experiences for all
- Raise standards of performance and achievement
- Develop active and responsible citizens
- Develop caring and confident communities

The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:

- Communication and Consultation

6.2 The Council's Corporate Plan 2006-2010 lays out five objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. This report relates to the following objectives:

- A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
- Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens
- Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities

7 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

The Parental Involvement Strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Assessment Framework and the determination was made that the items summarised in this report do not require further assessment.

8 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Parental Involvement Strategy presented in this report was considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the determination was made that the items summarised in this report do not require further action as they do not qualify as a plan, programme or strategy as defined by the Act.

9 CONCLUSION

The Parental Involvement Strategy is to be welcomed as a further development to support parental involvement in the representation of parents, the building of home school partnerships and the involvement of parents supporting their child's learning at home.

JOHN FYFFE
Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)

Note: The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report:

- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 guidance.
- Parents as partners in their children's learning Toolkit.

Contact Officer: Pat Fegen, Service Manager
Ext no 76221
pafegen@pkc.gov.uk

Address of Service: Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, Perth PH1 5GD

Date: 27 May 2009

Appendix 1 - Perth and Kinross Parental Involvement Strategy
Appendix 1a - Parental Involvement Strategy Parent Leaflet
Appendix 2 - List of Consultees

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 *The Communications Manager*
E-mail: ecsgeneralenquiries@pkc.gov.uk



Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573



Parental Involvement Strategy

Parents as Partners



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

There are three main levels of engagement described in the Act:

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

A Parental Involvement Strategy Group made up of parents, school staff and Education & Children's Services with additional involvement from young people and representatives from voluntary agencies worked together to develop a strategy to support and improve parental involvement in Perth & Kinross.

This Parental Involvement Strategy contributes to the vision of "a confident and ambitious Perth & Kinross with a strong identity and clear priorities that everyone works together to achieve. Our communities will be vibrant and successful; safe, secure, healthy and sustainable environments; places where people are nurtured and supported". (Statement of Intent, Perth & Kinross Council March 2007).

It links to the Communication and Consultation Policy which is part of the Perth & Kinross Council Education and Children's Services Policy Framework.

Parents are already involved in education through other key policies and plans. These include:

- Perth and Kinross Business Management and Improvement Plan
- Creating a Curriculum for Excellence Parts 1-5
- How Good is our School – HMle
- Child at the Centre - HMle
- Journey to Excellence - HMle
- Getting it Right for Every Child.

In addition, the strategy also complements the Parenting Strategy for Perth and Kinross (2008 – 2012), which outlines support for parenting provided by the Council, the NHS and Voluntary Agencies (www.pkc.gov.uk).

A parent leaflet summarising this strategy, 'Parents as Partners' has been produced. See Appendix 1a.

N.B. The term parent used throughout this document and appendices applies equally to parent, carers and family members who care for children.

Looked After Children (LAC) is the term given to the statutory duties and responsibilities placed on local authorities in respect to children and young people either in their care or placed on supervision by the Children's Hearing System.

A looked after young person or child is any child for whom the local authority has legal responsibility. The local authority is the corporate "parent."

The Looked After Children Strategy document features on Perth & Kinross Council's Website.

1. Strategic Aims

The way to better parental involvement lies through increased engagement with parents and their families. This strategy has been produced in order to provide a supportive framework in which all parents can engage meaningfully in the education of their children and in the wider life of the school.

The aims of this strategy are that:

- all parents and staff are partners in the education process and are aware of the complementary roles they perform
- building relationships and creating mutual trust and respect between parents and staff is given high priority
- communication between home and school is effective
- potential opportunities and difficulties are identified early
- groups such as Parent Councils and Parent Teacher Associations are fully supported to play a valuable role in building good relationships between and among parents, schools, Education & Children's Services and the wider local community
- parental understanding of the education their children are receiving is increased
- clear channels of communication are established so that schools and parents can respond quickly to emerging issues and concerns

2. Promoting Parental Involvement

We know from national research that children do better at school, and achieve more in life when parents and schools work together. Only 15% of a child's life is spent at school and so it is very clear that parents have the most influential role in a child's education. It is important that we respect that each of us has our own role to play, but in working together we will aim to ensure that every child does the best they can at school and beyond.

All Scottish schools have placed “Curriculum for Excellence” at the heart of the work they are doing. It endorses our view that all of our children and young people can succeed and that all partners in the learning process – pupils, parents and teachers – must continually search for ways to fully involve each learner in Perth & Kinross.

Curriculum for Excellence plays a significant role to “help prepare young people to take their place in a modern society and economy. It will provide a framework for all young people in Scotland to gain the knowledge and skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that they need.”

Building the Curriculum 3, A Framework for Learning and Teaching. Scottish Government, 2008

The broad purposes of education are defined in Curriculum for Excellence; these are to develop the attributes and capabilities in all children and young people enabling them to become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

This strategy supports all four Capacities of ‘Curriculum for Excellence’

3. The Three Levels of Engagement

The three levels of engagement of the Parental Involvement Act 2006 are: **Learning at Home, Home/School Partnerships and Parental Representation.**

Supporting Learning at Home

We recognise the vital role that parents and carers play in their children’s learning and development. Parents are the first and ongoing educators of their children and can expect to receive information on what their children are learning at school and how they can be best supported. Effective communication and a sense of shared responsibility are the key to getting this right.

Across Perth & Kinross we have excellent examples of how our schools work with parents to help them support and extend their child’s learning, providing materials such as homework and study guides. We want this level of support to be available to all parents.

Examples of how we can support parents to help their children’s learning are:

- 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
- giving parents advice and support on how pupils can study, revise and prepare for exams
- exploring ways to hold ‘study’ and homework sessions for parents
- Headteachers, with other Education & Children’s Services staff, working together to support parents who are unsure of procedures and next steps

- developing a policy on homework that will give parents, pupils and staff a shared understanding of what is required – regular homework is the equivalent of an extra year’s schooling, a real benefit when it comes to national examinations
- providing continuing information on new developments in education such as Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Assessment is for Learning (AifL)

Removing Barriers

There is a variety of reasons why some parents have little or limited contact with a school. This can create barriers that stop them getting involved or supporting their child’s education and learning. Barriers may include previous personal experience; additional support needs; the isolation of lone parents; shift (or long) working hours; lack of child care facilities and language differences.

In addition we shall recognise and respect the various cultural, faith, ethnic and lifestyle choices within our communities, developing practical ways to support parents and pupils.

Examples of the way we can work together to tackle the issues which stop parents being involved are:

- being flexible in the timing of events to discuss a child’s progress with parents
- the Headteacher, together with staff from across Education and Children’s Services working together to support parents who find it difficult to become involved
- accessing translation and interpretation services
- supporting learning for **all** children
- making support available to parents who choose to educate their children at home
- making it easy for parents to find out about adult learning opportunities, parenting skills and community involvement
- supporting the parents of Looked After Children to play their part in parental involvement
- encouraging parents who find it difficult to come to school on their own to bring a friend, relative or partner with them

4. Supporting Home/School Partnerships

Effective home/school partnerships are essential to ensure that children get the most out of their school and their education. Working co-operatively will allow potential difficulties and opportunities to be identified and addressed at an early stage.

Schools and Education and Children’s Services should create opportunities for parents to be more involved in their children’s learning and education and to develop communications to improve the information schools provide to parents.

Examples of the ways we can work together include:

- issuing regular newsletters with holiday dates, information on school trips and events and for secondary school exam dates and best sources for revision advice
- offering a range of opportunities for parents to participate in school life – from one off assistance to regular activities
- developing a clear policy on how parents and wider family members can participate in the life of a school
- establishing formal and informal times when parents and teachers can meet to discuss
- demonstrating a commitment to share ideas and information – and so build trust
- arranging ‘fun social events’ that create opportunities for building relationships with parents and the wider community – which can, at the same time, raise funds for the school
- organising and developing training opportunities for staff and parents to develop communication about the curriculum and supporting children’s learning at home and in school
- consulting parents on School Improvement Plans
- ensuring that Education and Children’s Services and School Improvement Plans include proposals to improve parents’ involvement in their child’s learning

Giving advice and information to parents

The type of advice and information required by parents about their child will vary but all communication must be honest and respect the privacy of other children and staff. All opportunities should be taken to work towards a two-way exchange of information, trust, openness and achieving the best for every child – by parents and staff.

Examples of how and when we can provide support and advice are:

- at key transition stages such as starting nursery, primary or secondary school and also on moving schools
- when Additional Support Needs including Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) have been identified
- when parents and/or school have attendance concerns
- if support and advice from external agencies would benefit a child or family

5. Parental Representation

This strategy provides a framework for ensuring that parents have the opportunity to express their views and have these taken into account on matters affecting the education of their children.

All parents who have a child attending a school are automatically members of the Parent Forum for that school. This allows parents to have their collective views represented by their elected Parent Council members.

One of the key roles of Parent Councils is to represent the views of parents to the school and to the authority. They have a duty to ensure that the views they give us are truly representative. We will ask for views in a number of different ways to give parents and pupils a say on school and on authority issues and the decisions we make.

Examples of how we can continue to encourage and support Parent Councils include:

- providing specific help to establish new Parent Councils
- training for Parent Council members to enable them to fulfill their role
- funding for Parent Councils will comprise three elements:
 - a budget for administration expenses, based on the size of the school roll and whether it is a primary or secondary school
 - payment of a public liability insurance premium for each Parent Council (under review)
 - making a small tax free payment (called an honorarium) for the clerk to the Parent Council
- consulting with parents in various ways on school and authority issues

Examples of the different bodies involved in consultations are:

- **Parent Forums** – every parent who has a child at a school is automatically a member of the parent forum for that school. Depending upon the subject matter we may at times invite the views of **all members of a parent forum**.
- **Parent Councils** – we will normally seek your views through your school's Parent Councils. Examples of how we can see the views of the Parent Forum and pupil body:
 - talking to parents
 - sending out questionnaires or surveys to establish parental and pupil views
 - attending parents' evenings or events and asking parents for their views
 - considering the views of School Pupil Councils
- **Chairs' Group** - all Chairpersons of Parent Councils are invited to attend at least two meetings a year with the Head of Education and members of the Senior Management Team, Education and Children's Services. Other meetings will be arranged to discuss specific topics, such as consultation issues.
- **Focus Group** - a cross-sector representational group of Parent Council members will meet in a consultative role with the Head of Service and Senior Managers twice a year.

6. Recruitment & Appointment of Senior Staff

The views of parents are sought as part of this process.

The principles of the recruitment and appointment process are:

- to enable parental involvement through Parent Councils at key stages in the recruitment process including short listing of candidates and the interview process
- training will be provided to enable parents to participate in the process with confidence and make informed choices

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Parental Involvement Strategy reflects the Council's commitment to work in partnership with parents to promote their involvement supporting children'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 include:

- every school will evaluate the success of its partnership with parents using quality indicators from "How Good is our School" and "Child at the Centre", as a basis for its self evaluation
- Perth & Kinross Council will monitor and evaluate the school's success in continuing to develop partnership with parents
- when a school is having an HMIE Inspection or an Extended Learning and Achievement Visit, parents' views are sought through questionnaires and focus group meetings
- Perth & Kinross Council will review this strategy, in partnership with key stakeholders, within three years of implementation

8. Providing an effective complaints system

The Authority aims to deliver services to the highest quality. Feedback is valued and helps to improve the quality of the service provided.

The Authority has an established process for dealing with parental concerns and complaints. This complaints procedure comprises of clear definitions and advice should a complaint be made or received. This can be accessed by all on the Perth and Kinross website. www.pkc.gov.uk

This strategy sets out the policy to support effective parental involvement in Perth & Kinross Council schools. It takes account of the guidance detailed in The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act 2006). Scottish Executive 2006.

For further information please contact the Operations Manager on 01738 476216 or at ECSGeneralEnquiries@pkc.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1a - Parental Involvement Strategy Parent Leaflet

Appendix 2 – List of Consultees

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Research shows that when parents are involved in their child's learning, children do better at school and throughout life.

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006

The Act reflects the shared responsibility that schools, parents and the community have in working to educate children.

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 asks schools and Authorities to:

- help parents become more involved with their child's education and learning.
- welcome parents as active participants in the life of the school.
- provide easier ways for parents to express their views and wishes.

We are aware that there may be barriers to effectively supporting your child's learning at home and in school. The Parental Involvement Strategy identifies the steps we will take to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to be partners in their children's learning.

Please Note: A parent in this case includes a guardian and any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibility or care of the child or young person. This includes Looked After Children.

- There are three broad areas in which you can be involved in your child's learning:
- **Learning at Home** – by providing you with information on what your child is learning at school and how this can best be supported by you at home.
- **Home/School Partnership** – by providing you with opportunities to contribute to the life of the school e.g. by helping out in the classroom, on school trips and at school events.
- **Parental Representation** – by helping you to decide what kind of parent group/s and representation the school should have.

Steps we will take to support you in these three areas:

Learning at Home

- you will get lots of encouragement from the school to take part in your child's learning
- schools and teachers will keep you informed of what your child will be learning in school so that you can discuss this with your child at home
- parents and staff will tackle areas of difficulty and concern together.
- schools will provide a range of activities for you to do with your child at home

- you can support your child's learning by helping with homework and making links with other areas of school work
- how we will communicate with you will reflect your individual needs
- there will be open channels of communication so that you feel comfortable talking to your child's teachers and making them aware of how your child's learning is being supported at home
- you can discuss with your child's teacher activities undertaken at home
- Adult Family Learning opportunities will be available in your community

Home and School Partnership

- you will feel welcome in your child's school and know who to speak to
- you will be asked about what is important to you and what you would like to see happening in your child's school
- your child will be asked to contribute their ideas about what is important to them and how they want you and others to be involved
- we will value the skills you have to offer
- we will provide opportunities for you to get involved in different activities

Parental Representation

- you will have the opportunity to express your views on matters affecting the education of your child
- we will have arrangements in place to encourage **your** involvement in your child's school
- you will automatically be a member of your school's **Parent Forum**
- we will assist the **Parent Forum** to set up a **Parent Council** and provide ongoing support
- your **Parent Council** will participate in the process for Headteacher and Depute Headteacher appointments

Monitoring and Evaluation

- through its self evaluation process, your school will regularly review the success of its partnership with parents
- we will monitor and evaluate every school's success in promoting a meaningful partnership with parents
- we will review this strategy within three years of implementation

Successful parental partnership will ensure that our schools achieve excellence and the outcomes for our children will be improved.



PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL'S

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

Advice, Information and Handling Concerns

- your child's school is your first point of contact should you require advice, information or to raise concerns
- you will be advised of the key person to contact in your child's school
- your school will work with you to resolve any concerns and issues
- your school will advise you on how to take your concerns forward should your concerns remain unresolved
- your concerns will be dealt with confidentially, within a set timescale and feedback will be given

Further information may be obtained from:-

The Operations Manager
Education & Children's Services

Perth & Kinross Council 01738 476216 or
ECSEnquiries@pkc.gov.uk

Parental Involvement features on Perth & Kinross Council's Website:

www.pkc.gov.uk/Education+and+learning/Schools/Parental+Involvement

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PARENT LEAFLET

'PARENTS AS PARTNERS'

Perth & Kinross Council values parents and carers as the most important influences on children's lives and their learning.

We acknowledge that when parents and schools work together, children do better.

This leaflet sets out the ways in which the council aims to encourage and promote the involvement of parents in their children's learning.

Consultation for draft Parental Involvement Strategy

- **Parental Involvement Strategy Group**
- **Parent Councils**
- **Pupil Councils**
- **Corporate Management Group**
- **Headteachers**
- **Extended Management Team**
- **Convener**
- **Vice Conveners**
- **Elected Members**
- **Senior Management Team**
- **Cultural and Community Services Strategy Group**
- **Children's Services Strategy Group**
- **Headteacher Strategy Group**
- **Local Management Groups**
- **Youth Council**

